

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115
Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

April 10, 2013

Mr. Jeffrey Zients
Acting Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Zients:

For too long, mental illness has been a topic saved for the shadows, often going unmentioned even as one in five Americans struggle with mental illness. Despite evidence that prevention and treatment are effective, fewer than 40 percent of Americans experiencing mental illness receive care in a given year. We applaud the President's announcement directing Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to launch a national conversation to increase understanding about mental health. As we wrote to Secretary Sebelius on February 7, 2013, a national discussion that addresses the negative perceptions about mental illness is an important initial step.

The Committee on Energy and Commerce has been leading the way on addressing mental illness following the tragedy at Newtown, Connecticut. While the vast majority of individuals with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression are not violent, those with untreated severe mental illness are two to three times more likely to exhibit violent behavior – directed at themselves or others. The presence of such disorders in perpetrators of mass violence demands additional research, investigation, and understanding as to what went wrong. To understand the current approach in the mental health arena, the Committee is reviewing relevant Federal programs and policies, research, and treatments.

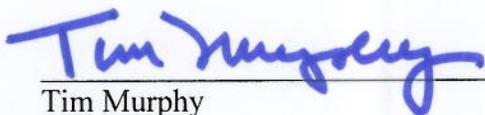
On March 5, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a bipartisan public forum to discuss the link between severe mental illness and violence. We heard powerful stories from parents with children who have schizophrenia and other forms of serious mental illness, including their experiences with the current mental health system. In fact, we learned that there is no real, coordinated system out there for these families, even if they have health insurance or the financial ability to get help. Yet, we learned that half of those individuals with severe mental illness do not even recognize they have a problem, may refuse treatment, and may refuse to take medication that can help them recover.

Working together we can ensure Federal resources are effectively used so that tax dollars reach directly down to the level of patients and their families. Therefore, as a starting point of our bipartisan effort, we are working to itemize Federal spending on mental health programs and identify every agency and program in the Executive Branch involved with mental health. It does not appear that such a compilation of every Federal program related to mental health presently exists. Therefore, we would request that your agency prepare for the Committee a list of all Federal mental health research, prevention, and treatment programs, including the total amount of Federal funds each of these programs receives annually, and the amount of such funds that are used to support efforts to address serious mental illness.

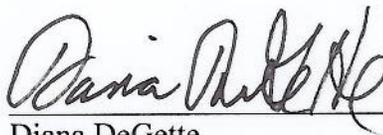
Thank you for your interest in this issue and for your consideration of this request.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Sam Spector with the Majority Committee staff at (202) 225-2927 or Stacia Cardille with the Minority Committee staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



Tim Murphy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations



Diana DeGette
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Fred Upton, Chairman

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Ranking Member