Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515
October 26, 2017

Brenda Fitzgerald, MD
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald,

Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric illness, affecting 30 million Americans during their lifetime while every 62 minutes one person loses their life as a direct result. **For these reasons we urge you to revise the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) national surveys to include and re-include surveillance questions on eating disorders.**

While we applaud the CDC's great work, we were dismayed to see the CDC's 2015 removal of eating disorders surveillance questions from the Youth Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. The CDC surveillance surveys provide a valuable opportunity for our nation to detect, track, assess, and identify community-level issues for public health so that we can best coordinate prevention efforts for the most at risk populations. As you know, a lack of data collection for mental illness is already a serious problem, and this sparse availability information hinders our ability to deliver treatment to those who need it most.

Accordingly, we request that the CDC expand its national surveillance to include eating disorders questions within three of its numerous national surveys, including the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, National Health Interview Survey, and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Specifically, an increase in surveillance will help us to learn early signs and symptoms before someone develops an eating disorder, identify regions or communities that are harder hit by eating disorders, and discover if we are missing affected groups who need specialized prevention efforts and treatment access. Particularly, we encourage the CDC to include eating disorder surveillance of underrepresented groups including men, Native Americans, and people at risk for binge eating disorder.

Recently we overwhelmingly passed the bipartisan 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114-255), demonstrating a commitment towards fixing our nation's broken mental health care system. Particularly, Cures represented the first time in history that we passed eating disorder-specific provisions into law, expressing our commitment to improving the lives of people affected by eating disorders.

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To address the alarming statistics surrounding eating disorders, we urge you to include eating disorders questions in your national surveys to help us to detect, track, assess and identify new issues in the public related to this deadly disorder. Thank you for your consideration of this important request. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact my office

Sincerely,

Ted Deutch
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Markwayne Mullin
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Marcy Kaptur
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Peter Visclosky
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