

The Advocacy Issue

FALL 2012



For the one in five among us affected by mental illness, recovery relies on empowerment, self-advocacy and personal responsibility, as well as access to timely, humane, effective and affordable care in our communities.

Recovery relies on access to safe and affordable housing, employment and lifestyles. Recovery relies on building relationships and inclusion in our communities.

NAMI's State Action Agenda 2012 outlines nine policy objectives and positions that support our goal of ensuring that people living with mental illness receive the treatment and supports they need to lead full and satisfying lives as valued members of the community. Use this information as a way to learn about the key issues surrounding mental health care. More information about NAMI Maryland's state policy platform and advocacy agenda can be found under "Advocacy" at www.namimd.org. Also, to receive our Action Alerts please email info@namimd.org

Protect public mental health services

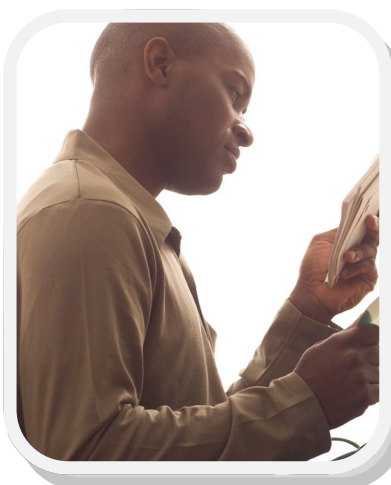
Medicaid

As the single largest payer of mental health services in the country, Medicaid provides critical treatment and supports for many children and adults who live with severe mental illness.¹ When Medicaid budgets are cut, people living with mental illness lose the stable services they need to maintain their recovery. In tough economic times, the need for mental health services doesn't go away; in fact, more people than ever need help.

Public mental health services

Public mental health programs provide important community-based mental health services for children and adults living with serious mental health needs who are uninsured, who have exhausted private insurance coverage, or who are awaiting eligibility for Medicaid. Public mental health systems provide intensive services and supports and long-term care that are vital for individuals living with serious mental illness.

Expand access to mental health coverage



Medicaid Eligibility

About one in six low-income uninsured adults lives with serious mental illness—and many more need help for less severe mental health conditions.² However, Medicaid coverage is unavailable in most states to low-income adults who are not receiving federal disability benefits. As a result, thousands of Americans living with

mental illness are left without the option of Medicaid coverage.

Increased access to Medicaid plans that include an array of proven, cost-effective services will help low-income Ameri-

NAMI Policy Objectives

1. Protect public mental health services
2. Expand access to mental health coverage
3. Ensure that effective mental health services are available
4. Promote integration of mental health, addictions and primary care
5. Improve the mental health of children, youth and young adults
6. Meet the mental health needs of service members, veterans and their families
7. Provide homes and jobs for people living with mental illness
8. Eliminate disparities in mental health care
9. End the inappropriate jailing of people living with mental illness

cans get the mental health care they need to successfully manage their mental illness and live healthy lives.

Affordable coverage with parity

Over 50 million Americans have no coverage for health and mental health care.³ Over one in four young adults is uninsured—at a time in life when many will experience a mental health or substance use condition for the first time.⁴ Still others find that their health plan does not cover mental health or substance use care in the same way it covers other medical care. Americans need access to affordable health insurance that includes parity, or fair and equal, coverage for mental health and substance use conditions.

Ensure that effective mental health services are available

A range of services

The right treatment at the right time helps children and adults living with mental illness experience success and get on with their lives—and we all benefit. Many don't get the mental health services they need. A range of proven mental health services, such as housing, crisis services, case management, medications, and community-based services, are indispensable to promoting recovery.

Medication access

For many, medications are an important part of successful treatment. Because individuals have varying symptoms and unique responses to mental health medications, people need more, not fewer, choices.⁵ Restrictive formularies and barriers to getting the right medication can result in poor health outcomes, increased ER visits, hospital care, and institutionalization for vulnerable populations.⁶

Promote integration of mental health, addictions and primary care

Individuals living with serious mental illness frequently live with other medical and substance use conditions, yet few receive integrated treatment that addresses their whole health. People living with serious mental illness die an average of 25 years earlier than other Americans, largely of treatable health conditions.¹⁰ Effective models of integrated mental health, addictions and primary health care, show promise in both improving health outcomes and in controlling health care costs for individuals with complex health and mental health care needs.¹³

Improve the mental health of children, youth and young adults

Half of all chronic serious mental illness begins by age 14, three-quarters by age 24.¹⁴ Despite effective treatment, most youth go without. Early detection and treatment of mental illness can result in a shorter and less disabling course of illness, as well as promote success in school and the community. Early intervention is also critical to address youth suicide, the third leading cause of death for people ages 15 to 24.¹⁵

Meet the mental health needs of service members, veterans and their families

One in four of America's service men and women who returned from Iraq and Afghanistan live with a mental illness.²⁴ Conditions such as depression and PTSD complicate integration into civilian life and place tremendous stress on service men and women and military families.²⁵ Worse, mental illness contributes to high rates of suicide.

Collaboration between state-funded public mental health programs and state National Guard and Veterans Affairs entities is imperative to provide mental health screening, diagnosis, services and supports that address the needs of those who have served our nation.

Provide homes and jobs for people living with mental illness

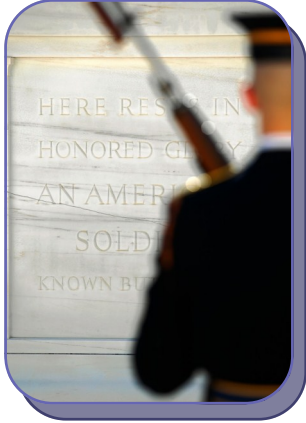
Permanent Supportive Housing

Without housing, too many individuals cycle in and out of homelessness, jails, shelters and emergency departments—or remain institutionalized. Supportive housing and "Housing First" models combine housing with support services to provide stability, reduce shelter use, hospitalizations and involvement with criminal justice systems.²⁹

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This Veteran's Day, Help a Vet or Family Member Find Support

NAMI Maryland is partnering with the Perry Point VA Medical Center to offer the NAMI Family-to-Family course. If you are a relative of an individual that has mental illness and would like to find a Family-to-Family course near you, please call NAMI Maryland at 410-884-8691 for more information.



The NAMI Veterans Resource Center has resources on PTSD, TBI, suicide, homelessness, public policy and more. There are also online discussion groups.

Visit www.nami.org/veterans for more resources.

How you can make a difference with Advocacy here in Maryland!

- ▶ **Tell your story!**
The personal experiences of NAMI members makes a difference when talking to decision makers.
- ▶ **Respond to Action Alerts.**
The collective voices of advocates can influence legislators' decisions.
- ▶ **Advocacy Training**
Advocacy training is an ongoing process. NAMI Maryland has training opportunities on how to be an advocate.
- ▶ **Come to Advocacy Day!**
Each year during the Legislative session, we invite NAMI members to come to Annapolis for Advocacy Day. We meet with legislators and support funding for mental health services.

Email info@namimd.org to tell your story, ask to be added to action alerts, information on advocacy training or Advocacy Day.

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Supported employment

Fewer than one in six adults living with serious mental illness is employed,^{30 31 32} even though most want to work.³³ Supported employment models show that with effective supports, most adults living with serious mental illness can work and achieve independence,³⁵ yet too few have access to successful employment programs.

Eliminate disparities in mental health care

Cultural and linguistic competence

Mental illness affects Americans in all geographic regions and across all racial and ethnic groups. Individuals living in racially and ethnically diverse communities are less likely to receive mental health care and, when they do receive treatment, more likely to receive poor quality of care.³⁶ Cultural and linguistic competence standards in requirements for mental health funding are needed.

End the inappropriate jailing of people living with mental illness

Diversion from incarceration

Disproportionate numbers of people living with mental illness are in our criminal justice systems,³⁷ often as a result of untreated or undertreated illness. Tragically, jails and prisons are now the largest psychiatric wards in the nation, housing well over 350,000 inmates living with seri-

ous mental illness.³⁸ Jail diversion programs are needed to divert offenders living with mental illness from incarceration to more appropriate and cost-effective community-based treatment and supervision.³⁹

Care in custody

Jails and prisons frequently fail to provide effective treatment to individuals living with serious mental illness and substance abuse disorders. Without appropriate treatment, individuals living with mental illness experience significant suffering and worsening of their condition and, too often, horrifying deaths.

Connection to benefits

People in jails and prisons experience serious mental illness at a rate two to six times higher than the general population.^{41 42} Typically, inmates living with mental illness are released without access to the mental health treatment and supports they need to live successfully in the community and, instead, end up cycling in and out of jail.⁴³ Ensuring that people living with mental illness are connected to benefits and treatment upon release promotes successful re-entry, safer communities and more efficient use of tax dollars.

