



H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act

Delivering Long Sought Meaningful Reforms to the Nation's Mental Health Care System

In the wake of the tragedy of Newton, Connecticut, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chairman Tim Murphy (R-PA) has led the multi-year, multi-Congress effort to reform the nation's failing mental health care system. H.R. 2646 unanimously passed the Energy and Commerce Committee by a vote of 53 to 0 on June 15, 2016.

- H.R. 2646 represents the most significant reform to our nation's mental health programs in decades.
- The bill would create a new Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use to run the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMSHA) and help coordinate mental health program across the federal government.
- H.R. 2646 would also create a National Mental Health and Substance Use Lab to drive evidence-based grants.
- The bill would direct the Secretary of HHS to undertake rulemaking to clarify when communication can take place under HIPAA to help ensure the best communication among providers, families and patients to improve mental health treatment for those with serious mental illness.
- The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act would also codify a recent Medicaid managed care rule to foster access to care for short term stays of adults in institutions for mental disease.
- The bill also includes targeted authorizations and reauthorizations to improve mental health care for children with serious emotional disturbance or adults with serious mental illness, including expansion of Assisted Outpatient Treatment and strengthen our mental health workforce.
- H.R. 2646 is also fiscally responsible and fully offset according to analysis from the Congressional Budget Office.