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November 20, 2013

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3506

Dear Senator Portman:

The Care Continuum Alliance (CCA) writes today in strong support of the Behavioral Health Information Technology Coordination Act of 2013 (S.1685). As you know, this bipartisan legislation extends the meaningful use incentives established through the 2009 HITECH Act to specified mental health and addiction treatment and providers. Better health IT integration between physical and behavioral health professionals is a positive step towards a more fully-connected health system, one that leverages teams of care providers who are focused on proactive, coordinated, quality healthcare.

Policymakers know the Care Continuum Alliance as the voice of wellness, prevention, and population health management. Our members believe that managing health requires the active, integrated involvement of all healthcare professionals coordinated with the patient and their caregivers and families.

The Care Continuum Alliance's diverse membership includes physician groups, nurses, other health professionals, hospital systems, Medicaid and commercial health insurers, wellness and prevention providers, population health management organizations, pharmaceutical manufacturers, pharmacies and pharmacy benefit managers, health technology innovators, employers, researchers, and academics.

Under health reform, the American healthcare delivery model is turning to one focusing more on integration across providers and on treatment of both the body and the mind. We believe that the Behavioral Health IT Act corrects an oversight in the 2009 HITECH legislation that excluded key providers of mental health and substance use treatment services from much needed funding to enhance the quality of care delivered.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we may be of further assistance. We thank you for your leadership on this important issue and we look forward to working with you to enact this critical legislation during the 113th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Goldstein", is written over a horizontal line.

Fred Goldstein
Executive Director (interim)