

To: wendell.primus@mail.house.gov; katie.meyer@mail.house.gov

Subject: COVID: Do NOT Exclude Addictions, Mental Health from COVID Response Bill

I am writing today to urge you to ensure that community addiction and mental health treatment organizations are included in the forthcoming COVID-19 Phase III response legislation. Specifically, I am writing to request your support of an \$850 million supplemental appropriation for this providers and clinics who are on the front lines of the COVID-19, coronavirus pandemic.

To be clear, our organization and organizations like ours across the nation are not currently equipped to handle the ongoing and upcoming challenges COVID-19 will bring. We are in dire need of personal protective equipment like masks, gloves and respirators. Like other small businesses, we are in need of emergency cash funds to remain financially solvent through this crisis while we continue treating and seeing clients through both in-person and virtual health visits. Without emergency funds and without additional support from Congress, clinics like ours will be unable to properly and sufficiently serve our communities mental health and addiction needs during this crisis time and beyond.

Community Behavioral Health Organizations (CBHOs) are on the front lines of the current COVID-19 response alongside community health centers, hospitals and nursing homes. In many communities across our state, CBHOs are the primary source of health care for individuals with substance use disorder and mental illness. To exclude them from this legislation would leave them financially vulnerable through this crisis, likely leading to staff layouts and program closures. Without outpatient addiction and mental health treatment options, individuals with these diseases will end up in crisis at hospitals and emergency departments during this pandemic.

Please work with your colleagues and encourage your leadership to not leave behind people with addiction and mental health disorders. I urge you to specifically include \$850 million in supplemental funds for community mental health and addiction treatment clinics to assist during this global health crisis. Thank you for your consideration of this timely and urgent request.

Respectfully,

Uplift Family Services
<https://upliftfs.org>