

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2019

The Honorable Elinore F. McCance-Katz, M.D., Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Assistant Secretary McCance-Katz,

As the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) works to implement the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (P.L. 115-271), we write to request that SAMHSA consult local governments in the development of national recovery housing best practices.

As communities across the country have struggled to respond to the ongoing opioid and other addiction crises, several regions have likewise seen a proliferation of recovery residences, also known as sober living homes. Although these facilities are intended to provide alcohol- and drug-free living environments to support individuals in recovery, some unethical operators have, as the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis noted in its final report, "cast suspicion on recovery residences generally and have complicated the efforts of families, treatment centers, and court systems to identify safe, supportive, well run, and affordable recovery housing." Across the country, such unethical operators have exploited individuals in recovery, jeopardized their wellbeing, and strained community resources. Any regulatory framework should accommodate well-intentioned, responsible operators to offer quality recovery housing in a manner consistent with the American Disabilities Act and Federal Housing Association and in accordance to resources available to local communities, in particular underserved rural communities.

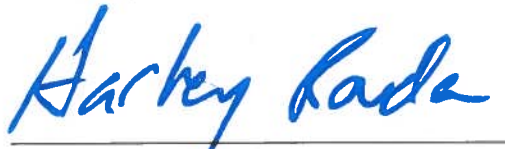
We applaud the efforts of our colleagues to include Sec. 7031 in the SUPPORT Act, which was signed into law by President Trump on October 24, 2018, to direct the Department of Health and Human Services to work with relevant agencies and stakeholders to identify or facilitate the development of best practices for operating recovery housing and common indicators for fraudulent recovery housing operators. We believe that local governments, equipped with local knowledge, should have input in the development of national recovery housing practices.

While federal law has inadvertently protected unethical operators of sober living homes from regulation at the state and local level, city and county governments have been on the forefront in managing the harm caused by these facilities. Additionally, local leaders have heard directly from their residents regarding the day-to-day effect of unethical operators in communities. We believe understanding the robust experience of local governments are key to comprehending all of the aspects of recovery housing. As such, we respectfully request SAMHSA to consult local governments in its process to identify or facilitate the development of best practices, which may

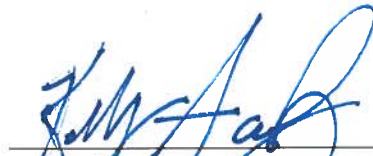
include model laws for implementing suggested minimum standards, for operating recovery housing and common indicators of fraudulent recovery housing operators.

Lastly, we were pleased to see SAMHSA issue proposed minimum guidelines for the development of best practices for recovery housing on March 29, 2019. We look forward to working with you to ensure all individuals with a history of substance use have access to high-quality recovery housing. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



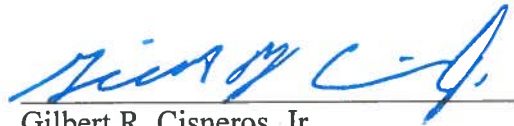
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