

May 10, 2022

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
Chairwoman
Health Subcommittee of the House Committee
on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Ranking Member
Health Subcommittee of the House Committee
on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, Chairwoman Eshoo, and Ranking Member Guthrie:

On behalf of the physician and student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to thank you for your bipartisan work in introducing H.R. 7666, the “Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022,” to address the national mental health and substance use disorder crises. The AMA is deeply committed to confronting and ending these two epidemics, which are having devastating impacts across the country.

As you proceed to the markup of H.R. 7666 in the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee tomorrow, we would like to note our support for the timely reauthorization of key programs within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), including the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, Recovery Block Grant, that would support mental health and substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery services activities and would address mental health needs and prevent suicide for Fiscal Years 2023 through 2027.

In addition, the AMA would like to note the following provisions that we support:

- **Collaborative Care and Behavioral Health Integration.** The bill reauthorizes a program that allows the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to award grants to states that partner with a community program, a health center, or a primary health care physician practice to implement and evaluate specified models of care that integrate behavioral health and primary care services. The Collaborative Care Model (CoCM) provides a strong building block to address these problems by ensuring that patients can receive expeditious behavioral health treatment within the office of their primary care physician. The CoCM integrates behavioral health care within the primary care setting and features a primary care physician, a psychiatric consultant, and care manager working together in a coordinated fashion. Importantly, the team members use measurement-based care to ensure that patients are progressing, and treatment is adjusted when

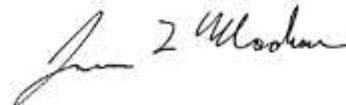
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they are not. The model has over 90 research studies demonstrating its efficacy and is covered by Medicare, most private insurers, and many state Medicaid programs. Additionally, the CoCM has tremendous cost savings potential. Furthermore, the Model greatly increases the number of patients being treated for mental health and substance use disorders when compared to traditional one-to-one treatment. The CoCM has also been shown to increase physician and patient satisfaction and reduce stress among primary care physicians.

- **Mental Health Parity.** The AMA supports eliminating the opt-out for self-funded nonfederal governmental health plans and requiring them to comply with mental health parity requirements. However, much more is needed to ensure that mental health parity is achieved and enforced. As we noted in a [letter](#) to the House Ways and Means Committee in February after the 2022 Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) Report to Congress was released, increased legislative action is necessary to protect patients with a mental illness or substance use disorder. The Report found that insurers' parity violations have continued and become worse since the MHPAEA was enacted in 2008. At a time when our nation is in the throes of a drug overdose epidemic killing more than 100,000 Americans each year, and a growing mental health crisis affecting children, young adults and people of all ages, this report shows how insurers' failures and parity violations have harmed millions. The AMA urges you to add additional parity protections to your bill as it proceeds through subcommittee markup and full committee markup, including the state parity enforcement grant provision from H.R. 7232.

Again, we support your work on these important health care issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD