



1051 RIVERSIDE DRIVE NEW YORK, NY 10032  
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**Esteemed Members of the Biden – Harris Transition Team,**

**Come January 20, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) will need a proven leader who is ready to take charge on day one as America marshals all available resources to tame the COVID-19 pandemic and, at the same time, address the unprecedented surges in the decades-long epidemic of overdoses. As our national leader for mental health and addiction equity for more than 25 years, I believe that former Congressman Patrick Kennedy is the right man for the job. Patrick will be an inspirational and effective ONDCP leader.**

**People across our country awoke last summer to the realization that long-standing racial injustices demand action, not just talk. COVID-19 has revealed the stark inequities that people of color face accessing effective healthcare and achieving equitable outcomes, and our nation’s mental health and substance use disorder systems must put health equity at the forefront of all our efforts. Patrick has long viewed services for those with mental and substance use disorders through a civil rights lens and nowhere are the inequities more apparent than in our jails and prisons, where drugs-related crimes are the primary drivers of incarceration. We understand the issues, and with a team of public servants like Patrick Kennedy, the new administration will have the courage and will to overcome the challenges.**

**Patrick Kennedy’s entire career has led up to the opportunity to lead ONDCP. I could offer a long list of his accomplishments or describe his lineage but all of that is publicly known. I have had the good fortune to see him at work and to be able to speak to who he is as a loving husband and father, a thoughtful friend, and a passionate and dedicated leader. He has lived the walk, not merely talked the talk.**



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He is a recognized consensus building partner and a resource nationally to the addictions and mental health communities. Through decades of work, Patrick offers fresh perspectives and practical strategies. He excels in the ability to understand all dimensions of complex problems, to find scalable solutions, and to spur adoption by tapping into his vast network of connections at the local, state, and national levels and in the public and private sectors. And perhaps one of Patrick's most important gifts mirrors that of our President-elect Joe Biden: the ability to understand the needs of others, to reach across the political aisle and company tables, and to find common ground.

Currently on faculty at the Columbia University Department of Psychiatry, I retired last year after 15 years as CEO of the National Council for Behavioral Health and prior to that served as Senior Deputy Commissioner of New York State's Office of Mental Health. I have run programs, residences and hospitals for people with addictions and mental illness, helped shape and move policy, but most wrenching are the calls I regularly get from families with loved ones in the ER, on the streets or in jail. Those struggling and those who love them need and deserve Patrick Kennedy. Patrick offers hope and delivers results. He will be an outstanding member of a healing administration.

Sincerely,

Linda Rosenberg, MSW  
Director of External Affairs  
Columbia University Medical Center