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PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

May 7, 2014

The Honorable Ron Barber
United States House of Representatives
1029 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette
United States House of Representatives
2368 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doris Matsui
United States House of Representatives
2434 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
United States House of Representatives
1610 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
United States House of Representatives
2463 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Barber, DeGette, Matsui, Napolitano and Tonko:

On behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA) its 130,000 members, students, and affiliates engaged in the practice, research, and teaching of psychology, and the affiliated American Psychological Association Practice Organization (APAPO), we are writing to applaud your leadership in undertaking and crafting the “*Strengthening Mental Health in our Communities Act of 2014*,” legislation to improve the behavioral health service system for patients, families, communities, and providers.

APA and APAPO appreciate that in this bill you seek to improve the responsiveness and integration of behavioral health services, reduce mental health crises, foster psychologist adoption of health information technology, and bolster research, as well as increase outreach and preventive services, early intervention, crisis support, and rehabilitation across the lifespan. We are heartened that you reauthorize existing community mental health programs ensuring the continuity of behavioral health services for millions of Americans. This legislation supports programs that have broad bipartisan support that address suicide and traumatic stress in children and youth, improves responses to people with mental illnesses in the criminal justice system, and expands access to early prevention and integrated services across the lifespan. Finally, this bill incorporates new programs that emphasize evidence-based practices in treatment that support rehabilitation and recovery.

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Comprehensive behavioral health reforms, such as those proposed in your legislation, deserve attention by a broad range of behavioral health stakeholders. APA and APAPO are committed to working with you on the bill's provisions to foster an improved service system, and appreciate your outreach and consideration of our input.

If you have any questions, please contact Judith Glassgold, PsyD, Associate Executive Director for Government Relations of our Public Interest Directorate, jglassgold@apa.org or 202-336-6104 or Doug Walter, J.D., Associate Executive Director for Government Relations of our Practice Organization at dwalter@apa.org or 202-336-5889.

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, PhD
Executive Director,
Public Interest Directorate



Katherine C. Nordal, PhD
Executive Director for Professional Practice