



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **NATSAP Applauds the Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act** *Proposed Bill Would Establish Federal Work Group to Study Youth Residential Treatment Centers' and Recommend Best Practices*

Bethesda, MD--The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, the largest not-for-profit membership association in the U.S. dedicated to residential treatment centers, therapeutic boarding schools, and wilderness therapy programs for adolescents, applauds the proposed legislation titled the Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act.

The proposed bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish a Federal Work Group on Residential Programs comprised of leaders from relevant federal agencies. As part of their role, the agency leaders will consult with a wide array of industry experts.

"I'm impressed that SICAA's proposed Federal Work Group is looking to hear from many diverse voices representing our industry--including former students," said Megan Stokes, Executive Director, NATSAP.

Once convened, the Work Group will develop recommendations regarding data collection policy initiatives, education and training for professionals, and other activities relating to development, dissemination, outreach, and engagement. In short, the bill would result in creating policy recommendations to improve industry best practices.

"We also applaud the proposed legislation for providing guidance to programs exempted from oversight through state legislation," Stokes continued. "Those programs would not be accepted as NATSAP members since our members must abide by state licensure and accreditation requirements."

Additionally, the Work Group would be requested to file a report every two years with the U.S. Senate HELP, Finance, and House Education, Energy, and Ways and Means.

The bill also requires the HHS Secretary to work with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct a study examining the state of youth in residential treatment centers and related programs. The results of that study will include recommendations on industry best practices. This report needs to be completed within three years after the law's enactment.

For more information about NATSAP, log onto [www.natsap.org](http://www.natsap.org).

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**About the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP)**

Founded in January 1999, NATSAP, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit membership organization, is a national resource for programs and professionals assisting young people with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Located throughout the U.S., NATSAP members include therapeutic schools, residential treatment programs, wilderness therapy programs, young adult programs, and home-based residential programs. The Association is governed by an elected, volunteer Board of Directors comprised of representatives from its membership. NATSAP members are independently operated and owned; therefore, NATSAP does not provide placement services. All NATSAP member programs that treat children under 18 are overseen by state therapeutic licensure or accredited by major mental health bodies, and in some cases, both.