

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lynn Jenkins
United States House of Representatives
1526 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-1602

The Honorable Doris Matsui
United States House of Representatives
2311 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Portman, Senator Whitehouse, Congresswoman Jenkins, and Congresswoman Matsui,

On behalf of the Behavioral Health Information Technology (BHIT) Coalition, the undersigned organizations are writing to **thank you for your outstanding leadership in spearheading S.1732/HR 3331, the Improving Access to Behavioral Health Information Technology Act, which authorizes a behavioral health information technology pilot program administered by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI).**

Established in 2010, the Behavioral Health Information Technology (BHIT) Coalition is comprised of organizations dedicated to advancing public policy initiatives that tap the full potential of technology in the delivery of coordinated, integrated services and treatment for people with mental health and addiction disorders. The BHIT Coalition members are dedicated to ensuring that all persons in need of mental health and addiction services receive high-quality, coordinated care from their behavioral health and primary care providers utilizing healthcare information technology as a key element in delivering services and care for the “whole person.”

The undersigned organizations strongly support S.1732/HR 3331, and recognize the crucial steps this legislation takes to address the opioid epidemic. **The BHIT Coalition recognizes that we cannot hope to address the opioid crisis successfully without providing electronic health records (EHRs) and supporting health information technology within behavioral health settings, and we would like to thank you for your leadership to address this barrier in the efforts to fight the opioid epidemic.**

Without your extraordinary efforts, we would not have much this tremendous legislative progress in the past weeks. The BHIT Coalition looks forward to standing side-by-side you in the fight to expand access to behavioral health information technology as we work to send this legislation to the President’s desk.

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MEMBERS: American Psychological Association • Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness • Centerstone • Jewish Federations of North America • Mental Health America • National Alliance on Mental Illness • National Association of Counties • National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors & Developmental Disability Directors • National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems • National Association of State Alcohol/Drug Abuse Directors • National Association of Social Workers • National Council for Behavioral Health • Netsmart

Sincerely,

American Psychological Association

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

Centerstone

The Jewish Federations of North America

Mental Health America

National Association of Counties

The National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems

The National Association for Rural Mental Health

National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors

National Association of Social Workers

National Council for Behavioral Health

Netsmart