Join us as we #Act4MentalHealth!

NAMI TX Capitol Day Rally

NAMI TX CAPITOL DAY RALLY

When: April 30th at 11 am CT
Where: Zoom Webinar / Facebook Live

How can you advocate for mental health in the 87th Legislative Session?

Join us for a Virtual Rally to hear from mental health advocates and key state legislators!
Now is the time to #Act4MentalHealth.

REGISTER AT:
namitexas.org/capitolday

MEDIA CONTACT:
- Matthew Lovitt
  - peerpolicy.fellow@namitexas.org
  - 512-693-2000, ext. 3

Special thanks to our sponsors:
Advocacy is essential to improving access and availability of mental health care across Texas. Advocates who are able to effectively share their stories of mental illness and recovery can help to shape the policies that determine the quality of care provided to those most in need. Simply, advocacy is one of the best ways to ensure that every Texan living with a mental illness is given the opportunity for recovery.

Unfortunately, elected officials are faced with a host of competing interests that complicate policy advocacy. These challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has prevented face-to-face outreach and may limit advocate access to legislators during the 87th Legislative Session. One consequence of limited access to policymakers may be policies and programs that fail to provide the appropriate mental health services to all Texans.

So, what can you do to change this situation? Talk to your legislator! Legislators respond best to people they know who live in their district. Hundreds of bills land on their desk every session, so a personal story from a constituent increases the chance that they will take action.

In conjunction with the fourth and final Day of Action, NAMI Texas will host a virtual Capitol Day Rally. Individuals living with mental illness and their family members will share their stories and advocate for policies that address gaps in the mental health care continuum. Similarly, a few state legislators will describe how their work in mental health policy has shaped their legislative priorities.

The Capitol Day Rally is scheduled to occur at 11am on Friday, April 30th, and will be followed by our fourth and final Day of Action legislative outreach meetings.

Raising Mental Health and TD Awareness

Join us on Tuesday, May 4 at 11 am CT for a virtual event in support of Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week and Mental Health Month with special guest, First Lady Cecilia Abbott.

During the pandemic, the number of people that experienced mental health challenges increased at unprecedented rates. Many states, like Texas, were tasked with meeting the needs of acute mental health conditions partly attributed to the negative impacts of COVID-19 including social isolation, sickness and the loss of loved ones. At the same time some patients with chronic mental health conditions struggled to stay connected to their providers in a meaningful way. In this discussion we will talk about the importance of keeping patients engaged and treating the associated conditions, like tardive dyskinesia, that can be difficult to diagnose but have a significant impact on a person’s overall well-being.

Our special guest, Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott, has been a longtime mental health advocate. With a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and Master of Education, Mrs. Abbott brings a unique perspective into the importance of mental wellness in developing young adults. As First Lady, she has devoted herself to numerous causes focused on improving the health and well-being of Texans.
Tardive Dyskinesia (TD) is a condition where people have movements they can’t control. These movements may occur in the face, torso, limbs, or fingers and toes. TD may develop after a few months of taking medication to treat bipolar depression, depression, or schizophrenia. TD is a real condition that affects at least 500,000 people in the United States. The uncontrollable movements of TD may be disruptive to people’s lives due to the symptoms themselves and the impact they have on emotional and social well-being. The first week of May is recognized as TD Awareness Week.

Partnering with us on this event are MHA Dallas, Texas Council of Community Centers, DBSA, Talk About TD, and Movement Disorders Policy Coalition.

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Advocacy Opportunities Week of April 19-23

Here are this week’s upcoming policy advocacy opportunities. Make sure to sign up for the NAMI Texas advocacy newsletter so that you receive updates like this every week!

Highlighted are NAMI Texas championed bills for which your support would be particularly appreciated. If you are able to visit the Capitol, please review House Witness Registration to make sure you are fully prepared. If you are unable to travel to the Capitol, the House Public Comment form can be accessed through the link provided at the bottom of each Notice of Hearing. Unfortunately, advocates are only able to support or oppose Senate legislation while on Capitol grounds (unless you contact each Senate office individually). Please see the appropriate Notice of Hearing for more information.

Bills on deck for this week include:

**Tuesday, April 20**

*House Human Services (E2.030 @ 8:00am, Notice of Hearing)*

Support HB 706—Relating to the provision of counseling services by certain providers under Medicaid and reimbursement for those services.

This bill increases Medicaid reimbursement rates for LCSWs, LPCs, LFMTs, and LMSWs.

*House Public Education (E1.030 @ 8:00am, Notice of Hearing)*

Support HB 1754—Relating to the inclusion of suicide prevention information on certain student identification cards issued by a public school.

This bill requires student identification cards issued by public schools to students in grade six or higher to include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number.

*Senate Business & Commerce (Senate Chamber @ 8:00am, Notice of Hearing)*

Support SB 2051—Relating to health benefit plan coverage of prescription drugs for serious mental illnesses.

This bill prohibits commercial insurers from implementing step-therapy, or fail-first, protocols that require a patient to demonstrate or prove failure on preferred drugs before providing coverage for those determined by the physician and patient to be most appropriate.

*House Transportation (JHR 120 @ 2:00pm, Notice of Hearing)*

Support HB 3914—Relating to the inclusion of adults with mental illness in reduced-fare programs of public transportation providers.

This bill ensures that individuals with serious mental illness are eligible for reduced fare programs provided by public transportation providers.
Wednesday, April 21

House Public Health (JHR 140 @ 8:00am, Notice of Hearing)

Oppose

**HB 297**—Relating to inservice training on prevention of abuse, neglect, and illegal, unprofessional, and unethical conduct provided by certain health care facilities.

This bill reduces the annual training requirement on abuse and neglect from 8 hours to 4 hours for inpatient mental health facilities, SUD treatment centers, and hospitals.

Senate Health & Human Services (Senate Chamber @ 8:30am, Notice of Hearing)

Support

**SB 500**—Relating to creating the criminal offense of operating a boarding home facility without a permit in certain counties and municipalities.

This bill creates a criminal offense for operating a boarding home without a permit in counties or municipalities in which a permit is required.

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**Collaboration with Texas CIT Association**

Last week, NAMI Texas joined forces with the Texas CIT Association at the Texas State Capitol to advocate in support of **HB 3075**, a Rep. Garnet Coleman bill that would improve mental health jail diversion data collection. It was nearly midnight before we were called up to testify! We thank the Texas CIT Association for their ongoing partnership and congratulate them on their recent conference in Amarillo.

![Pictured above: Late night at the Capitol last week with Texas CIT Association and Rep. Coleman!](image)

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See below for a couple great ways to support NAMI Texas!

![Support NAMI Texas!](image)

From now until the end of May, The Vega Agency will donate $10 per every no-obligation insurance quote to NAMI Texas. Call (817) 527-5898 or click the link below to start your quote!

[Get Your Quote Now](link)
The Circle of Hope is a passionate group of monthly givers who are on a mission to improve the quality of life of all individuals living with mental illness and their families. The current crisis situation has created an unprecedented demand for NAMI Texas’ no-cost mental health resources. Your monthly gift helps NAMI Texas continue to bring hope and recovery through support, education, and advocacy to thousands of Texans living with mental illness and their families. Join here!

NAMI TEXAS INC
PO Box 300817
Austin, TX 78703
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