January 26, 2018

The Hon. Roy Blunt  
U.S. Senator  
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC  20510

The Hon. Patty Murray  
U.S. Senator  
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC  20510

The Hon. Tom Cole  
U.S. Representative  
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee  
House Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC  20515

The Hon. Rosa DeLauro  
U.S. Representative  
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee  
House Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC  20515

Chairmen Blunt and Cole, Ranking Members Murray and DeLauro,

As local, state, and national leaders who believe that the federal government should harness the power of data and evidence to solve our nation’s greatest challenges, we are concerned that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA) has discontinued the contract for administering the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP), as reported by the Washington Post on January 10, 2018.

We believe that all federal agencies should identify and promote the use of evidence-based interventions through publicly-available, user-friendly tools. While we recognize there are limitations to NREPP’s current approach that should be addressed, we urge the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and SAMSHA to improve NREPP rather than eliminating it altogether.

Overall, we commend SAMHSA’s commitment to the use of data and evidence through various efforts such as the creation of an evaluation policy, dissemination of evidence-based strategies through the Learning Center, and recently announced technical assistance to advance evidence-based practices in addressing opioid use and serious mental illness. As part of these efforts, we believe NREPP can and should play an integral role in ensuring that SAMSHA funds are invested in results-driven, evidence-based solutions.

To that end we urge the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees with jurisdiction over HHS to include report language in the FY2018 appropriations bills expressing support for the promotion and use of evidence-based practices throughout HHS, including but not limited to a strengthened clearinghouse at SAMSHA.

We applaud the Members of Congress who work every day to ensure that taxpayer dollars are invested in what works. And we look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

Sincerely,

AcademyHealth  
Achievement Network  
America Forward  
America's Promise Alliance  
American Statistical Association  
AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation  
BARR Center  
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NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity  
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Reliance Methods  
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Social Innovation Research Center  
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Jack Bareilles, Northern Humboldt Union High School District  
Jim Kohlmoos, Principal, EDGE Consulting LLC  
John Bridgelan, CEO, Civic Enterprises, and former Director, White House Domestic Policy Council  
Joshua Ogburn, Director, University of Virginia Pay for Success Lab  
Kevin Madden, former Senior Advisor and Spokesman for Governor Mitt Romney, and former Press Secretary, House Majority Leader John Boehner (R-OH)  
Kim Wallin, former Nevada State Controller  
Mary Losch, Professor and Director, Center for Social and Behavioral Research, University of Northern Iowa  
Rebecca Maynard, University Trustee Chair  
Professor of Education & Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania  
Robert Shea, Principal, Grant Thornton  
Thomas Love, Professor of Medicine, Population & Quantitative Health Sciences, Case Western Reserve University  