



# National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery

May 5, 2014

The Honorable Ron Barber  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20215

Dear Representative Barber:

The National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery is pleased to support the Strengthening Mental Health in Our Communities Act of 2014. Please convey our appreciation to all of your colleagues who contributed to the Act, including Representatives Henry Waxman, Diana DeGette, Grace Napolitano, Doris Matsui, Paul Tonko, and others.

Our Coalition provides a first-person voice for Americans who experience severe mental health conditions regarding the policies and programs that affect them. Our member organizations and the many local peer-run programs they support help people with severe mental illnesses to find hope, health and recovery in their own communities.

We thank you for including our recommendations for this legislation, and for ensuring a strong voice of people who use the mental health system in federal strategies and policies.

We support the purposes of this legislation to promote health and recovery and reduce crisis, homelessness, institutional care and incarceration through the provision of timely community-based services, trauma-informed care, prevention, engagement and peer-to-peer services. This legislation would also improve the coordination and accessibility to person-centered behavioral health services in the most integrated setting, address the comprehensive needs of people with serious mental illnesses, and affirm the right of Americans with disabilities to live and fully participate in their chosen communities.

We applaud the initiative to promote emerging best practices based on the values and principles of trauma-informed care and mental health recovery, delivered in a culturally and linguistically competent manner.

We fully support the commitment to strengthening and investing in SAMHSA programs that support wellness and recovery, reduce health disparities, and respond to the diverse needs of local communities and populations. We also thank you for your commitment to preserving a robust Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) program.

We look forward to working with you and other members of the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

Raymond Bridge  
Director of Public Policy, NCMHR, [www.ncmhr.org](http://www.ncmhr.org)