ISSUE:

Urgent action is needed to expand America’s mental health workforce in the face of growing unmet mental health needs, particularly among youth.

BACKGROUND:

- Mental illness, such as depression, impacts 1 in 5 Americans, and 21% of all youth, aged 13-18, experience a severe mental health disorder at some point in their life.
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in America and the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10-34. Suicide takes the lives of 44,000 Americans every year.
- Untreated mental health disorders can lead to a host of adverse consequences, including homelessness, academic failure, unemployment, contact with the criminal justice system, and suicide.
- America faces a dire shortage of mental health professionals, with less than half of those with a mental health condition receiving mental health services in the last year.
- Over 20,000 additional child and adolescent psychiatrists are needed to meet demand for treatment of depression and other child and adolescent mental illnesses.

SOLUTION:

A severe lack of mental health professionals is contributing to our nation’s mental health crisis. We need Congressional action to address this issue. Reps. John Katko (R-NY) and Grace Napolitano (D-CA), and Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) have introduced the “Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Relief Act of 2019,” H.R. ____ and S. ____. This legislation would create a loan relief program for mental health professionals who agree to practice in a HRSA-designated mental health shortage area.

By providing much needed student loan relief, we will be able to incentivize individuals to join the mental health field and work in medically underserved areas. This program would allow mental health professionals to have up to one-sixth of their educational debt repaid for each year of service in a mental health professional shortage area for up to six years.

CONGRESSIONAL ASK:

- Please help alleviate our nation’s mental health workforce crisis by co-sponsoring and advancing H.R. ____ and S. ____ “Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Relief Act of 2019,” as introduced by Reps. John Katko (R-NY) and Grace Napolitano (D-CA), and Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA)