



American Psychological Association Services, Inc.

Public Witness Written Testimony

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Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,

Education and Related Agencies

Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations

The American Psychological Association Services (APA Services) is the companion organization of the American Psychological Association, which is the nation's largest scientific and professional nonprofit organization representing the discipline and profession of psychology, as well as more than 157,000 members and affiliates who are clinicians, researchers, educators, consultants, and students in psychological science.

We are grateful for this Subcommittee's leadership in making bipartisan investments in mental health. Supporting psychological research, workforce development, and mental and behavioral health services is not only a matter of health policy, but a crucial investment in population health, wellness, and resiliency, particularly in the midst of our current crisis of mental health.

APA data show a population experiencing remarkably high levels of stress and anxiety.ⁱ Psychologists report that the demand for treatment for anxiety and depression remains high. Practitioners are seeing increased workloads and longer waitlists, which have contributed to higher levels of burnout within the profession.ⁱⁱ At the same time, the U.S. has significant shortages of mental health care providers.

Most alarming is the crisis we continue to see in youth mental health. Nationally, more than 2.7 million children and adolescents are living with severe major depression. Sixty percent of youth with major depression receive no mental health treatment.ⁱⁱⁱ Educators report increasing numbers of students seeking assistance for mental health issues. Recent CDC data show that 45 percent of high school students are feeling consistently sad and hopeless, with teen girls and LGBTQ+ students showing disproportionate levels of concerning behaviors.^{iv} Hospitals continue to be overwhelmed by the numbers of young people seeking care for mental health emergencies.

We must reverse the accumulation of decades of neglect, stigma, and unequal treatment of mental and behavioral healthcare that has led to this crisis. However, the existing statutory cap for non-defense discretionary funding is inadequate to address these consistently growing needs, both in 2025 and beyond. To meet these challenges, we ask the Subcommittee to continue its leadership in this area and support necessary programs to boost critical research funding, support the psychology workforce, improve access to mental and behavioral health services across the lifespan, and address social determinants of health.

APA Services requests the following funding levels for fiscal year 2025 within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Education, and Department of Labor. We urge Congress to use all funding options available to increase investments in these critical programs.

Boosting Critical Research Funding:

Psychological research is critical to developing evidence-based practices in mental health, informing policy, and contributing to the development of effective mental and behavioral health interventions. To this end, APA Services supports at least \$51.303 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in FY25 to support basic and applied research and training in the social, behavioral, and psychological sciences.

We support the President's request of a \$275 million increase for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to combat the youth mental health crisis, including \$10 million to support behavioral health prevention implementation science, focusing on evidence-based prevention and early intervention for mental and behavioral disorders. APA Services also supports language directing NIMH to collaborate with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities on research in the youth populations most vulnerable to mental health disorders.

APA Services recommends at least \$900 million for the Institute of Education Sciences to build on ongoing research and development activities and improve educational outcomes, bolster education research and data infrastructure.

Finally, for gun violence prevention research, APA Services recommends \$25 million at the NIH and \$35 million at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in FY25.

Supporting the Psychology Workforce:

The prevalence of mental illness in the United States has been rising steadily since 2015, and we are experiencing a nationwide shortage of mental health providers. It is estimated that 158 million U.S. residents – nearly half of our population – live in a mental health workforce shortage area. Twenty-seven percent of the mental health care need in the United States is currently met.^v Our mental and behavioral health workforce must be expanded to meet the growing demand for services, particularly in underserved communities.

Within HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration, APA Services urges the Subcommittee to provide \$30 million for the Graduate Psychology Education Program, which supports the education and training of doctoral-level health service psychologists, and \$253.6 million for the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Programs, which aim to increase the number of mental and behavioral professionals trained to deliver services to vulnerable populations.

The U.S. is facing a concurrent shortage of culturally and linguistically competent mental health care providers. Culturally and linguistically competent care is vital to ensure that underserved communities receive services that meet their individualized needs. While the psychology workforce has been steadily diversifying over the last several years, only 19% of providers identify as a racial or ethnic minority, despite the U.S. population being 41% non-white.^{vi vii}

Within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), we request \$25 million for the Minority Fellowship Program to support its mission to increase

diversity and cultural competency of the mental and behavioral health workforce and improve access to mental health and substance use disorder services in underserved communities.

Improving Access to Mental and Behavioral Health Care Across the Lifespan:

Prioritizing mental and behavioral health at every stage of life helps to ensure safer and healthier communities, reduce healthcare costs, and improve quality of life. APA Services requests \$1 billion for the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant and the highest possible funding levels for additional essential public health programs, including Healthy Start at CDC, Safe Motherhood and Infant Health at CDC, and research supporting healthy pregnancy at NIH.

