

January 26, 2022

The Honorable Ayanna Pressley
U.S. House of Representatives
1108 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dina Titus
U.S. House of Representatives
2464 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David McKinley
U.S. House of Representatives
2239 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter Meijer
U.S. House of Representatives
1508 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Pressley, Titus, McKinley, and Meijer:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician partners – including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is pleased to support the Post-Disaster Mental Health Response Act (H.R. 5703).

Our member hospitals and health systems serve as front-line responders to emergencies, witnessing first-hand the enduring effects of mass violence, natural disasters and other traumatic events on the health and wellbeing of the survivors and the health care workers who come to their aid. In communities across the nation, survivors must secure needed treatment in the aftermath of such crises by navigating a health care system rife with shortages of mental health providers whose support they require.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program (CCP) is a valued program that directs federal resources to state and local governments to help deliver mental health care in communities that have been declared major disasters by the President. CCP works with the SAMHSA Center for Mental Health Services to provide technical assistance and training for state and local mental health providers, and, through two grant programs, funds short-term counseling services and support. Under current law, eligibility for CCP services is extended only to areas with a major disaster declaration, and not to those affected by emergency declarations; this leaves many in need without assistance.



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Your bipartisan bill would expand eligibility for CCP aid to include communities affected by emergency declarations as well as those in Presidentially-declared major disaster areas, thereby helping bolster the nation's public health infrastructure and ensuring that more people affected by trauma can receive vital mental health services.

We thank you for your leadership in highlighting this issue and introducing the Post-Disaster Mental Health Response Act, and we stand ready to work with you to ensure its passage.

Sincerely,

/s/

Stacey Hughes
Executive Vice President