We are sharing an abbreviated version of the Agenda. For a full version go to www.namimd.org, click Advocacy and click on the candidate kit tab.

Policy Priority— Effective Mental Health Services for Children and Youth

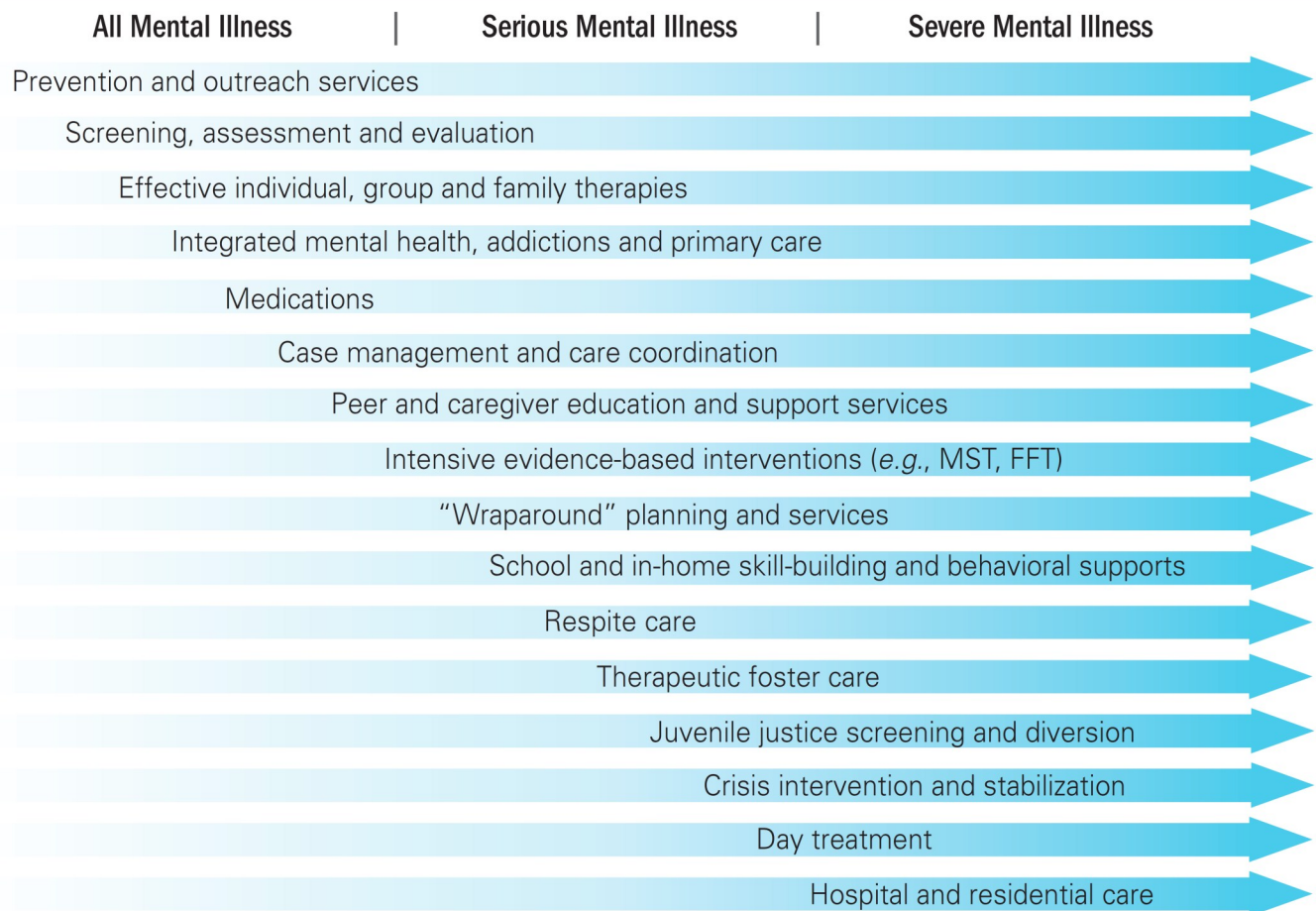
Public mental health systems that meet diverse mental health needs are a critical investment in the health and well-being of our country's children and youth.

A range of services and supports are essential in every public mental health system.

