

**SAMPLE CONSTIUEENT LETTER**

**Date**

The Honorable [**Name of Politician**]

**Address**

**City, State, Zip**

Dear [**Title and Politician's Name**],

On behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), allow me to introduce you to a grassroots organization dedicated to education, support and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with severe mental illnesses and their families. Local affiliates provide free peer education and support programs for both individuals with mental illnesses and family members, as well as community education.

Mental illness is a serious medical illness that affects one in four families here in Maryland- that is over 1 million people in our state. Over 300,000 Marylanders have a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, major depression, or bipolar disorder. Treatment works, but only half of people living with mental illness receive appropriate treatment. NAMI Maryland is engaged in a variety of activities to create awareness about mental illness and promote the promise of recovery in our community. However, the need for mental health services grows as community and state resources diminish.

Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA) has been underfunded even in prosperous years. There continues to be an inadequate amount of in-patient, crisis and community services to meet the demands of those most seriously ill. Cutting mental health services means Maryland taxpayers will pay more. Mental health cuts actually end up costing us all even more-lost jobs and careers, broken families, more homelessness, higher insurance costs, more welfare and much more expensive costs for hospital emergency rooms, nursing homes, schools, police and courts, jails and prisons.

Additionally, mental illness often co-occurs with other health conditions, complicating treatment and raising overall medical costs. Furthermore, as the population of individuals with mental illness ages, and their family member gets older, the demand for services will continue to escalate. Those who receive services know that recovery is possible and that people with mental illness can live productive lives.

Please protect all our families and all our communities now. NAMI Maryland urges you to preserve the budget allocated to MHA and to refrain from any further cuts to an already underfunded agency.

Sincerely,