

Talking Points for NAMI Volunteers

Thank you for sharing your story. Use these messages when engaging in grassroots advocacy.

If your time is limited, use this succinct message:

Individuals and families impacted by mental illness want to live healthy and balanced lives in our community. Your support can protect mental health services and preserve the hope of recovery.

Next year, we will add 10,000 more Medicaid recipients.¹ The Budget is flat. What is going to happen to me/my family member? It will be even harder to get services.

Please Protect Mental Health Funding!

NAMI Maryland's top three issues for 2012:

1. Fund our public mental health services

- *Funding for mental health services is flat.* Although services cost more today, *per capita spending is the same as it was in 2004.*
- **Next year, we will add 10,000 more Medicaid recipients.ⁱ The Budget is flat. What is going to happen to me/my family member? It will be even harder to get services.**
- Services for mental health have been cut to the bone. FY 2013 MHA budget includes \$30 million in cost containment measures including:
 - reduction in approval for purchase of care hospital beds,
 - reduction in rehabilitation programming for the uninsured,
 - reduction in use of residential treatment centers for children and privatization of state hospital beds.
- Additional cuts will decimate the mental health community.
- Ensure that Alcohol Tax revenue is dedicated to *improving and expanding* Mental Health Services.ⁱⁱ
- Ensure adequate funds, staffing and supports for the state hospital facilities to create or maintain a safe, therapeutic environment for patients in state hospitals and Perkins.

2. Prioritize services for persons with severe mental illness and expand crisis services

- In hard economic times, services are limited.
- The most ill and individuals in crisis need to be ensured services.
- Without adequately funded crisis services, the state pays elsewhere- jails, courts, hospitals.
- A 2007 law required statewide crisis services, but these crisis services have not been funded and successful hospital and criminal justice diversion programs have been cut.
- Please support legislation to fund and expand statewide crisis services

3. Support services that allow people to live successfully in our communities (e.g. housing, employment, education)

- To be successful in the community, people need housing, employment and education.
- If people have access to treatment but do not have housing, they are unlikely to be successful.
- The State pays to house people in jails in hospitals at very high costs.
- Even when people have housing vouchers or other benefits, many landlords will not be willing to take them because of their source of income.
- Support legislation that prohibits discrimination based upon source of income.

ⁱ Due to the economy, Medicaid enrollment has drastically increased from 6% (2008) to 13% (2010).

ⁱⁱ Last year, the majority of the increased Alcohol Tax Revenue went to one time spending on school construction.