Services at the top left of the graphic below are needed by most children and youth living with mental health conditions, regardless of severity. Services, as they progress to the bottom right, become more specialized and intensive to serve children and youth with more acute or severe needs.



Child and Youth Mental Health Services and Supports



Policy Priority— Effective Mental Health Services for Adults

Public mental health systems that meet the varying needs of adults living with mental illness are a critical investment in both America's health and productivity and in reducing reliance on institutional care.

A range of services and supports are essential in every public mental health system.

Services at the top left of the graphic below are needed by most adults living with mental health conditions, regardless of severity. Services, as they progress to the bottom right, become more specialized and intensive to serve individuals with more acute or severe needs.



Adult Mental Health Services and Supports

All Mental Illness

Serious Mental Illness

Severe Mental Illness

Prevention and outreach services

Screening, assessment and evaluation

Effective individual, group and family therapies

Integrated mental health, addictions and primary care

Medications

Case management and care coordination

Peer and caregiver education and support services

Intensive outpatient services

Employment and education supports

Housing with supportive services

Skill-building and socialization services*

Daily living and personal care services*

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)

Jail diversion and reentry services

Crisis intervention and stabilization

Hospital and residential care

*Including transportation services

Maryland's Mental Healthcare System is Changing Fast— Stay Connected

The state of Maryland's healthcare and mental healthcare system is changing fast with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and the State's behavioral health integration of the substance use and mental health treatment systems. **NAMI Maryland wants to keep you informed. Your voice should be heard.**

Maryland is ahead of most states in taking action to implement the Affordable Care Act (Healthcare Reform). The Act will be fully implemented by 2014. It's great that more people will have insurance, but we want to make sure that the right services are covered.

As the state of Maryland moves forward by making changes in its systems, NAMI Maryland is also moving forward fast on its core advocacy goal: to ensure better lives for children and adults living with mental illness and their families. We have launched a new advocacy action planning process and committee to lead NAMI Maryland's advocacy efforts. We will be actively engaged in educating our community and activating our grassroots to achieve our advocacy priorities. Make sure that you are hearing the latest advocacy issues and opportunities.

We want our voices to be heard by our local, state, and national leaders. When you are reaching out to candidates, elected officials and decision-makers, *let us know your plans* so we can provide you with a Decision-Maker Packet to give to them. Then let us know what you hear from them, using our feedback form, so we can advocate more effectively.

Stay Connected

A great way to stay connected is by getting on our email list for Action Alerts. You will receive the latest information of what's happening in our state and federal government and what action needs to be taken to make your voice heard. Other ways that you can make a difference are:

- Get information about attending Advocacy Day in Annapolis
- Share Your Story using our form (it's ok to be anonymous)
- Train to be an effective advocate
- Sign up to help your local NAMI Affiliate get out advocacy alerts and information to YOUR community and networks.

Email info@namimd.org, call 410-884-8691 or sign up on the new NAMI Maryland website at www.namimd.org to get involved!

Start a Dialogue with the Candidates

If you think our country is not prioritizing mental health care and you'd like to do something about it, meet with your candidate. Today's candidates, if elected, will cast votes that determine the future of health and mental health care in America.

NAMI needs people who are passionate about their mental health to voice their opinions with candidates—and we'd like you to be one of them.

Not sure how to begin? Call a candidate's office and ask for a meeting. Group meetings are ideal. Or, invite candidates to a NAMI meeting or event. Let us know your plans so we can provide you with an information packet to give to them. *NAMI is non-partisan and does not endorse any candidate or political party.*

Introduce yourself and NAMI

"I am [name] from [city or county you live in] and I'm a member of NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. We are the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness."

Add a personal touch

If mental illness has affected your life, consider letting the candidates know.

Your story helps make our issues real and helps build a personal connection. If you decide you're ready to share, practice sharing the highlights of your story in a few brief lines.

Talk about our priorities

"Every American deserves the opportunity to be productive and healthy. To have that opportunity, Americans need—and want—access to quality mental health care.

You can help ensure access to mental health care—and the opportunity for better lives—by supporting our three priorities:

1. *Protecting public mental health funding;*
2. *Expanding access to mental health coverage; and*
3. *Ensuring that effective mental health services are available.*

If elected, how will you address these priorities?"

Listen and Respond

"I appreciate hearing your thoughts on our priorities. Millions of youth, adults, seniors and veterans in America are affected by mental illness. We know treatment works, but too many aren't getting the care they need.

