*Template Letter to Congressional Delegation - Draft April 23*

On behalf of [insert name of agency], which represents [insert description of membership], I am writing to urge inclusion of an emergency appropriation allocation of $38.5 billion for behavioral health organizations in the next stimulus package.

Organizations that deliver mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services, particularly those serving low incomes individuals, are at risk of collapse, nationwide and in [state]. The combination of lost revenue, increased costs for staff overtime, personal protective equipment and purchasing telehealth equipment is overwhelming many providers.

According to an [online survey](https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/press-releases/behavioral-health-crisis-in-america-getting-worse-as-covid-19-forces-community-behavioral-health-care-organizations-to-cut-back/) conducted by ndp|analytics and the National Council for Behavioral Health, nearly two-thirds of behavioral health organizations nationwide believe that they can only survive financially for three months or less under the current COVID-19 conditions, and nearly half of all behavioral health organizations across the country already have cut positions.

The situation in [state] is particularly/equally dire. [Insert state level statistics].

[Add any additional details that convey the urgency of the situation, i.e. number of employees / patients that have been quarantined, tested positive become sick and/or died … or other aspects of how the crisis is impacting the people you serve.]

People who have lost their jobs or had a reduction in hours are reporting high levels of anxiety and depression and alcohol sales have increased dramatically. If we do not take steps now to avert the collapse of the system, we can expect thousands / hundreds of thousands of individuals with mental illness and addiction to arrive in overtaxed emergency departments across the state.

In addition to meeting the needs of our communities today, we must prepare now to care for those who have cared for us. Individuals working on the front lines of the pandemic will surely experience aftershocks, including trauma and PTSD. The [insert number or estimate] professionals working at our member organizations want to be there to help. But without emergency funding, we may not be able to do our part.

The $38.5 billion infusion will ensure that mental health and SUD organizations in [state] are viable to respond – immediately and when the crisis has passed but the effects remain. I urge you to include this critical financial support in the next COVID-19 legislative package.