



STATEMENT

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CONTACT: Carole Szpak
202/393-6700, ext. 101
comm@naphs.org

Inclusion of Mental Health Reforms and Addiction Funding in 21st Century Cures Act Is a Victory for the Health of America

The following is a statement from:

**Mark Covall,
President and CEO,
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS).**

(Washington, DC, December 7, 2016).....Today mental health reforms and funding to address the opiate crisis in America were passed overwhelmingly (94-5) by the U.S. Senate as part of the *21st Century Cures Act*. The House passed the *Cures Act* earlier (392-26), and President Obama has indicated he intends to sign the *Cures Act* legislation into law.

This is historic. In a divided Congress, mental health and substance use disorders stood out as bipartisan issues. Having both issues included – and passed – in the *Cures Act* shows the need for these services and confirms that addressing mental health and substance use disorders must be part of the solution to improving overall health. This broad legislation passed today looks to the future, and there is no future without attention to the tremendous impact of mental health and substance use disorders. These disorders affect millions of Americans of all ages, cost our economy billions of dollars in lives lost, lives interrupted, and lost productivity.

Over the course of several years, both House and Senate leaders – and Republicans and Democrats alike – worked tirelessly to identify problem areas and to find potential solutions.

As an association representing professionals and facilities delivering behavioral health care, the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) applauds the House and Senate for taking long-overdue action to move forward critical steps toward improved behavioral health.

We particularly want to thank Reps. Tim Murphy (R-PA) and Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) as well as Sens. Christopher Murphy (D-CT) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA), who were authors of original mental health reform legislation in both chambers. While not all recommendations were included in the final legislation, the House and Senate kept their eyes on the stark reality: lives are a stake.

Republicans and Democrats came together to compromise on promising approaches, and found common ground in the need to change – for the better.

All Americans will benefit from the advances included in the *Cures Act*. The creation of both an Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and a Chief Medical Officer will help to elevate behavioral health issues as part of overall health policy and emphasize the importance of treatment for serious behavioral health disorders.

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Provisions to help implement and enforce the federal mental health parity law (the *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act*) will include more guidance to help all stakeholders understand the requirements of the law, improved audits to ensure health plans' compliance, and development of a federal action plan for improved federal and state enforcement coordination. We believe this improved transparency and communication will be key to ensuring that consumers benefit from the full protection of the law.

Inclusion of \$1 billion in funding over two years to address the opioid crisis, along with grants for critical areas such as suicide prevention, will also be critical to saving lives.

We thank Congress for enacting mental health reform legislation and providing addiction treatment funding part of the *21st Century Cures Act*.

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The National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) advocates for behavioral health and represents provider systems that are committed to the delivery of responsive, accountable, and clinically effective prevention, treatment, and care for children, adolescents, adults, and older adults with mental and substance use disorders. Its members are behavioral healthcare provider organizations that own or manage more than 800 specialty psychiatric hospitals, general hospital psychiatric and addiction treatment units and behavioral healthcare divisions, residential treatment facilities, youth services organizations, and extensive outpatient networks. The association was founded in 1933. See www.naphs.org for more information.