

October 21, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader, United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader, United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, and Leader McCarthy,

As leading organizations that support the nearly 20 million Americans who have substance use disorders, we are calling on Congress to reduce the barriers to treatment and recovery by including a federal paid family and medical leave policy as part of the Build Back Better Package.

We are facing a dual public health crisis of mental health disorders and substance dependence in this country, yet too many people who seek treatment and recovery are unable to access timely care because they have no paid leave. Today, 1 in 3 Americans don't even have a single day of paid leave to care for themselves or their loved ones. That means 113 million people, overwhelmingly women, communities of color, and low-wage working families, have to choose between a paycheck and critical medical interventions, including treatment for substance use disorders.

The current proposal in the Build Back Better package would provide 12 weeks of paid leave for family caregiving and personal medical leave, including leave for those who seek treatment for substance dependence and addiction, at no cost to employers. It would help families, workplaces, and our economy to thrive. Substance misuse and addiction costs American society more than \$740 billion annually in lost workplace productivity, healthcare expenses, and public safety costs. A national paid leave program is an investment that will pay dividends, benefiting patients, families, and our economy.

While nearly 20 million Americans are negatively affected by substance use and addiction, only 10% of them seek treatment. We must remove the roadblocks to recovery, and paid leave is a critical step. Lawmakers who have claimed to prioritize addressing the opioid and

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addiction public health crisis should step up to support national paid leave, making it easier for people to access treatment.

We urge Congress to help the millions of Americans diagnosed with substance use disorders for whom paid leave would be life changing, by passing comprehensive paid family and medical leave now.

Signed,

Organizational Signatories

Academy of Perinatal Harm Reduction, OR
American Psychiatric Association, DC
Behavioral Health Group, CO
Community Connections, WV
Faith in Public Life, DC
First United Methodist Oak Ridge (Recovery Ministry), TN
Goldfinch Health, TX
Kohnlinq, Inc., DE
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, VA
National Advocates for Pregnant Women, NY
National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers, CO
National Association of Social Workers, DC
National Association of Social Workers, WV
National Perinatal Association, MO
Navigating Recovery of the Lakes Region, NH
Personal Remedies, LLC, MA
PSYCHeANALYTICS, Inc., CA
River Valley Organizing, OH
Sen-Jam Pharmaceutical, NY
Substance Abuse and Addiction Recovery Alliance (SAARA of Virginia), VA
TEAM for WV Children / Prevent Child Abuse WV, WV
The McShin Foundation, VA
WellBrain, CA
West Virginia Perinatal Partnership, WV
Young People in Recovery, CO
youturn, SC

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Executive Signatories

Amanda Kiger, Executive Director, River Valley Organizing
Ann Herbst, Executive Director, Young People in Recovery
David Haddick, Chairman and CEO, PSYCHeANALYTICS, Inc.
Honesty Liller, CEO, The McShin Foundation
Jacqueline Iversen, Head of Clinical Development, Sen-Jam Pharmaceutical
James Iversen, CEO, Sen-Jam Pharmaceutical
Rev. Jennifer Butler, CEO, Faith in Public Life
Kristy Love, Executive Director, National Perinatal Association
Lynn Paltrow, Executive Director, National Advocates for Pregnant Women
Matthew Holder, Recovery Ministry Director, First United Methodist Oak Ridge
Mory Bahar, CEO, Personal Remedies, LLC
Shay Houser, Co-Founder & CEO, youturn
Sumeet Maniar, CEO, WellBrain
Tonya Harris, CEO, Kohnlinq, Inc.

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