#Vote4MentalHealth - Promote Mental Health this Election Season

The 2020 Election Season has officially started this week. Texas is holding its party primary elections on March 3rd, and NAMI Texas is focused on educating voters and candidates on critical mental health policies we hope to see pass in 2021 and beyond. Below are three unique opportunities to become involved in mental health voter initiatives.

State: #Vote4MentalHealth Volunteers Needed!

Thank you to those who have already stepped up and volunteered for this project! We still need volunteers for our election project. We are working on a candidate questionnaire for individuals running for state legislative seats this year. Texas has over 300 candidates running for the state legislature in 2020, so we need all the help we can get sending the questionnaire forms via email to these candidates before the March 3rd primary.

Please contact me at policy.fellow@namitexas.org if you are interested in volunteering for this project by February 12th.

#SickofItTX Needs Mental Health Voices

NAMI Texas is partnering with #SickofItTX, a non-partisan grassroots network of engaged activists committed to making healthcare the key issue for Texas policy makers in the 2020 elections and 2021 legislative session.

Access to quality healthcare is a core part of recovery. We need NAMI members to not only help with this movement, but also represent NAMI locally and highlight the need for strong mental health services as part of this healthcare movement.

Learn about this critical movement here and how to get involved here: https://sickofittx.org/ join.

Federal: Voters for Cure Volunteers Needed!

The Voters for Cures (VFC) coalition is looking for volunteers in Texas who are interested in federal mental health advocacy. The VFC mission is to support medical progress and the policies that make new medicines possible. VFC members have the opportunity to advocate for proposals that support the next
medicines possible. VFC members have the opportunity to advocate for proposals that support the next generation of treatments and cures and that ensure people can get the medicines they need. VFC efforts focus on three core areas:

**Making Sure Patients Can Afford Their Medicines**
We need to make sure that patients who need medicines can get them without the burden of high-deductibles or out-of-pocket costs. We must work with policymakers to ensure that Americans continue to benefit from the research and development of new treatments that improve how we treat the most complex health challenges.

**Supporting the Next Generation of Treatments and Cures**
Vital medicines are only successful if the people who need them can get them. We need to make sure that federal, state and local politicians support policies that improve access to these treatments for patients today and protect the innovation of tomorrow at the same time. We know we can do both.

**Protecting Medicare Benefits**
Politicians in Washington are looking to cut costs and make real changes to Medicare. Some policies would allow the government to decide which medicines Medicare beneficiaries can get, and which they can’t, in order to save money. We can’t break our promises to these beneficiaries and shrink their access to life saving treatments.

The coalition is specifically looking for constituents of these members of Congress:
Kay Granger: https://kaygranger.house.gov/about/our-district
Michael Burgess: https://burgess.house.gov/district/interactivemap.htm
Marc Veasey: https://veasey.house.gov/our-district
Will Hurd: https://hurd.house.gov/about/our-district

If you live in any of these districts and might be interested in sharing your story with federal lawmakers, please contact Greg Hansch at executive.director@namitexas.org.

If you have anything you would like to share with NAMI Texas advocates in these emails, please send the information to policy.fellow@namitexas.org
- Alissa Sughrue and the NAMI Texas Public Policy Team

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**Texans Care for Children - Postpartum Depression Strategic Plan**

*From Texans Care for Children: We're excited to tell you about a new project to support healthy moms and babies by making sure YOU and other Texans have a say in improving postpartum depression screening, referral, and treatment across the state. Texans Care for Children, in partnership with the St. David’s Foundation, is gathering input to shape recommendations to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission as they create the state's first five-year postpartum depression strategic plan, as required by HB 253. The input we collect will also inform future policy advocacy work and community investments.*

**Sign up to receive our upcoming online survey** on addressing postpartum depression in Texas, and send it to anyone else you know who might be interested.

Who should sign up to take the survey? We'd love to get input from:
- mental health providers
- medical providers (including health professionals, nurses, OB/GYNs, and pediatricians)
- community health workers
- peer support specialists
- advocates
- moms and families
In addition to the upcoming survey, over the next several months we will also convene an advisory group and host an online listening session to gain more in-depth information on challenges and opportunities facing families and providers.

We look forward to working with you so we can better support Texas moms and babies!

Advocacy 101 Training by the United Ways of Texas

Join United Ways of Texas in strengthening advocacy efforts and delivering policy priorities for family economic mobility and early childhood education.

**Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. at UWATX - 2000 E MLK JR BLVD, AUSTIN, TX, US, 78702**

**Topics:**
- Why advocacy? (The power of nonprofit voice and power of the collective)
- Opportunities to raise your voice and drive change—advocacy in action
- Nonprofit advocacy—Yes, nonprofits can and should advocate.
- Advocacy vs. lobbying
- Allowable activities
- Advocacy do's and don’ts
- How to make an effective ask
- The power of storytelling
- Next steps for collective advocacy

Training facilitated by Ashley Harris (United Ways of Texas)

**Registration can be found here:** [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/advocacy-training-registration-91714439357](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/advocacy-training-registration-91714439357)

NAMI Texas is nonpartisan. We support policies that help people with mental health conditions and their families.

Please visit our website at [NAMITexas.org](http://NAMITexas.org).