



## Loan Relief to Address Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Workforce Shortage

### ISSUE:

Exacerbated greatly by the COVID-19 pandemic, urgent action is needed to expand America's mental health workforce, especially child and adolescent psychiatrists, in the face of growing unmet mental health needs.

### 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 a leading cause of death in America and the **second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10-34.**
- **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.
- **According to SAMHSA, upwards of 40,000 additional child and adolescent psychiatrists are needed** to meet demand for treatment of depression and other child and adolescent mental illnesses.

### SOLUTIONS:

The 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 Sens. Tina Smith (D-MN) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), are sponsoring the "*Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act of 2021*," H.R. 3150 and S. 1578.

This bill would create a **new loan relief program for mental health professionals, including child and adolescent psychiatrists,** who agree to practice in a HRSA-designated mental health shortage area. **Much needed student loan relief would incentivize mental health training and service in medically underserved areas up to 1/6th of \$250,000 debt, per year of service, for up to 6 years.**

Another urgent approach would fund HRSA's Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Relief Program (PSLRP) to repay eligible medical student debt for service in mental health professional shortage areas for up to 3 years at \$35,000/year. CARES Act re-authorized this program.

### **CONGRESSIONAL ASKS:**

- Please co-sponsor, support, and advance H.R. 3150 and S. 1578, "*Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act of 2021*," sponsored by Reps. John Katko (R-NY) and Grace Napolitano (D-CA), and Sens. Tina Smith (R-MN) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
- Please fund the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Relief Program (PSLRP) at \$50M in FY22

American Association of  
Child & Adolescent  
Psychiatry