

From: Plasky, Naomi
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:31 PM

Subject: FW: KENNEDY UNVEILS UNIVERSAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Hi all,

Thank you so much for your support and help with the resolution, it really means a lot to the Congressman. We have a number, which should be up on congress.gov tomorrow: H Res 1057. Thanks again for everything and Rep. Kennedy and I look forward to continue working with you!

Best,
Naomi

From: Black, Dan
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:03 PM
To: Black, Dan
Subject: KENNEDY UNVEILS UNIVERSAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE



For Immediate Release:
July 21, 2020

Contact:
Dan Black – Dan.Black@mail.house.gov

KENNEDY UNVEILS UNIVERSAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Continues his leadership on mental health care & substance use disorder treatment

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Joe Kennedy III today unveiled a resolution calling on Congress to pursue universal behavioral health care and address the systemic inequities that plague the current system. Building on his recent success strengthening behavioral health parity laws, Kennedy’s resolution outlines the disjointed federal response to the mental health and substance use disorder crisis, outlines the urgent policies needed to combat it, and demands an immediate, historic investment in the health system that focuses specifically on addressing behavioral health conditions. The resolution is co-led by Congresswoman Doris Matsui, Congressman Paul Tonko, Congressman Tony Cárdenas, and Congressman David Trone. In the

coming days, Kennedy will introduce legislation to begin to match the goals laid out in the resolution to achieve universal behavioral health care.

“People die on a daily basis in this country because we still treat behavioral health as an afterthought,” said **Congressman Kennedy**. “But in the wealthiest nation on earth, not a single person should ever be denied substance use disorder treatment and mental health care for any reason, whether it be cost, access, stigma, racial inequities, insurance coverage, parity violations, or an aging workforce. This resolution will show exactly where Congress stands and what we’re willing to do about it.

“For my entire career, expanding access to behavioral health care has been my priority,” continued Kennedy. “Through countless conversations with patients, loved ones, providers and advocates, it is abundantly clear that even as we fight for Medicare For All, we need to enact systemic changes to our mental health care system now. In the days, weeks, and months ahead, we will begin to put forth legislation and ideas to comprehensively fix a health system that is broken beyond recognition and has never fully accepted that mental health care is health care.”

To read Kennedy’s resolution, [please click here](#). His resolution has earned the support of the following organizations: American Academy of Pediatrics, American Art Therapy Association, American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work, American Association on Health and Disability, American Counseling Association, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, American Group Psychotherapy Association, American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine, American Psychoanalytic Association, American Psychoanalytic Association, American Psychological Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, Anxiety and Depression Association of America, Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare, The Bazelon Center, Behavioral Health Association of Providers, Campaign for Youth Justice, Clinical Social Work Association, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Faces and Voices of Recovery, Families USA, Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice, International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium, The Kennedy Forum, Lakeshore Foundation, Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance, NAADAC – the Association for Addiction Professionals, National Alliance for Mental Illness, National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health, National Association for Behavioral Healthcare, National Association for Children’s Behavioral Health, National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers, National Association of Social Workers, National Council on Aging, National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Partnership to End Addiction , Policy & Action, Postpartum Support International, The Reclaimed Hope Initiative, Residential Eating Disorders Consortium, SMART Recovery, Treatment Communities of America, and Well Being Trust.

“The American Psychological Association commends Congressman Kennedy for the comprehensive vision reflected in the Resolution to improve the overall well-being of Americans with or at risk of mental health and substance use disorders, through a ‘whole person’ approach” to care, said **APA CEO Dr. Arthur C. Evans Jr.** “APA recognizes the critical

need to extend significant investments in mental health and substance use prevention, treatment and recovery supports, promote collaboration among federal, state and local systems of care, and address cultural, ethnic and racial disparities by examining the social factors that influence health and impact outcomes, which are often ignored. Psychologists as educators, researchers and clinicians play a vital role in shifting towards an integrated physical and behavioral health system, and we are pleased to join in support of this vision.”

“We thank Rep. Kennedy for recognizing the important role played by SUD professionals. As the global leaders in the credentialing of SUD professionals- as well as in setting standards for reciprocity between jurisdictions- IC&RC is pleased to see leaders in Washington recognize the role we can play in addressing the disease of addiction. Our professionals meet the highest possible standards, both clinically and ethically, and we embrace a future where our contributions to health care are fully understood and valued. This resolution is an important step in that direction,” said **Crystal Smalldon, President, IC&RC.**

Last week, Kennedy’s legislation to increase transparency and strengthen accountability for parity violations passed the House Appropriations and Energy & Commerce committees. In 2015, he introduced the [Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act](#) which would increase transparency, strengthen accountability and enhance patients’ ability to file complaints. Beyond his work focused on strengthening parity laws, he has introduced legislation to increase access to behavioral health care for [low-income workers](#), [pregnant women](#) and [children](#).

While in Congress, Kennedy has introduced the following bills to overhaul the mental health system: Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act, the Strengthening Behavioral Health Parity Act, Moms MATTER Act of 2020, Medicaid Bump Act, CHIP Mental Health Parity Act, and Fair Care for Kids Act.

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