To ensure that K-12 students receive a well-rounded education and access to school-based mental health services, APA Services requests \$1.6 billion for Title IV-A, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant, and \$190 million for Project AWARE. To increase the number of mental health providers in schools, APA Services requests \$250 million within Safe Schools National Activities for the School Based Mental Health Services Professional Demonstration Grant and the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant.

APA Services urges the Subcommittee to include \$16.26 billion for Part B (Grants to States) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to provide equitable education for students with disabilities. In addition, to expand access to early childhood education, the Committee should provide \$13.1 billion for the Head Start Program, \$9 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and \$360 million for Preschool Development Grants.

For mental health services on college campuses, we ask the Subcommittee to include \$12 million for the Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant Program and support language directing SAMHSA to continuing waiving the program's institutional matching requirement for minority-serving institutions and community colleges.

APA Services requests \$1.25 billion for SAMHSA's Community Mental Health Block Grant including a 10% set-aside to support state implementation of a 988 and crisis response continuum system and a new 10% set-aside for prevention and early intervention; \$2.008 billion for the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Services Block Grant; and \$1.595 billion for the State Opioid Response Grants in FY25.

APA Services also supports the request for \$506.1 million for Opioid Overdose Prevention and Surveillance at CDC, which would support the integration of state and local prevention and intervention efforts, enhance partnerships with public safety and first responders, and improve linkages to medications for opioid use disorder. APA Services supports funding for creation and adoption of behavioral health programs utilizing the Project ECHO model, which has served as a critical resource for rural and underserved communities by enabling clinicians to share best practices while leveraging scarce resources.

APA Services supports \$602 million for 988 and Behavioral Health Crisis Services grants, \$100 million for the Mobile Mental Health Crisis Response program, \$29.9 million for the National Strategy on Suicide Prevention, and \$102.9 million for the Promoting Integration of Primary and Behavioral Health Care grant program.

Finally, within the DOL's Employee Benefits Security Administration, APA Services requests \$10 million for Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act enforcement, with 10% allocated to the Office of the Solicitor for parity litigation. To support parity act enforcement within HHS, we request \$10 million for CMS's Office of Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight.

Addressing Social Determinants of Health & Social Safety Net:

An individual's health cannot be isolated from the context in which they live. APA Services is dedicated to a population-health approach to address mental health concerns in every community; thus, we support \$8 million for CDC's Social Determinants of Health. To expand the reach of federal school-based health education, increase access to health services, and foster supportive learning environments, we request \$100 million for the CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health.

APA Services supports \$9.2 million for the SAMHSA Minority AIDS Initiative to improve HIV prevention and intervention efforts. Within HHS' Administration for Children and Families, we support \$1.7 billion for the Social Services Block Grant and \$105 million for CAPTA Title I to support state child abuse prevention and treatment services.

We share the Subcommittee's concerns with the growing instances of child labor violations nationally. To improve enforcement of child labor laws, APA Services supports \$341 million for the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD). This funding level would allow WHD to both replenish its ranks and retain the current workforce necessary to ameliorate enforcement of child labor laws and eliminate illegal child labor.

Finally, APA Services supports \$10 million for CDC's Office of Rural Health to address unique rural health care needs, coordinate efforts across CDC's portfolios, tailor scientific and communications resources, and improve public health functions and service delivery.

APA Services thanks the Subcommittee for the opportunity to share our FY25 funding requests. These investments will give us a greater understanding of the biological, psychological, and social factors needed to adopt a population health framework, as well as give us the tools to respond effectively to the current mental health crisis. We urge your full consideration of our requests in recognition that the health of our nation depends on the well-being of its citizens.

ⁱ American Psychological Association. (October 2022). Stress in America: Concerned with the future, beset by inflation. <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2022/concerned-future-inflation>.

ⁱⁱ American Psychological Association (December 2023). Psychologists reaching their limits as patients present with worsening symptoms year after year, 2023 Practitioner Pulse Survey.

ⁱⁱⁱ Reinert, M., Fritze, D., & Nguyen, T. (October 2022). *The State of Mental Health in America 2023*. MHA.

^{iv} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). *Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2011-2021: Data Summary & Trends Report*.

^v Bureau of Health Workforce. (2024, March 31). *Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas: Statistics*. Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

^{vi} American Psychological Association. (2021). Center for Workforce Studies. Data Tool: Demographics of the U.S. Psychology Workforce.

^{vii} United States Census Bureau. (2022). QuickFacts. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>