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April 30, 2014

Congressman Ron Barber  
1029 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Strengthening Mental Health in Our Communities Act

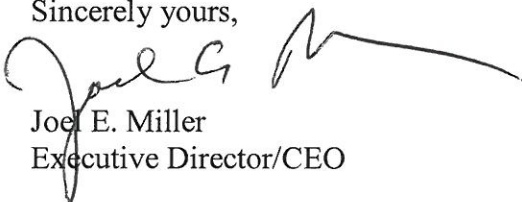
Dear Congressman Barber:

The American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) seeks to enhance the clinical mental health counseling profession through advocacy, education, licensure, and professional development. AMHCA speaks for state-licensed clinical mental health counselors who possess a master's or doctoral degree in clinical mental health counseling and meet additional qualifications. Mental health counselors practice in a variety of settings including private practice, substance abuse treatment centers, community mental health centers, and Veterans Administration clinical settings.

It has been many years since has Congress considered comprehensive legislation to address the mental health needs of the nation. AMHCA members are very pleased that your legislation would address so many outstanding mental health issues in federal legislation. Among the major purposes of this bill our members support are improving Medicaid services, improving the mental health workforce, strengthening SAMHSA programs, and expanding the Medicare pool of eligible providers to include clinical mental health counselors and marriage and family therapists. We believe the impact of this broad legislation would be enormous in improving the mental health care available to the nation.

AMHCA members are deeply grateful for your leadership on behalf of this important legislation and we look forward to supporting it during legislative consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Finley, AMHCA Associate Executive Director, at [jfinley@amhca.org](mailto:jfinley@amhca.org) or 703-548-6002 (ext 105).

Sincerely yours,



Joel E. Miller  
Executive Director/CEO