

The Combating Loneliness Act – Section-by-Section

Sponsored by: Representative Becca Balint (VT-AL)

Co-lead: Rep. Paul Tonko (NY-20)

Endorsed by: The Kennedy Forum, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Foundation for Social Connection Action Network

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TITLE I—COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

Sec. 101. Grants for third-spaces.

- Directs the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a competitive grant program that creates and scales community connection programs and local institutions that bring people together at community facilities.
 - Eligible entities/programs may include: libraries, senior centers, childcare centers and after school programs, recreation centers, teen centers, and veteran service organizations

Sec. 102. Grants for social infrastructure.

- Creates a grant program through HHS for state and local governments for the purposes of building parks, playgrounds, recreation spaces, and natural areas.
 - Preference to projects that are environmentally conscious, prioritize accessibility for disabled people, or are in underserved communities. Authorizes \$170 million per year from FY25 to FY29 for this program.

Sec. 103. Grants for Outreach and Intervention to address loneliness.

- Directs HHS to provide grants to area agencies on living, centers for independent living, and similar organizations for the purpose of providing outreach to at-risk individuals to mitigate the effects of loneliness and social isolation.

TITLE II.—PUBLIC HEALTH

Sec. 201. Support group demonstration program.

- Creates a demonstration program to award grants to support eligible organizations to coordinate group therapy care for mental health and substance use treatment.
 - Allowable expenditures include: administrative and operational costs related to such treatment, outreach, participant recruitment, patient education, and treatment plan development.
 - Priority given to States and localities that will support eligible organizations in rural areas.

Sec. 202. Building communities of recovery program reauthorization.

- Reauthorizes the Building Communities of Recovery Program at \$16 million for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029. This program supports community-based programs to increase the availability and quality of long-term recovery support for persons with substance use disorders (SUD) and co-occurring substance use and mental disorders (COD).

Sec. 203. Mental health provider student loan forgiveness.

- Directs the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to establish a student loan forgiveness program for mental health providers.

Section 204. Health Workforce Resiliency program.

- Extends the Health Workforce Resiliency program, as originally authorized through the American Rescue Plan Act. These grants are to assist in the establishment of programs to

reduce and address burnout, suicide, mental health conditions and substance use disorders and promote resiliency among health care students, residents, and professionals.

Sec. 205. Task force to prevent health care worker burnout.

- Establishes a taskforce to prevent healthcare worker burn-out.

TITLE III—MEASUREMENTS OF LONELINESS

Sec. 301. Addition of loneliness to the Older Americans Act of 1965.

- Amends the Older Americans Act to include “loneliness” in the screening for the prevention of negative health effects associated with social isolation and coordination of supportive services and health care to address negative health effects associated with social isolation.

Section 302. HHS working group on measurements of loneliness

- Establishes a working group within HHS to formulate recommendations for standardizing the methods by which agencies measure loneliness and isolation.

Sec. 303. GAO study and report on impact of social isolation.

- Directs the Comptroller General to conduct a study on the impact of social isolation and efforts by the Federal Government and state/local governments to address social isolation and deliver the report to Congress within 5 years of enactment.

TITLE IV—COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

Sec. 401. Coverage of Community Health Worker services under Medicare and Increased FMAP for Community Health Worker services.

- Provides Medicare coverage for community health workers and certified community behavioral health clinic services.
- Increases the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for each state by 6% every quarter (with respect to the amount that states spend on community health worker services).

Sec. 402. Community Health Workers in NHSC loan repayment program.

- Amends the Public Health Service Act to include community health workers as an eligible applicant of the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) loan repayment program.

TITLE V—EDUCATION

Sec. 501. School-based services under Medicaid and CHIP.

- Authorizes \$50 million for fiscal year 2026 for the Secretary to award grants to States for the purpose of implementing, enhancing, or expanding the provision of assistance through school-based entities under Medicaid or CHIP.

Sec. 502. Support for Project AWARE.

- Codifies the Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) grant program to improve the infrastructure for school-based mental health programs and services.
- Authorizes \$130 million per year from FY26 to FY30 for this grant program.

Sec. 503. Support for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and the Full-Service Community Schools Program.

- Amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to include mental health services and community service activities among the services that can be provided by community learning centers.
- Authorizes increases of \$100 million per fiscal year between FY25 and FY29 to fund the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, as well as authorizing an increase of \$500 million over the period FY25-29 to fund the Full-Service Community Schools program.

TITLE VI—DEFINITIONS

Sec. 601. Definitions.