June 7, 2021

Senator Patty Murray  
Chairwoman,  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Burr  
Ranking Member,  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

On behalf of the undersigned nation’s leading mental health, addiction, and well-being advocacy groups, we write to express our strong support for the nomination of Dr. Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon for Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Assistant Secretary will play a key role in coordinating the federal government’s initiatives to address the serious mental health and substance use challenges currently facing our country; we therefore encourage a prompt confirmation so we can begin to work together as soon as possible to address these challenges.

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) is a coalition of organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates, payers, and other stakeholders committed to strengthening Americans’ access to mental health and addiction care. As trusted leaders in the field, our 70+ member organizations are dedicated to elevating the national conversation around mental health and addiction. Together, we work to advance federal policies that support prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery services and supports.

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified many of our nation’s most neglected issues, most notably our widespread mental health crisis. More than 26 million individuals are experiencing mental illness without access to treatment, and every year thousands of Americans overdose and die from the opioid epidemic. We need a passionate and experienced public health leader at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to spearhead national efforts to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities.

Dr. Delphin-Rittmon has established herself as that capable leader in the mental health and addiction space throughout her distinguished career. She is a public health expert with over 20 years of experience in the mental health and addiction field at the local, state, and national levels. Over the span of her career, she has become an expert at designing, evaluating, and administering mental health, substance use, and prevention services across systems. As a clinical psychologist, she holds a faculty appointment in the Yale Department of Psychiatry and has published several peer-reviewed research publications on a range of issues such as exploring ethnic differences in coping and help-seeking behavior and assessing the impact of race and stereotyping biases on the clinical judgment process. Her
experience and expertise on mental health issues from both a policy and research perspective make her the ideal candidate to lead SAMHSA.

Further, Dr. Delphin-Rittmon currently serves as the Commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, a position she was appointed to in 2015. In this role, she has demonstrated her commitment to meaningful community inclusion, culturally responsive services, and a recovery-oriented approach. She has managed a multimillion-dollar budget, thousands of employees, and led the department through the COVID pandemic; rapidly transforming their agency operations in order to maintain core services for the 110,000 individuals they serve. Dr. Delphin-Rittmon has been instrumental in securing grants targeting women’s services, recovery, the opioid crisis, suicide prevention, Hurricane Maria, and the behavioral impact of the pandemic. She also co-chaired Connecticut’s Alcohol and Drug Policy Council that guided many opioid crisis interventions, including the introduction of a recovery coach program that served as a model for federal legislation.

Prior to serving as Commissioner, Dr. Delphin-Rittmon completed a two-year appointment at the White House, where she worked as the Senior Advisor to the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In this position, Dr. Delphin-Rittmon was involved in a wide variety of policy efforts focused on equitable behavioral health, workforce development, and mental healthcare reform. Since her tenure at SAMHSA, she has received multiple commendations for her work in the field, including the 2019 State Service Award from the National Association of State Drug and Alcohol Directors and the 2016 Mental Health Award for Excellence from the United Nations Committee on Mental Health.

On top of her strong resume, Dr. Delphin-Rittmon is widely known in the field as a leader of integrity who brings a strong sense of compassion to all her work. We are eager to begin working with her to ensure all Americans have access to vital mental health support and substance use recovery. The undersigned MHLG organizations strongly endorse Dr. Delphin-Rittmon’s nomination for Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Dance Therapy Association
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Association Of Community Mental Health Authorities of Illinois
BasicNeeds US
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Centerstone
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
Children's Mental Health Network
Clinical Social Work Association
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)
Crisis Residential Association
Crisis Text Line
DBHIDS
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Eating Disorders Coalition
Education Development Center
Geriatric Psychiatry Clinic
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Inseperable
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium
Mental Health America
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
NACBHDD
NARMH
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National League for Nursing
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.
NHMH - No Health w/o Mental Health
Postpartum Support International
REDC Consortium
RI International, Inc.
SMART Recovery
The American Counseling Association
The Jed Foundation
The Kennedy Forum
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The National Council for Mental Wellbeing
The Trevor Project
Treatment Communities of America
Vibrant Emotional Health
Well Being Trust