

May 5, 2022

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
U.S. House of Representatives
272 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
U.S. House of Representatives
271 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Eshoo and Fitzpatrick:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician partners — including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers — and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is writing in support of your legislation, H.R.7236, Strengthen Kids' Mental Health Now Act of 2022. We share your goal of improving mental health care for children and adolescents.

Your legislation seeks to address mental health challenges for our children and adolescents with a comprehensive approach to the issue, including challenges identified by our members, such as provider payment, workforce shortages and infrastructure costs. The Strengthen Kids' Mental Health Now Act focuses on:

- Improving and targeting Medicaid payment for pediatric patients;
- Expanding and improving treatment access, such as through telehealth;
- Ensuring timely access to care, with a focus on provider capacity for children experiencing mental health crises as well as the regulatory and legal barriers which may impact the ability of children's hospitals and other providers to meet pediatric behavioral health needs in their communities; and
- Requiring the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct annual reviews of the implementation of Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment program for pediatric mental and behavioral health services.

The Strengthen Kids' Mental Health Now Act further specifies financial investment in activities to enhance the delivery of community-based mental and behavioral health services for children and adolescents, to support pediatric behavioral health care integration and coordination, to develop and expand the pediatric mental health workforce and to make investments in pediatric mental health infrastructure and address gaps in the continuum of care for children. This support includes the



The Honorable Anna Eshoo
The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
May 5, 2022
Page 2 of 2

construction of new sites of care, modernization of existing facilities, investment in technology to facilitate telehealth and expanded capacity to deliver intermediate levels of care, such as intensive outpatient services, partial hospitalization programs and day programs.

Thank you again for your efforts to address mental health care for children and adolescents. We look forward to working with you to advance your legislation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Lisa Kidder Hrobsky
Senior Vice President, Advocacy and Political Affairs