



National Alliance on Mental Illness

Grading the States 2009 Fact Sheet

In 2009, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will publish *Grading the States 2009: A Report on America's Health Care System for Adults with Serious Mental Illness* (*GTS '09*). The report provides the only comprehensive, ongoing assessment of the nation's public mental health care system for adults. It is funded by a grant from the Stanley Family Foundation.

In 2003, the presidential "New Freedom" Commission on Mental Health condemned the nation's mental health care system as outmoded, fragmented, and often ineffective and called for "fundamental transformation." One key to transformation is transparency and accountability, which this report provides.

In 2006, NAMI published its first *Grading the States* report (*GTS '06*), the first comprehensive survey of state mental health care systems in more than 15 years. It provided a common baseline against which progress can be measured over periods of years.

The new report is the first report card since the initial measurement in 2006—in which states received an average grade of D, and only five states received Bs. Governors, legislators, state agencies, mental health professionals, consumer and family advocates, the news media, and taxpayers all sat up and took notice. *GTS '06* provided guidance and momentum for reform in many states.

GTS '09 will help determine whether or not states have improved or lost ground in the past three years; whether the national average has increased, decreased, or stayed the same; and what strengths, innovative trends, or urgent needs can be identified in each state and nationally. *GTS '09* will be an installment in continuing public dialogue about what is working or not working in America as we seek to build a mental health care system that is evidence-based, recovery-focused, and consumer- and family-driven.

Information Sources

The primary source of data for *GTS '09* was a survey of state mental health agencies (SMHAs). Additional information was collected through secondary sources, including but not limited to:

- A Web-based survey of consumer and family experiences with state mental health services conducted in September 2008.
- A “Consumer and Family Test Drive” of state Web site and telephone information sources conducted by NAMI volunteers.
- Public information such as state community mental health services block grant applications, agency and academic reports, newspaper articles, and other sources.
- Secondary data sources including: the number of adults living with serious mental illnesses, mental health workforce shortages, and hospital-based inpatient psychiatric bed capacity.

Grading Methodology

The information was scored and weighted in four broad categories:

- Health Promotion & Measurement
- Financing & Core Treatment/Recovery Services
- Consumer & Family Empowerment
- Community Integration & Social Inclusion

Sixty-five criteria were used in the grading process. Each one was weighted to reflect its relative importance. State grades—both overall and for each of the four categories—are based on these weighted scores. The nation’s grade was calculated by averaging the weighted state scores.

The report is scheduled to be released at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, March 11, 2009.

The report will be available at www.nami.org/grades09 or in printed report form from the NAMI store at www.nami.org/store.

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