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August 5, 2024

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Betty McCollum
2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Don Bacon
2104 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sens. Klobuchar and Murkowski and Reps. McCollum and Bacon,

On behalf of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the national medical specialty association representing more than 39,000 psychiatric physicians, I write to express support for your important legislation, the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Respect Act (H.R. 3946/S. 1800).

As you well know, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) impacts an alarmingly high percentage of children and adults in the U.S. Those with FASD face profound social, cognitive, and emotional challenges throughout their lifespan. Families in every state, and especially in the child welfare system, struggle with FASD, and often cannot find systems of care that are familiar with or equipped to diagnose and address FASD-related disabilities. In addition, nearly one out of four children in juvenile corrections have FASD.ⁱ

While there is no cure for FASD, early intervention treatment services can help to improve a child's development. Unfortunately, alarming gaps exist in FASD-related diagnostic and clinical resources around the country. Due to a severe shortage of psychiatrists, and many primary care physicians having a limited knowledge of diagnostic criteria and clinical guidelines, children and adults living with FASD are often undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. Given these realities, your efforts to reauthorize and enhance programs to promote FASD prevention are critically needed.

We were heartened to see the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee advance your legislation as part of its efforts to reauthorize the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act last year and urge consideration by the House and Senate before the end of the 118th Congress.

APA stands ready to assist in moving this important legislation forward and greatly appreciates your continued leadership. If you have any questions, please contact Daniel "Trip" Stanford at dstanford@psych.org or (315) 706-4582.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wills', is positioned above a white rectangular redaction box.

Marketa M. Wills, MD, MBA, FAPA
CEO and Medical Director

¹ Bower C, Watkins RE, Mutch RC, *et al* -Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and youth justice: a prevalence study among young people sentenced to detention in Western Australia *BMJ Open* 2018;