



March 10, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As national organizations dedicated to improving our nation’s mental health, we stand behind you in the fight against COVID-19 and praise your leadership in passage of the landmark *American Rescue Plan Act*. Thank you for this significant investment in services and supports to help address the mental health and substance use needs of our country.

While we have found recent glimmers of hope in COVID -19 vaccine approvals, and the flattening number of new cases, we also find ourselves amid a national mental health crisis exacerbated by not only the anxiety, isolation and loss created by COVID-19, but also the associated economic challenges, and the racial and social injustices seen across our nation.

The pandemic has stressed the mental health infrastructure at a time when the country has seen increases in overdose deaths, suicidal ideation, and reports of anxiety and depression. The *American Rescue Plan Act* recognizes that mental health is integral to our collective recovery and takes decisive action to help our nation heal.

Demand for mental health and substance use services continues to grow, including for children, exacerbating our nationwide shortage of behavioral health providers. The *American Rescue Plan Act* tackles these problems by expanding funding for community mental health services, suicide prevention, and behavioral health workforce education and training programs. It also provides enhanced Medicaid funding for mobile crisis teams, which will help ensure a there is a strong mental health system in place to respond to the mental health crisis facing our nation.

Millions of people have lost their jobs and the security and peace of mind that can come with employment. The *American Rescue Plan Act* addresses this by providing additional unemployment

payments, stimulus funding, housing assistance, as well as investments in childcare and food assistance programs. The legislation also recognizes the importance of affordable, comprehensive health insurance. The legislation will help people get covered for mental health and substance use treatment through the expansion of the Affordable Care Act health plan subsidies, incentives for Medicaid expansion, and extended Medicaid coverage for postpartum women.

Our nation's children have endured unprecedented challenges as schools moved to virtual learning. Students have been disconnected from their friends, teammates, teachers, and in some cases, their only access to mental health care. This has taken a heavy toll on a generation who were already experiencing high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide before the pandemic. The *American Rescue Plan* will help students get back on track with funding to provide mental health services and supports in elementary and secondary schools.

First responders and health care professionals around the country have been on the frontline of responding to the pandemic and it has taken a toll on their mental health. The *American Rescue Plan Act* addresses this by providing critical funding to address suicide and mental health needs amongst first responders and other medical professionals.

The *American Rescue Plan Act* will help millions of Americans in every stage of life dealing with mental health conditions and substance use disorders. We are optimistic that this legislation signifies a turning point in addressing the mental health crisis within the pandemic and marks just the beginning of our nation's long-term commitment to making mental health a priority. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your Administration to meet the nation's mental health and substance use needs.

Sincerely,

American Psychological Association
American Psychiatric Association
Inseparable
The Jewish Federations of North America
The Kennedy Forum
Mental Health America
NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare
Steinberg Institute
Treatment Advocacy Center
Well Being Trust