



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami

Maryland

Messages

- Mental illness affects all families and treatment works.
- In Maryland, approximately 175,000 adults has a serious mental illness in Maryland and 34,000 receive state mental health services.
- You really save lives when you protect mental health care funding.
- More cuts to state mental health care are devastating individuals, families and our communities.
- When state mental health care funds are cut, we all pay even more for the consequences.
- Our state's mental health care budget crisis is everyone's problem and the solution is everyone's responsibility.
- We must protect and strengthen our state's mental health care system-it's a real investment that returns real benefits.

Talking Points

- The face of mental illness isn't some stranger. It's our co-workers, our neighbors, our friends, our families and sometimes ourselves.
- State and local funding for mental health care has never been adequate, so budget cuts now just make a bad situation even worse.
- We know cuts are hitting every state program, but tough choices shouldn't be bad or unfair choices.
- Mental health cuts actually end up costing us all even more-lost jobs and careers, broken families, more homelessness, higher insurance costs, more welfare and much more expensive costs for hospital emergency rooms, nursing homes, schools, police and courts, jails and prisons.
- The governor, state legislators and other officials really need to protect and strengthen mental health care. We need to invest in proven, cost-effective, community-based treatment and services that really promote recovery.
- The state's Medicaid budget, especially, is a lifeline for thousands of people in our state who face mental illness.
- Lives are at stake. Treatment works-if you can get it. Without it, more people will end up hospitalized, in shelters, in nursing home, on the street, in jail or dead.
- Cuts are coming while the need for help is only increasing.
- We've all been hit by the worst economic times and highest unemployment in more than 25 years. Those unemployed workers are reporting symptoms of severe mental illness

four times more than people who still have jobs. Four times as many report thoughts of suicide.

- Returning combat veterans are experiencing very high rates of serious mental illness, suicide, addiction, homelessness and incarceration related to posttraumatic stress disorder.
- One in three young adults is uninsured, even though three-quarters of all lifetime cases of mental illness occur by age 24.
- Mental health agencies already operate with inadequate resources and have worked hard to cut administrative expenses as well as imposed hiring freezes and added managed-care restrictions. More cuts can only mean deeper cuts in treatment and services.
- Preserving mental health services preserves jobs, keeping people working and well rather than overlooked, marginalized, trivialized, stigmatized and sick.
- Mental illness does not discriminate. It affects adults, children and people of every ethnic, socioeconomic and religious or political background.
- It affects Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike. It can hit anyone at any time, including the families of public officials.
- One out of every four Americans experiences mental illness at some point in his or her life, and 10 percent of children and youth have serious impairments from mental illness that impact their day-to-day lives.
- Please protect all our families and all our communities now. Protect state funding for mental health care. Treatment works. Cuts kill.