

Mental health organizations urge government to provide PPE to behavioral health professionals

April 2 2020, by Glenn O'neal, Erin Connors



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A mental health coalition today urged the federal government to provide

personal protection equipment (PPE) to all behavioral health care professionals on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. [The letter](#), signed by The National Council for Behavioral Health, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Mental Health America (MHA) and the American Psychiatric Association (APA) states that the lack of PPE is putting behavioral health care workers at risk.

The level of anxiety among Americans continues to rise due to concerns over risks associated with COVID-19. While some people struggle to cope with the isolation caused by lockdowns and restrictions on social distancing, others who already rely on behavioral health care treatment are searching for ways to overcome disruptions in services.

Behavioral health care workers continue to respond to the historic demand for treatment. Telehealth services help meet the needs of some clients, but practitioners still meet clients in clinics, shelters, hospitals and elsewhere. They provide those services without the proper resources necessary to protect themselves. The lack of PPE for behavioral health care workers puts them at risk of contracting COVID19. When behavioral health care workers contract COVID-19, they need to stay away from patients. Which means fewer people to take care of the patients who need care.

Behavioral health care workers—like all our brave health care workers—also deserve to have the resources necessary to protect them on the job. But too often their needs are ignored because the risks they face are misunderstood.

Behavioral health care workers will always do their jobs—no matter the risks. But we must do a better job as a nation to ensure that they have the resources they need. Let's do all we can to reduce the risk [behavioral health](#) care workers face every day. Let's make sure they have the PPEs they need to protect themselves and flatten the curve.

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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