

## ask a question

### learn where candidates stand

If you think candidates are not addressing mental health care and you'd like to do something about it, *ask a question*. Today's candidates, if elected, will cast votes that determine the future of mental health care.

Not sure what to ask? Pick one or two of our suggested questions below to ask on candidate 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.

*Please remember that NAMI is nonpartisan and does not endorse any candidate or political party.*



Mental illness doesn't go away in bad times. In fact, more people than ever are seeking help from public mental health programs.<sup>1</sup> **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.<sup>2</sup> **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,<sup>3</sup> 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 workforce<sup>4</sup> are contributing to a crisis in care, especially in rural America. **What will you do to address mental health workforce shortages?**

Safe and affordable housing<sup>5</sup> is vital to helping people with serious mental illness live in the community, but lack of housing options are keeping people in costly and restrictive facilities. **What will you do to address housing needs for people with mental illness?**

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.<sup>6</sup> **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.<sup>7</sup> **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](http://www.nami.org/citations).