

Loebsack Praises Expanded Mental Health Funding

Written by Vonnie Hampel

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As Newtown anniversary approaches, Administration announces \$100 million for mental health services and facilities

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Dave Loebsack released the following statement today after the Administration announced \$100 million in funding for mental health services and facilities. In the immediate aftermath of the Newtown School shooting, Loebsack brought together law enforcement officers, members of the mental health community, parents, teachers and administrators, as well as the general public to have a conversation about how to ensure our children stay safe. One thing he heard from each group was the need for additional funding for mental health services. This funding will come from both the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA), which will focus on rural mental health facilities.

“I, like so many others, have personally dealt with the effects that a mental illness can have on an individual, family or community, as my mother struggled with mental health difficulties when I was young. There are too many people dealing with mental illnesses in the shadows and we must continue to work to ensure they get the help they need,” said Loebsack. “In the wake of the horrible tragedy that happened at Newtown, I heard from various professionals who told me that one of the biggest obstacles they face is how to address mental health needs. I am pleased the Administration has taken this step and made this funding available to assist those experiencing mental health challenges.”

Congressman Loebsack has been a champion for expanding mental health care coverage. He has worked on many pieces of legislation, including:

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- [Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act](#) , which worked to end discrimination against patients seeking treatment for mental illness;
- [Reducing Barriers to Learning Act](#) , Loebsack authored this legislation, which would increase student access to critical instructional support personnel, including school counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, specialized teachers, and community partners such as mental and physical health providers;
- Excellence in Mental Health Act, which would improve access to community mental and behavioral health services;
- Mental Health in Schools Act, which would increase access to mental health services on-site in schools.

He has also led the way as a member of the House Armed Service Committee to ensure that the men and women serving our nation in the military have access to mental health care and suicide prevention resources. In 2011, his legislation, the [Embedded Mental Health Providers for Reserves Act](#) (HR 948) was signed into law as part of the FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act.

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