

Mental Health Care Priorities

NAMI advocates to ensure that children and adults living with mental illness receive the services and supports they need to experience lives of resiliency, recovery and inclusion.

One in 17 adults lives with a serious mental illness like schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder and one in 10 children in America is affected by a serious mental health disorder.

Mental illness is common—and so is recovery. Yet, most do not get the right care at the right time.

Health plans fail to routinely provide equitable coverage of quality mental health care. And our health care system has left 45 million or more Americans without coverage for health care, many of whom live with mental illness.

We know that America cannot achieve a quality health care system without quality treatment for mental illness. We can do better.

Mental Health Care Priorities

The new health care and federal parity laws provide important opportunities to expand coverage for children and adults living with mental illness. However, NAMI's advocacy is needed to ensure that these opportunities result in the right care at the right time and in the right place. This will foster recovery and prevent harmful consequences.

NAMI's expectations for mental health coverage and quality care are captured in a single goal and three priorities for all major payers of health care.

One Goal

Children and adults living with mental illness receive the right care at the right time and in the right place to experience lives of resiliency, recovery and inclusion.

Three Priorities

- Public and private health plans should provide an essential benefit set of effective services and supports for children, youth and adults living with mental illness and co-occurring disorders.
- Public and private health plans should have an adequate workforce of primary care and specialty providers who are well-trained in effective and culturally competent services and supports for children, youth and adults living with mental illness and co-occurring disorders.
- Integration of care for mental health, addictions and other medical conditions should be the norm in all public and private health care settings.

All Major Payers

All major payers, including Medicaid, private health plans and state mental health agencies, should be held accountable to NAMI's goal and priorities for mental health care.