

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-222, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer and Leader McCarthy:

As you continue to negotiate legislation responding to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), we urge you to expand access to critical mental health services for Medicare beneficiaries.

Specifically, we ask that any forthcoming legislative package include the text of H.R. 945, the Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019. This bipartisan and bicameral legislation, which has been cosponsored by 113 Members of the House of Representatives and 30 U.S. Senators, would require Medicare to cover the services of mental health counselors (MHCs) and marriage and family therapists (MFTs).

These professionals are required to obtain education and training equivalent to that of clinical social workers, whose services are already covered by Medicare, and collectively provide almost 40 percent of mental health services – a number that rises significantly in underserved areas. Ample evidence demonstrates that mental and neurological illnesses are both pervasive and undertreated amongst the elderly, and it is particularly vital – during and following this period of unusual and sustained isolation – to ensure that seniors can access the mental health care they need.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact us if we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "M" and "T".

MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Katko". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "J" and "K".

JOHN KATKO
Member of Congress