

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0609

September 9, 2021

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo:

Thank you for your letter to the members of the Senate Committee on Finance on August 5, 2021 regarding your bipartisan effort to address the current mental and behavioral health crisis. This crisis has only been exasperated by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and is an urgent threat facing individuals and families across America, which deserves our utmost attention.

We are grateful that you are focused on policy areas that we have heard when speaking with our constituents throughout Colorado and Texas. However, local communities have faced unprecedented challenges in their attempt to address increases in suicides, drug overdose deaths, and most alarmingly – pediatric mental health issues. Stigma continues to impede individuals' ability to recognize their mental and behavioral health needs through their care continuum, which inhibits appropriate service delivery and tools reaching people at when they need it. A lack of Federal coordination and administrative burden often prevents local communities from addressing their current needs when they are happening, until it is too late.

The Senate Finance Committee has a unique opportunity to create generational change for Americans today and to sustain this focus moving forward. We believe that there are deep, systemic issues with the way that mental and behavioral health services are delivered that warrants bold action to redesign the system and we should reject incremental changes. To that end, we are releasing a white paper, **A Bold Vision for America's Mental Well-being**, making the case on why and how to redesign the mental and behavioral health care system and have attached it for your convenience.

Through conversations, we have heard that many of our colleagues on this committee have heard similar needs from their constituents across the country and we are hopeful we can create better mental and behavioral well-being for all in the United States. Thank you for your willingness to work with us and we look forward to accomplishing this task with you in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

John Cornyn
United States Senator