

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
U.S. Senate  
211 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
U.S. Senate  
531 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jodey Arrington  
U.S. House of Representatives  
204 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brendan Boyle  
U.S. House of Representatives  
507 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 29, 2025

**Re: Protect Medicaid for People with Mental Health Conditions and Substance Use Disorders**

Dear Chairman Graham, Chairman Arrington, Ranking Member Merkley, and Ranking Member Boyle:

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing people with mental health conditions and substance use disorders, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders, is committed to strengthening Americans' access to mental health and substance use disorder care. We are writing to urge Congress to protect Medicaid, including in any reconciliation efforts. Cutting Medicaid funding or benefits, as well as imposing burdensome work requirements, would disproportionately harm people with mental health (MH) conditions and substance use disorders (SUD), who make up approximately [40%](#) of nonelderly adults on Medicaid. In the midst of our nation's ongoing mental health crisis, including its devastating impact on youth, and our ongoing overdose epidemic, we cannot reduce access to community- and school-based life-saving services.

Our organizations are deeply concerned by policy proposals under consideration that would change Medicaid's financing structure, shift costs to the states, reduce eligibility or benefits, or impose additional barriers to coverage and enrollment. Any of these policy changes or cuts would take away quality, affordable MH/SUD care from approximately 80 million Americans who rely on Medicaid, including low-income children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and seniors. However, the need for MH/SUD services would not go away. Many people would be forced to forgo community-based and routine MH/SUD care, such as medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), therapy, and prescription MH medications. This would lead to people's conditions worsening until they require more costly and more intensive treatment at a point of crisis. Moreover, limiting access to Medicaid threatens to undermine gains in reducing overdose mortality rates, and could lead to increasing rates of incarceration and hospitalization.

Medicaid is the [single largest payer](#) of MH and SUD services, and we fear the devastating consequences to our nation if the federal Medicaid program were to be weakened. All people, regardless of their economic circumstances, deserve access to evidence-based MH and SUD care, and we all pay a high cost when that care is unattainable. We strongly urge you to reject any cuts to the Medicaid program. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue, please do not hesitate to contact Hannah Wesolowski, Chief Advocacy Officer at the National Alliance on Mental Illness ([hwesolowski@nami.org](mailto:hwesolowski@nami.org)), or Deborah Steinberg, Senior Health Policy Attorney at the Legal Action Center ([dsteinberg@lac.org](mailto:dsteinberg@lac.org)).

Sincerely,

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)  
Legal Action Center  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work  
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Psychological Association Services  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Crisis Text Line  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Epilepsy Foundation of America  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Huntington's Disease Society of America  
Inseparable  
International OCD Foundation  
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses  
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance  
Mental Health America  
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Council for Mental Wellbeing  
National Federation of Families  
National Health Law Program  
National League for Nursing  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
National Women's Shelter Network, Inc.  
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies  
Postpartum Support International  
Psychotherapy Action Network  
School Social Work Association of America  
SMART Recovery  
The Kennedy Forum

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health/Got Transition  
UnidosUS  
Vibrant Emotional Health  
Western Youth Services  
Youth Villages

Cc: House and Senate Leadership; Chairs and Ranking Members of E&C and Finance