

April 17, 2018

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
U.S. Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
U.S. House of Representatives
2235 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Warren and Congressman Cummings,

On behalf of the National Council for Behavioral Health and our 2,900 community-based mental health and addiction treatment member organizations, I am writing to thank you for your leadership for introducing the Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act. This important legislation would improve access to desperately needed substance use treatment services for millions of Americans across the country.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 22 million Americans aged 12 or older have experienced a substance use disorder. Yet, only 1 in every 10-people living with addiction receive treatment services.

The CARE Act is modeled on the Ryan White Act, and would provide needed federal resources to help meet local needs for evidence-based addiction prevention, treatment and recovery support services. Importantly, this act would target federal discretionary resources to states and localities most affected by the crisis and supports local control and input for resource allocation. By increasing addiction treatment capacity, your bill addresses critical elements of the nation's growing addiction crisis.

As bold as your legislation is, we recognize that even more needs to be done to close the treatment gap in this country. The federal government provides funding to state and local governments and providers through two means: discretionary and mandatory programs. Understanding the value both mechanisms provide, we have communicated on numerous occasions that expansion of Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers (CCBHCs), which is done through mandatory funding, is the foundation from which to transform our nation's substance use treatment system. We also appreciate the Senate HELP Committee's commitment to exploring new ways to expand discretionary funding and believe that the CARE Act would provide a much-needed infusion of discretionary funding that would complement the work happening within CCBHCs.

Thank you for your dedication to expanding access to lifesaving treatment for millions of Americans living with substance use disorders. The National Council looks forward to working with you and your colleagues to see this important legislation through to passage.

Sincerely,



Linda Rosenberg
President and CEO
National Council for Behavioral Health