**For those interested in having their professional and/or volunteer leaders communicate with their contacts in the United States Senate about the *Mental Health Reform Act of 2016,* please feel free to use or modify for your community the following sample letter and suggested talking points:**

Dear Senator:

I am writing today to urge your support for the advancement of comprehensive mental health reform by asking your leadership to bring up S. 2680, the *Mental Health Reform Act of 2016*, for immediate consideration, and that you vote “yes” on this important bill.

Mental illness is widely prevalent in the United States. *Over 68 million Americans, over 20 percent of the U.S. population, have experienced mental illness in the past year alone, and the suicide rate is the highest it has been in 30 years.* Many individuals with mental illness or addictive disorders are unable to access or receive necessary services and supports, and they remain challenged by mental health service delivery systems that are largely fragmented and uncoordinated.

The need for comprehensive reform is critical to improve the lives of tens of millions of Americans, their families, and communities throughout the country. The bipartisan *Mental Health Reform Act of 2016* will, if enacted, strengthen federal coordination of mental health resources, hold health insurers accountable for providing mental health and addictive disorder services at parity, promote the integration of mental health care with primary care, and increase early access to mental health services.

I ask you to support the advancement of mental health reform legislation by urging your colleagues to bring the *Mental Health Reform Act of 2016* to the floor for a vote this year and to vote “yes.”

 Sincerely,

**SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS**

Please ask your leadership to bring up S. 2680, the *Mental Health Reform Act of 2016,* for a vote this year, and please vote “yes” on this important bill.

Over 68 million Americans have experienced mental illness in the past year, which is more than 20 percent of the total population of the United States.

Many individuals with mental illness or addictive disorders are unable to access or receive the appropriate services and supports for these illnesses.

Among many improvements, the bipartisan *Mental Health Reform Act of 2016:*

* Strengthens federal coordination of mental health resources;
* Holds health insurers accountable for providing mental health and addictive disorder services at parity;
* Promotes the integration of mental health care with primary care;
* Increases early access to mental health services.

**For further information, please contact Elizabeth A. Cullen, Counsel for Health Policy, The Jewish Federations of North America, at (202) 736-5887 or *Elizabeth.Cullen@jewishfederations.org.***