Dear Members of Congress:

We are a coalition of statewide and local Recovery Community Organizations (RCO)¹ and recovery community leaders writing to you to seek your support to establish a dedicated Center for Addiction Recovery at The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Similar to the Congressionally Authorized Centers for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, a dedicated programmatic focus on recovery supports is

¹ As defined in section 547(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290ee-2(a)), recovery community organizations (RCOs) are independent nonprofit organization that (1) mobilizes resources within and outside of the recovery community, which may include through a peer support network, to increase the prevalence and quality of long-term recovery from substance use disorders; and (2) is wholly or principally governed by people in recovery for substance use disorders who reflect the community served.
essential to equitably serve our diverse communities across all 50 states and territories. While there have been limited discretionary funding opportunities in the past, our work, which is vital for the development and strengthening of statewide and local recovery capital, has never been funded in a stable and consistent manner.

The COVID-19 pandemic is further exacerbating our national addiction epidemic. As physical distancing guidelines caused social and emotional isolation, our networks quickly adapted to provide virtual support and outreach, promoting health and community without any waiting lists. As unemployment rose, our networks provided workforce development, connected individuals to social support and education around PPP loans. As residential treatment capacity decreased and more individuals became unstably housed, our networks of recovery housing provided people with safe living environments. The kinds of activities that statewide and local RCOs engage in to foster hope, connection and purpose across our diverse communities has become even more vital given the twin public health emergencies facing America: COVID and substance use epidemics.

Time and time again, Congress has provided support directly to community-based organizations for Mental Health services. In the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, $600 million in dedicated new funds were allocated to SAMHSA to directly distribute to local Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics. Additionally, the legislation allows for SAMHSA to administer 50% of the new emergency funding in the Mental Health Block Grant directly to eligible community-based organizations. Some of this funding has already been posted for RFP and will reach the intended use within months, not years. In contrast, the continued expansion of funding through the State Opioid Response and Substance Abuse Block Grants (SABG), which is welcomed and very much needed, has often been hung up in States’ procurement processes and has not reached its intended use. This issue was documented by the Government Accountability Office in reports published in March and December 2020. The newly proposed House Budget Reconciliation package includes another $1.75 billion increase in the SABG for states in Section 3052, but seemingly because Single-State Authority’s (SSAs) have not be able to distribute large increases in new funds for intended use and in a timely manner, Congress is allowing them until September of 2025 to procure funding intended for emergency relief. This is unacceptable, especially given that SAMHSA has the ability to directly distribute funds to eligible community-based organizations.

Block grants require states to have consumer advisory committees, yet without supported statewide recovery community networks ensuring leadership, advisory structures become rife with tokenism. Funding, intended to support our efforts when passed through the SSA system more often than not go to large foundations, long-standing clinically focused providers, and academic institutions well connected and well poised to secure these funds yet with little or no insight into local recovery needs of communities.

The woefully under-resourced statewide and local recovery community organizations across this country stand ready now to respond urgently to needs of local communities and we believe allowing SAMHSA to provide a substantial dedicated grant program through a new Center for Addiction Recovery or a directly from the proposed emergency increase in SABG funding will realize far quicker and sustained results than waiting until 2025 for SSAs to procure these new funds.
We deeply appreciate your focus on these critically important matters. Please help us deliver this legacy of strong, stable funding to statewide and local recovery community organizations to save lives immediately and enhance recovery capital in communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Hampton, Founder, The Voices Project

Sean O’Donnell, Director of Communications, Foundation for Recovery

William Stauffer, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Recovery Organization Alliance (PRO-A)

Jason Howell, Executive Director RecoveryPeople (TX and OK) & Texas Recovery Oriented Housing Network (TROHN)

Phillip Valentine, Executive Director, Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)

Cheryle Pacapelli, Director of Peer Recovery Supports, Harbor Care (NH)

Daisy Pierce, Executive Director Navigating Recovery of the Lakes Region (NH)

Samuel Lake, Executive Director Keene Serenity Center (NH)

Janice Spinney, Executive Director MWV Supports Recovery Coalition (NH)

Keith Howard, Executive Director, Hope for New Hampshire Recovery
Mary Drew, CEO, Reality Check (NH)

Stephan Burdette, Executive Director, Plymouth Area Recovery Connection (NH)

Mike Marshall, Executive Director Oregon Recovers

Jessica Parnell, Executive Director, Revive Recovery Resource Center (NH)

Patrick Brown, Executive Director Thriving United (TX)

Steven Farnsworth, Executive Director Florida Association of Recovery Residences

Richard Jones, Chairman FAVOR South Carolina

Frank McIntyre, Board Chair FAVOR Pee Dee, Inc. (SC)

Beth Fisher Sanders, CEO HOPE Recovery (GA and NC)

Isaac Waters, Executive Director FAVOR Lowcountry (SC)

Johnny Hulin, Executive Director Willie Carter Outreach Center (TX)

Bobby Brazell, Executive Director Midlands Recovery Center (SC)
Robert Rice, Executive Director
FAVOR Piedmont (SC)

Michelle J. Lennon, Executive Director
Greater Tilton Area Family Resource Center (NH)

Donna Marston, Parent Support Consultant/CRSW, Donna 4 Support (NH)

George Morris, Executive Director
Jump Start Recovery Center

Mike Maddox, Executive Director
Oklahoma Alliance for Recovery Residences

Pete Nielsen, CEO, California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals

Wendy Jones, Executive Director
Minnesota Recovery Connection

Patty McCarthy, CEO
Faces & Voices of Recovery

Zachary Talbott, President & Chairman National Alliance for Medication Assisted Recovery (NAMA Recovery)

Danielle Tarino, President & CEO
Young People in Recovery

Darrin Acker, Executive Director
Communities for Recovery (TX)

Tonya Wheeler, Executive Director
Advocates for Recovery Colorado

Tiffany Hall, Executive Director
Recover Alaska
Jack Brown, Executive Director
PEER 2 PEER WHOLE WELLNESS (TX)

Robert Ashford, Executive Director of Unity
Recovery (PA) & CEO of RecoveryLink