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Charles Ingoglia, MSW, President and CEO

December 17, 2020

President-elect Joseph R. Biden  
Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris  
Biden-Harris Transition Team  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris:

On behalf of the National Council for Behavioral Health, a nonprofit association representing 3,300 Community Mental Health Centers and substance use treatment organizations serving more than 10 million Americans with serious mental health and substance use disorders, I want to congratulate you on your historic campaign and victory. As you know, the pandemic has increased anxiety, fear, isolation and grief, leading to declining mental health and increased substance use in our communities and the National Council looks forward to working with your Administration to provide solutions to this growing challenge.

The National Council supports the nomination of former Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy for the position of Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Congressman Kennedy served 16 years in the U.S. House of Representatives (D-RI) from 1994 to 2010 and is a leading national voice for mental health and addiction equity. He is best known as the lead author of the landmark Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity & Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (Federal Parity Law).

Congressman Kennedy is well suited to lead ONDCP. He has spent his life working with people from every political persuasion and every walk of life—he understands the unique needs of families, mental health and addiction treatment providers, law enforcement, people in recovery, and more. And as a person in long-term recovery himself, Congressman Kennedy has an unparalleled connection with millions of Americans who have been either directly or indirectly impacted by the brain disease of addiction.

Congressman Kennedy has also developed an excellent rapport among the NIH directors with whom this position would partner. For example, he is well respected by Dr. Nora Volkow, the Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. In addition, his public profile through his work at The Kennedy Forum and with multiple Surgeons General (e.g. Drs. Vivek Murthy and David Satcher) make him uniquely positioned to elevate the topics of addiction prevention and treatment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this exceptional candidate. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide Congressman Kennedy our support in the role of Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Sincerely,

Chuck Ingoglia  
President and CEO  
National Council for Behavioral Health