

The Honorable Harry Reid  
U.S. Senate Majority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
U.S. Senate Minority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
U.S. Speaker of the House  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
U.S. House Minority Leader  
Washington, DC 20515

October 22, 2009

Dear Madam Speaker, Leader Reid, Leader Boehner and Leader McConnell:

The undersigned over 40 national and over 90 state and local child welfare and mental health organizations and similarly impacted child- and family-strengthening organizations ask that as you finalize comprehensive health reform legislation, keep our nation's most vulnerable children and youth at the forefront and maintain the therapeutic foster care provision contained in both the House and Senate bills. Championed by Senator Debbie Stabenow and Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, the therapeutic foster care provision is Section 1641 in the Senate Finance bill and Section 1727 in the America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009 (H.R. 3200).

Children who come into contact with the child welfare system receiving placement and in-home services have a higher rate of physical and mental health issues, stemming either from abuse and/or neglect or from preexisting health conditions and unmet long-term service needs. Before they walk through the service delivery door, many of these children have been exposed to multiple traumas, including domestic violence, physical and emotional abuse, neglect, community violence, and exposure to other risk factors such as parental mental health problems, substance abuse, and poverty.

Some of the most vulnerable of this population receive much needed assistance and medical intervention in therapeutic foster care (TFC) placements. TFC provides medically necessary, cost effective services to at least 50,000 children with severe mental and behavioral health needs in a community-based environment. Recommended in the 1999 U.S. Surgeon General Report on Mental Health as an effective intervention, TFC is evidence-informed and results in positive outcomes in terms of the child's behavior and maintaining permanency.

The therapeutic foster care provision contained in both the House and Senate health reform bills provides one small piece of help to children and youth with serious health needs. The provision provides the first-ever federal statutory definition of therapeutic foster care and protects Medicaid reimbursement for the treatment central to therapeutic foster care. We look forward to progressing other legislation that will strengthen health coverage for children and youth in foster care such as the Medicaid Services Restoration Act (S. 1217), but in the immediate, we are greatly appreciative that health reform has begun to address their needs.

Thank you for your leadership and for working so diligently to improve the health care system. Please remember vulnerable children and youth in this debate and keep the therapeutic foster care provision in the final health reform legislation.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

Advantage Behavioral Health  
Alliance for Children and Families  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Children's Residential Centers (AACRC)  
American Humane Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Black Administrators in Child Welfare, Inc.  
Centerstone Research Institute  
Child Welfare League of America  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Every Child Matters Education Fund  
First Focus  
Foster Care Alumni of America  
Foster Family-based Treatment Association  
Generations United  
John Burton Foundation  
KidsPeace National Centers  
Lutheran Services in America  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)  
National Black Child Development Institute  
National Coalition of Mental Health Professionals and Consumers  
National Collaboration for Youth  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Foster Care Coalition  
National Foster Parent Association  
National Indian Child Welfare Association  
National Organization of State Associations for Children  
The Arc of the United States  
The Bair Foundation  
The MENTOR Network  
The Rebecca Project for Human Rights  
Therapeutic Communities of America  
United Cerebral Palsy  
Voices for America's Children  
Youth Law Center

## **State and Local Organizations**

Alaska Behavioral Health Association  
Alaska Children's Services, Inc.  
Alliance for Children, Inc. (Charleston, WV)  
Arizona Council of Human Service Providers  
Behavioral Healthcare Solutions  
Border Area Mental Health Services, Inc. (Silver Lake, NM)  
California Alliance of Child and Family Services  
Canyon Acres Children and Family Services (Orange, CA)  
Capital Area Counseling Service, Inc. (Pierre, SD)  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Boston  
Catholic Community Services of Western Washington (Seattle, WA)  
Centerstone of Indiana  
Centerstone of Tennessee  
Charis Youth Center (Grass Valley, CA)  
Child Saving Institute (Nebraska)  
Children and Family Services Association – NC  
Children's Alliance of Kentucky  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.  
Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, Inc. (New York, NY)  
Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies  
Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland  
Community Services Group (Mountville, PA)  
Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (Albany, New York)  
David & Margaret Youth and Family Services (La Verne, California)  
D.C. Behavioral Health Association  
Denali Family Services (Alaska)  
Duke University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Services Effectiveness Research Program  
Edgewood Center for Children and Families (San Francisco, CA)  
EMQ FamiliesFirst (Campbell, CA)  
Family Care Network, Inc. (San Luis Obispo, CA)  
Family Centered Services of Alaska  
Family Pride Foundation  
Five Acres - The Boys' & Girls' Aid Society of L.A.  
Four County Counseling Center (Logansport, IN)  
Gateway (Alabama)  
Georgia Alliance for Treatment Services (GATS)  
Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children  
Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services (Pasadena, CA)  
IARCCA, An Association of Children & Family Services (Indianapolis, IN)  
Inner Circle Foster Care and Adoption Services (Van Nuys, CA)  
Intermountain (Helena, MT)  
Juneau Youth Services  
Junior Blind of America  
Kinship Center (Salinas, CA)  
Kitsap Mental Health Services (Bremerton, WA)  
La Familia, Inc. (Albuquerque, NM)  
Lakeview Center (Pensacola, FL)

Lincoln Child Center (Oakland, CA)  
Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth  
Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards  
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies  
Missouri Alliance for Children & Families, LLC  
Missouri Coalition of Children's Agencies (MCCA)  
Montana Children's Initiative  
NHS Human Services (Harrisburg, PA)  
NYS Coalition for Children's Mental Health Services (Albany, NY)  
Navos (Seattle, WA)  
New England Network for Child, Youth & Family Services  
New Jersey Alliance for Children, Youth & Families  
New Mexico Family Network  
New York Therapeutic Communities, Inc.  
Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies (OACCA)  
Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers  
Oklahoma Therapeutic Foster Care Association  
Pacific Lodge Youth Services (Woodland Hills, CA)  
Paradise Oaks Youth Services (Citrus Heights, CA)  
PATH Alliance (Minnesota and North Dakota)  
Pend Oreille County Counseling Services (Newport, WA)  
Phoenix Houses of California (Lake View Terrace, CA)  
Rebekah Children's Services (Gilroy, CA)  
Remi Vista, Inc. (Redding, CA)  
Rhode Island Council of Resource Providers  
Sacramento Children's Home  
Saint Vincent Home for Children (St. Louis, MO)  
SeaView Community Services (Alaska)  
Seven Counties Services, Inc. (Louisville, KY)  
Sound Mental Health (Seattle, WA)  
South Carolina Association of Children's Homes and Family Services  
South Carolina Youth Advocate Program  
Southern Oregon Adolescent Study and Treatment Center  
Southwest Mental Health Center (San Antonio, TX)  
St. Jude's Ranch For Children (Boulder City, NV)  
Stanford Home for Children (Sacramento, CA)  
Swope Health Services (Kansas City, MO)  
Tahoe Turning Point, Inc.  
TeamBuilders Counseling Services, Inc. (Santa Fe, New Mexico)  
Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations  
Therapeutic Communities Association of New York  
Triad Family Services (Sacramento, CA)  
Virginia Association of Community Services Boards (VACSB)  
Walden Family Services (San Diego, CA)  
Washington Community Mental Health Council. (Seattle, WA)

Cc: The Honorable Debbie A. Stabenow  
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin