

### Where We Stand:

NAMI believes that all people with mental health conditions deserve access to supports that promote wellness. NAMI supports public policies and laws that encourage the development and use of psychiatric advance directives (PAD).

### Why We Care:

A PAD is a legal document that details a person's preferences for future mental health treatment or names an individual to make treatment decisions if the person is in a crisis and unable to make decisions.

While PADs have been around for years, they aren't often used in clinical settings. Many people with mental illness, their families and health professionals are not familiar with PADs. Currently, only 25 states have laws that allow them.

For states that do not have laws, an individual can still draft a PAD under the more general statutes connected to health care directives or living wills. However, a PAD is more beneficial because of the unique issues of mental health care and treatment. These issues include medication preferences, inpatient treatment

considerations and the reality that a person can experience changes in their wellness over time.

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There are numerous benefits to completing a PAD, including that it enables proper care and may prevent involuntary treatment. Individuals can also share their PADs with their local hospitals, providers and police departments, so their preference of care is clear and easy to prioritize. And when family members are kept up to date on an individual's PAD, they can be better advocates for their loved one.

To learn more about NAMI's work on this issue, visit [www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities](http://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities)