

Representative Paul Tonko  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2463 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Michael Turner  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2082 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Tonko and Turner:

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) strongly supports your bill H.R. 1329, the Medicaid Reentry Act, to grant Medicaid eligibility to incarcerated individuals 30-days prior to their release. We are pleased to see that this bill mirrors language from the bill introduced in the last Congress. While we appreciate the provisions in last year's SUPPORT Act to convene a stakeholder group to develop best practices for ensuring healthcare coverage for adult incarcerated individuals transitioning from incarceration, we remain supportive of the original language contained within H.R. 1329 to promote the health care needs of individuals transitioning back into communities.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, more than half of those in the criminal justice system suffer from a mental illness. Of those with serious mental illness, approximately 75 percent also have a co-occurring substance use disorder. Amidst the nation's ongoing opioid and suicide crises, we commend your efforts to provide better health outcomes for previously incarcerated individuals. As you know, individuals reentering society after incarceration are 129 times more likely than the general population to die of a drug overdose during the first two weeks post-release. Allowing incarcerated individuals to receive services covered by Medicaid 30-days prior to their release from jail or prison will expand access to vital mental health and addiction services, thereby preventing recidivism for substance use disorder and improving the chances of better health and well-being possibilities for previously incarcerated individuals. Furthermore, by investing in prevention, your legislation will save healthcare and criminal justice systemic costs, as well as facilitate a more effective use of community resources.

Successful reentry requires enabling justice-involved individuals to avoid returning to the exact environmental factors that led to their incarceration in the first place. By equipping individuals with timely access to addiction, mental health, and other health-related services before release, your legislation facilitates the transition to community-based care upon release that is necessary to help break the cycle of recidivism. Providing a head start to Medicaid reinstatement would work in tandem with innovative reentry programs already implemented in local support networks across the country and will contribute to fostering healthier, drug-free lives for formerly incarcerated populations.

On behalf of the assigned groups below, we would like to thank you for your re-introduction of the Medicaid Reentry Act, and we offer ourselves as a resource in furthering your efforts to pass this life-changing legislation in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Sincerely,

American Art Therapy Association  
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work  
American Counseling Association  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder  
Cities Thrive Mental Health Coalition  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
EMDR International Association  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
The Kennedy Forum  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)  
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)  
National Board for Certified Counselors  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Eating Disorders Association  
NHMH - No Health Without Mental Health  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
Psychotherapy Action Network  
Schizophrenia And Related Disorders Alliance of America  
School Social Work Association of America  
Treatment Communities of America  
Trinity Health  
Trust for America's Health