



STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

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**NAPHS Applauds Rep. Tim Murphy for
Introduction of Comprehensive Mental Health Reform Legislation
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Dialogue on Tough Challenges Will Help Advance Policy Changes**

(Washington, DC, December 12, 2013)....As the nation approaches the one-year anniversary of the tragedy in Newtown, CT, House Energy and Commerce Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA) today introduced comprehensive legislation ([The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act](#)) to improve America's system for addressing mental health and substance use issues. The measure resulted from nearly a year of dialogue with affected stakeholders to see what barriers prevent people from getting the right treatment, at the right time, and in the right setting. Rep. Murphy, who is a psychologist by training, is a co-chair of the House Mental Health Caucus.

"As an association representing behavioral healthcare organizations and professionals, the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) would like to extend thanks to Rep. Murphy for undertaking a thoughtful, year-long effort in the aftermath of the Newtown tragedy to thoroughly review the status of the mental health and substance use system in this country," said NAPHS President and CEO Mark Covall. "Families, neighbors, and coworkers are among the millions of Americans of all ages who currently – or at some point in their lives will – live with mental or addictive disorders. We believe that it is critical to improve access to care so that people can get timely treatment in the most appropriate setting."

Among other things, this bill would change Medicaid policy so that adults with mental illness would have the same access to short-term, acute care hospitalization as other populations. It would encourage collaborative care to allow for improved integration of treatment of mind and body. It would also create a strong federal commitment to behavioral health through a new Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders within the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate federal government programs. The measure also offers ideas for addressing privacy and safety issues.

"Rep. Murphy is to be commended for taking action that will open a dialogue to address service delivery gaps as well as to set a future course for behavioral health care. The bill does not shy away from addressing some of the tough challenges we must face as a nation as we work to improve the behavioral health system. Rep. Murphy's bill sets a framework for discussion and action," said Covall.

"Improving mental health and addiction treatment is a bipartisan goal – as demonstrated by the passage of federal parity legislation," he said. "These are illnesses that need to be treated in the same manner as other medical conditions. Developing policies to support that goal is the right thing to do, and the time for action is now."

NAPHS will continue to work with Congress and the Administration to ensure that people who need mental health and substance use services have timely access to the most cost-effective, highest quality services.

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 700 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.

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