

**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT: May 5, 2014**

**Mental Health America Supports the “Strengthening Mental Health in our Communities Act of 2014”**

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ALEXANDRIA, Va. (May 5, 2014)—Mental Health America appreciates the initiative and commitment to improving and reforming our nation’s approach to mental illness and mental health, reflected in the introduction of the “Strengthening Mental Health in our Communities Act of 2014.”

During the past year, members of the United States Congress, particularly the House of Representatives, have been examining how to frame an effective balance of person-centered, community-based interventions, services, and supports for persons at risk of or who experience mental illness. The Strengthening Mental Health Act is a commendable effort to articulate, administer and fund this needed balance.

MHA particularly commends the legislative purposes, as well as the proposed purposes and tasks of the White House Office of Mental Health Policy. These specifically include concepts vitally important to persons with mental illness, including:

- The integration of behavioral health and general health,
- person centeredness,
- access to timely and appropriate services and supports,
- reduction in crises, homelessness, incarceration,
- strengthening community-based services,
- prevention and early intervention,
- rehabilitation,
- peer- run services,
- evidence-based and emerging practices,
- trauma informed care,
- recovery,
- cultural and linguistic competence, and
- full participation - integrated settings – person’s chosen community.

***Mental Health America*** ([www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)) is the nation’s largest and oldest community-based network dedicated to helping all Americans achieve wellness by living mentally healthier lives. With our 228 affiliates across the country, we touch the lives of millions—Advocating for changes in mental health and wellness policy; Educating the public & providing critical information; and delivering urgently needed mental health and wellness Programs and Services.

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