



**BlueCross BlueShield
Association**

An Association of Independent
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans

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April 22, 2022

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chair, Energy & Commerce Committee
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member, Energy & Commerce
Committee
1035 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
Chair, Health Subcommittee
272 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Ranking Member, Health Subcommittee
2434 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Pallone, Rodgers, Eshoo and Guthrie:

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) commends your work in reviewing legislation related to mental health at your April 5 legislative hearing entitled, “Communities in Need: Legislation to Support Mental Health and Well-Being.” As the health care partner to one in three Americans, Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) companies (Plans) are committed to providing their members with secure and stable mental and behavioral health support services. Specifically, we write to offer our support to H.R. 5218, the “Collaborate in an Orderly and Cohesive Manner Act.”

BCBSA is the national association that represents the 34 independent, community-based and locally operated BCBS Plans. For more than 90 years, BCBS Plans have offered quality health care coverage in all markets across America – serving those who purchase coverage on their own as well as those who obtain coverage through an employer, Medicare, Medicaid or CHIP.

H.R. 5218 would provide resources to support additional training, technical assistance and grants to primary care practices looking to invest in the Collaborative Care Model (CoCM). This is an important step to begin addressing the significant workforce shortage challenges that limit patients’ access to behavioral health services.

CoCM is a specific approach that has demonstrated meaningful success for patients. It is a team-centered and evidence-based approach to care that keeps providers accountable for quality and integrates care across providers, patients, their families and communities.

This type of care integration can be a valuable tool to help behavioral health providers reach more patients by pairing their specific expertise with the primary care providers’ ability to

manage the overall health of the patient. It allows providers to work as a team to address comorbid behavioral and physical health conditions, increases mental health screenings, eliminates wait times for patients to see behavioral health providers and improves care coordination. These factors combine to promote prevention, earlier diagnosis and better managed treatment, all of which can significantly improve outcomes for patients and mitigate long-term challenges.

This model has demonstrated success in improving outcomes for patients. For example, adolescents with depressive symptoms had greater reduction in symptoms, better response to treatment, and higher remission rates when treated through the CoCM. The CoCM also reduces health inequities by reaching diverse populations and can be culturally tailored for underserved populations.

We look forward to working with you to advance H.R. 5128 and other policies that would improve the mental and behavioral health of all Americans, including children, adolescents and underserved populations.

If you have questions, please contact Amanda Schwartz, executive director of federal affairs, at Amanda.schwartz@bcbsa.com or 202.626.4797.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justine Handleman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justine Handleman

Senior Vice President

CC: Representatives Lizzie Fletcher and Jaime Herrera Beutler