Without appropriate treatment,

mental illness devastates lives and contributes to rising health costs. Providing effective mental health care is part of the solution.

With the right care at the right time, Americans living with mental illness can lead healthy and productive lives in their communities. That's why your support for improving access to mental health care is so important."

Say thank you

Thank the candidate for taking the time to meet with you. Ask them what the best way to stay in contact is.

Follow up

Nurture your relationship with a candidate by saying thank you again:

- Send a thank you via email;
- Write a thank you card and mail it; or
- Visit the candidate's website, which will have their Facebook and Twitter links. Go to a link and post or tweet a short thank you.

Here's another way to follow up: offer the candidate a folder containing NAMI's Candidate Kit resources—or email it. To download the kit, visit www.namimd.org, click Advocacy and click on the candidate kit tab.

Learn where Decision-makers stand

If you think decision makers are not addressing mental health care and you'd like to do something about it, ask a question. Today's decision makers determine the future of mental health care.

Not sure what to ask? Pick one or two of our suggested questions below to ask on decision makers websites, in public forums or during call-in radio shows and in other venues. We request that you do not ask "yes or no" questions or questions that imply a "correct" answer; instead, prompt a thoughtful dialogue.

Mental illness doesn't go away in bad times. In fact, more people than ever are seeking help from public mental health programs.¹ **What will you do to strengthen public mental health services?**

Awareness of mental illness and effective treatment is growing rapidly, but the majority of children and adults who need mental health services do not receive treatment.² **What will you do to improve access to mental health care?**

Half of all serious mental illness occurs by age 14 and

three-quarters by age 24,³ yet many of our youth don't have access to the most effective mental health services. **How will you improve access to effective mental health services for youth and young adults living with mental illness?**

Shortages in the mental health workforce⁴ are contributing to a crisis in care, especially in rural America. **What will you do to address mental health workforce shortages?**

Our veterans are experiencing high rates of mental illness and the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that one veteran dies by suicide approximately every 80 minutes.⁶ **What will you do to address the mental health needs of veterans and military families?**

Too many people living with mental illness are ending up in our jails and prisons, often as a result of untreated or undertreated illness.⁷ **How will you reduce the number of people living with mental illness in our juvenile and criminal justice systems?**

*Citations can be found at www.nami.org/citations.



Local NAMI Maryland Affiliates

NAMI Anne Arundel.....	443-569-3498
NAMI Carroll.....	410-857-3650
NAMI Cecil.....	443-955-4963
NAMI Frederick.....	240-379-6186
NAMI Harford.....	410-879-8570
NAMI Howard.....	410-772-9300
NAMI Lower Shore.....	443-229-2744
NAMI Metro Baltimore.....	410-435-2600
NAMI Montgomery.....	301-949-5852
NAMI Prince George's.....	301-429-0970
NAMI Southern MD.....	301-737-1988
NAMI Washington.....	301-824-7725

Make sure you get notices of NAMI Maryland's new educational teleconferences. The topics should be of interest to YOU!

Email your contact information to info@namimd.org and put "NAMI Maryland email list" in the subject line, and tell us how you heard about NAMI.

Donate to NAMI MD through your workplace giving campaign:

4186: The Maryland Charity Campaign & Central Maryland—Private Sector

80114: CFC of the Chesapeake Bay Area and National Capital Area

8568: The United Way

Other Campaigns? Call our office.

Does your employer have a grant or matching gift program? Let us know!

CONNECTIONS is published quarterly by NAMI Maryland—National Alliance on Mental Illness of Maryland. Letters, articles, and responses are welcomed and encouraged.

NAMI Maryland reserves the right to edit all submitted materials.

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NAMI Maryland - The State's Voice on Mental Illness

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SAVE THE DATES!
Coming May 11, 2013 to
Baltimore's Inner Harbor

All the funds collected by Walkers will be used to fund NAMI's programs right here in Maryland.

There is no registration fee! Get your coworkers, family, friends, and local businesses to sponsor you or join your team! Together we can stomp out the stigma of mental illness.

SIGN UP AT
WWW.NAMIWALKS.ORG/Maryland

Contribute to NAMI Maryland so that we can continue our mission to improve the quality of life for person diagnosed with mental illnesses and their families

I want to make a difference by:

- Volunteering (Skills/Interests _____)
- Making a contribution (circle one) \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$35
other \$ _____
- Making a monthly contribution (we will contact you with details)
- In memory of in honor of on the occasion of _____

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City, State, and Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____