

July XX, 2011

The Honorable Denny Rehberg  
Chair, House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
On Labor/HHS/Education  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rehberg, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

We are writing to request full funding for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant within the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies FY 2012 appropriations bill and to keep the Block Grant whole. In FY 2011, the SAPT Block Grant was reduced by \$15 million. This vital funding stream is the only federal safety-net program distributed to all States and Territories for lifesaving alcohol and drug abuse prevention, treatment and recovery services.

There is tremendous unmet need for addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery services. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) most recent National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 23.5 million Americans aged 12 or older needed treatment for an alcohol or illicit drug problem in 2009. During the same year, only 2.6 million received treatment for a problem related to the use of alcohol or illicit drugs at a specialty facility. As a result, 20.9 million people needed but did not receive services in 2009 in a specialty facility. Meanwhile, funding for the SAPT Block Grant has remained relatively stagnant with it being reduced by \$15 million in FY 2011. This stagnant funding for the SAPT Block Grant, coupled with dwindling investments (a 42.5 percent decrease in just 6 years (FY 2005-2011)) in programs place added pressure on underfunded systems.

The SAPT Block Grant, administered by SAMHSA accounts for approximately 42 percent of funds spent by State substance abuse agencies. An investment in the SAPT Block Grant ensures that resources reach all States and territories in an effective, efficient manner. According to SAMHSA, in 2009 individuals receiving services from SAPT Block Grant funded programs demonstrated high abstinence rates at discharge from both illegal drug (75.7 percent) and alcohol (81.5 percent) use. An independent and comprehensive evaluation of the program released in June 2009 (see <http://www.tie.samhsa.gov>) found that the SAPT Block Grant ensures accountability through enhanced State-federal communication, program monitoring, and data reporting.

Twenty percent of the SAPT Block Grant is dedicated to fund much needed substance abuse prevention services. On average, the SAPT Block Grant set-aside represents the single largest

source of prevention funding – 64 percent – for State substance abuse agencies across the country. In twenty-one States, the set-aside represents 75 percent or more of the agency’s prevention budget.

The President’s FY 2012 Budget proposes to separate the SAPT Block Grant by requesting a waiver to current law, which requires the 20 percent set-aside for substance abuse prevention. The funds would be used to create a new Substance Abuse-State Prevention Discretionary Formula Grant. We are concerned about the proposal as it would create an administrative burden to States and does not support services being delivered on a continuum that includes prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

Studies have shown funding the full continuum of drug and alcohol services can save the healthcare and criminal justice systems money. Every dollar invested in research-based substance use prevention programs, strategies and activities has the potential to save up to \$7 in areas such as substance abuse treatment and criminal justice system costs. In addition, for every dollar spent on addiction treatment programs there is a \$4 to \$7 reduction in the cost of drug-related crime. Treating addiction has also been shown to reduce medical bills per person by half. With drug use on the rise according to three national surveys (Monitoring the Future, the National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health and PRIDE), our nation needs to put more, not less, emphasis on effective substance use/abuse prevention and treatment. An investment in the SAPT Block Grant is an investment in public health and public safety.

Please support funding for the SAPT Block Grant and keeping the Block Grant whole in FY 2012.

Sincerely,