

August 3, 2007

The Honorable Grace Napolitano  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1610 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Napolitano:

The undersigned organizations applaud your introduction of the Mental Health in Schools Act of 2007 and pledge our support for passage of this initiative. We share your vision in expanding the availability of comprehensive school-based mental health services for students in communities across America. Undoubtedly, healthier students learn and perform better and a key component of academic success is addressing students' mental health.

Sparked by the final report of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health and a November 2005 national survey released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), efforts to enhance interventions for children's mental health must involve schools. Given the Virginia Tech tragedy and students returning soon for the new school year, the timing could not be better for taking a new look at the role of schools as part of our efforts to transform the mental health system and the delivery of mental health services.

The Mental Health in Schools Act of 2007 – similar to the Senate companion bill, S. 1332 – is important legislation not only because it emphasizes early interventions and referrals for treatment, but it also includes programs and services that promote positive mental health and prevent mental health problems. This comprehensive approach is needed in order to stem the cycle of failure that is a result of ignored mental health problems.

We commend you for introducing the Mental Health in Schools Act of 2007. Your bill recognizes that mental disorders are prevalent among our nation's youth and the introduction of your bill is an important step in addressing our nation's mental health crisis among youth. We strongly urge the House to pass this legislation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Psychological Association  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)  
Association for the Advancement of Psychology  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Center for Clinical Social Work  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children & Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders – ANAD  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Disability Rights Network  
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA)  
Therapeutic Communities of America  
Tourette Syndrome Association  
US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association