

February 8, 2016

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
SH-731 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Stabenow

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our support for the Compromise Emergency Relief Amendment to Address the Flint Water Crisis. There is overwhelming scientific evidence that childhood lead poisoning has a series of devastating impacts including significantly increasing the risk of long-term behavioral disorders.

Specifically, lead is a neurotoxic substance that has been shown in numerous research studies to affect brain function and development. Children who have been exposed to elevated levels of lead are at increased risk for cognitive and behavioral problems during development. The neuropsychological problems associated with lead include poor speech articulation, ADHD, delayed general intellectual abilities, learning disabilities, and problems controlling behavior (e.g., aggressiveness, impulsivity).

The Stabenow/Peters amendment has a number of relevant elements – most particularly the proposed Center for Excellence on Lead Exposure. The new HHS center would assist children and adults exposed to lead poisoning by connecting them to a variety of services – including behavioral health care -- available through health centers, schools, and other resources in the community. In addition, the center would conduct research on the physical and behavioral health impacts, education impacts, and other issues that arise due to lead exposure.

In short, the Stabenow/Peters amendment authorizes the critical infrastructure required to help children recover from extensive lead exposure. Early intervention with these youngsters in early childhood (3-6) and late childhood (7-10), in particular, has been shown to produce both substantial savings and vastly superior behavioral and developmental outcomes.

Thank you for your leadership. We strongly support the Stabenow/Peters amendment.

Sincerely,

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association on Health and Disability

American Dance Therapy Association

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Nurses Association

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Center for Clinical Social Work

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Eating Disorders Coalition

First Focus Campaign for Children

Lakeshore Foundation

Mental Health America

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

National Association for Rural Mental Health

National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State directors of Special Education

National Council for Behavioral Health

National Disability Rights Network

National Register

School Social Work Association of America

Tourette Association of America