



## **AATA Signs Joint Letters Advocating for Healthcare Access and Legislative Transparency**

AATA

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AATA continues to be an active voice supporting and advocating for policies that align with our code of ethics and increase accessibility for our clients. Recently the AATA signed two joint letters to House Representatives, one voicing our support for a recently introduced bill *Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Accessibility Act of 2017* and the other requesting legislative hearings preceding significant changes that affect Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act.

On February 28, 2017 AATA joined seventeen behavioral health organizations in thanking Representatives Tim Murphy (R-PA) and Derek Kilmer (D-WA) for introducing [H.R.1253](#) - *Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Accessibility Act of 2017*. The bipartisan bill seeks to overcome the challenges of constructing and modifying facilities and to provide support to both inpatient and community-based care. Despite the recommendation that communities have a capacity of 40-60 inpatient beds per 100,000 residents, the national average currently is 11.7 beds per 100,000. Although the need is clear, there are currently no federal programs to assist with hospital construction. This bill would “provide loans and loan guarantees on favorable yet responsible terms to qualifying psychiatric and substance use facilities.” The letter concludes with the AATA and other signers offering our commitment to “the goal of modernizing our infrastructure and improving behavioral health care in America.”

On March 3, 2017 AATA, along with 99 other healthcare organizations, voiced our concern that significant changes affecting Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act may be made without necessary deliberations and legislative hearings. The letter addresses Greg Walden (R-OR), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Kevin Brady (R-TX), and Richard Neal (D-MA), the Chairmen and Ranking Members of House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees. The letter expresses deep concern that these two committees “with jurisdiction over federal healthcare programs that cover 100 million Americans and account for nearly 18% of our nation’s economy, might vote on complex and far-reaching legislation without a single public hearing in this Congress on the bill.” The letter asserts that such consequential healthcare decisions should not be made without testimony from non-partisan experts or hearings that would offer Representatives and the public the opportunity to examine, question and weigh the impact and tradeoffs involved in the proposed changes for their respective constituents and communities.

