

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

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February 11, 2009

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

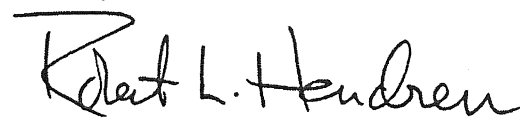
On behalf of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), I am writing to express our support for the **Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2009** (H.R. 911). The AACAP is the leading national medical association of child and adolescent psychiatrists dedicated to treating and improving the quality of life for the estimated 7-12 million American youth under 18 years of age who are affected by emotional, behavioral, developmental and mental disorders.

A child or adolescent with mental illness should be treated in the safest and least restrictive environment. Due to the severity of an individual's psychiatric illness, there are times when a patient's needs cannot be met in a community-based setting and child or adolescent may need to receive treatment in a psychiatric residential treatment center. This is never an easy decision for parents.

H.R. 911 takes an important first step in helping parents make these difficult decisions and creating national standards and guidelines for private residential programs. These standards integrate new training requirements for program staff members, including how to identify and report child abuse. This legislation would help end the horrendous abuse that can unfortunately occur in private residential programs.

On behalf of AACAP's 8000 members, we commend you for your continued leadership on this issue. We are pleased to support this bill and we look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure its passage. Please contact Kristin Kroeger, Director of Government Affairs, at 202.966.7300, x.108 if you have any questions concerning children's mental health issues.

Sincerely,



Robert Hendren, D.O.
President

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