



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Texas

NAMI Texas Public Policy Platform 2019-2020

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Texas (NAMI Texas) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded by volunteers in 1984. NAMI Texas is affiliated with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and has 27 local Affiliates throughout Texas. NAMI Texas has nearly 2,000 members made up of individuals living with mental illness, family members, friends, and professionals. Its purpose is to help improve the lives of people affected by mental illness through education, support, and advocacy.

Mental Health System Capacity, Workforce, and Continuum of Care

The state should prioritize opportunities to expand access to care, address gaps in the continuum of care, reduce the mental health workforce shortage, and invest in innovative programs.

- Address gaps in continuum of care
- Expand mental health workforce
- Fund NAMI Education and Support Programs
- Enhance funding mental health Clubhouses

Child and Youth Mental Health

Texas should ensure that effective mental health intervention, support, and promotion strategies are readily available throughout the school system and other child/youth-serving agencies.

- Child Psychiatry Access Program
- Certified Family Partners
- School mental health professionals
- Mental health education for students and parents
- Mental health services for foster youth

Integration of Care, Innovative Mental Health Care Projects, and Specialty Populations

The mental health care system and other systems should both be equipped to address mental health and other

health care needs. Additionally, Texas should build upon effective mental health projects like Coordinated Specialty Care and those made possible through the 1115 Waiver.

- Primary care system integration
- Services for co-occurring behavioral health
- 1115 Waiver Mental Health projects
- Coordinated Specialty Care for Early Psychosis
- Address mental health disparities for specialty populations

Medicaid, Insurance, and Medication

Often, our members don't get medically-necessary treatments and services through their insurance, and they report adverse outcomes as a result of this. Texas should strengthen requirements for robust, comprehensive, and affordable mental health coverage. Additionally, Texas should pursue policy options that would reduce the uninsured rate.

- Strengthen Medicaid/CHIP
- Close the coverage gap
- Mental health insurance coverage
- Prohibit non-medical switching
- Safe and effective medications for Medicaid enrollees

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Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice

Individuals with mental illness often find themselves involved in the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems. We can interrupt the cycle of system involvement by providing linkages to treatment, streamlining access to care, and emphasizing safe and humane conditions.

- Trauma-informed programming at all intercepts
- Mental Health Grant Program for Justice-Involved Individuals
- Peer services for re-entry
- Improve conditions and access to care in facilities
- Capital punishment exemption

Housing and Employment

Texas should build upon existing supportive housing programs, identify programming that addresses specific gaps in the housing continuum, and make a broader investment in employment programming for individuals with mental illness.

- Small group home model and other forms of permanent supportive housing
- Rental and utility assistance funding
- Public-private partnerships to address chronic homelessness
- Job training and supported employment

Suicide Prevention

Suicides and attempted suicides are a public health crisis in Texas. Untreated serious mental illness can present a risk of harm to the individual and to others. Comprehensive interventions would dramatically reduce these tragedies.

- Suicide Safer Schools programming
- Suicide prevention training for educators
- Extreme Risk Protective Order
- Training for mental health professionals
- Alert system for adults with serious mental illness with safety concerns who disappear

Mental Health Information Disclosures and Family Friendly Services

Both state and federal law require the protection of mental health information in the medical record. State law in Texas is generally more restrictive than federal law in regards to the disclosure of mental health information to family members. This often causes providers to refuse to disclose information, even when such disclosures are in the best interest of the patient and community. Texas should align with federal law on mental health information disclosures.

Prevention and Trauma

There are a variety of social, economic, and physical environments that can harm the mental health of individuals and communities. Because these factors do not affect everyone equally, well-documented mental health disparities and inequities exist in our society. Specifically, traumatic events can have lasting effects on a person's mental health. Texas should identify and address factors that contribute to negative mental health outcomes.

- Education and support around interpersonal violence
- Implement trauma-informed care/practice
- Poverty-related issues
- Family mental health
- Physical environment and mental health
- Reduce mental health disparities

The full platform can be found at
namitexas.org/public-policy-platform-principles

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