

ONE PAGE: THE PURSUING EQUITY IN MENTAL HEALTH ACT OF 2019

ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, American Psychological Association, Young Invincibles

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BACKGROUND: In April of 2019, the Congressional Black Caucus launched the **Emergency Taskforce on Black Youth Suicide and Mental Health** with Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12). Over the course of the year the Taskforce held several hearings, meetings, and district events to discuss the rise in Black youth suicide and what factors might be causing it. Alongside their work, the Taskforce had a Working Group of experts in the field to prepare a [report on the issue and prepare policy recommendations](#) on how to address the issue legislatively. The Taskforce took those recommendations from the report and created the Pursuing Equity in Mental Health Act of 2019 – as a first step to address the problem. Though the Taskforce report focuses on Black youth, this legislation will be extremely beneficial to all youth, especially youth of color. This legislation will:

- **Authorize** an additional \$650 million annually from fiscal 2021 through 2025 for the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. It also would authorize an additional \$100 million annually over that period for the National Institutes of Health to build relations with communities and support clinical research, including on racial or ethnic disparities in physical and mental health.
- **Increase** the authorization for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s [Minority Fellowship Program](#) to \$25 million annually from fiscal 2021 through 2025. The current \$12.7 million annual authorization runs through fiscal 2022.
- **Authorize** \$20 million annually for the first five fiscal years after the bill’s enactment for the Health and Human Services Department to award grants to establish interprofessional teams that provide behavioral health care. Eligible entities would include federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics, and behavioral health programs serving a high proportion of individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- **Authorize** \$10 million annually from fiscal 2021 through 2025 for HHS to develop an outreach and education strategy to promote behavioral and mental health and reduce stigma associated with mental health conditions and substance abuse among minority groups.
- **Directs** HHS to award grants to qualified national organizations to develop best practices on mental health disparities to use when training students in social work, psychology, psychiatry, and related fields. The grants would also be used to certify community health workers on the best practices and expand their use into health care.
- **Directs** the National Institutes of Health would be to enter an arrangement with the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine or another body to study mental health disparities in racial and ethnic minority groups and submit the result to Congress.
- **Directs** HHS to conduct or support research on smartphone and social media use by adolescents and its effects on health and disparities.