

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) North Carolina Abbreviated Public Policy Agenda for 2012

The National Alliance on Mental Illness North Carolina endorses consumer and family participation in decisions made at all levels of government. Public policy must meet the needs of those who use the system in NC, especially in these very challenging times. We believe that we must reshape our system to focus on recovery focused treatments that work based on the evidence.

1. Create a continuum of residential options for people with mental illness

- Expand independent housing throughout the state; Develop emergency housing options to divert from hospital care
- Develop a housing wait list
- Involve certified Peer Specialists in assisting with housing linkages
- Change state policy to permit people to use Special Assistance for housing of their choice, not just licensed facilities
- Advocate for sufficient time for our state to create adequate housing options to deal with the Adult Care Home problem

2. Decrease crises episodes for those with mental illness through improved prevention and service delivery

- Measure the right things- such as how long people actually wait for appropriate services to meet emergency needs
- Require first responders from agencies delivering enhanced services to respond to crises
- Develop appropriate incentives for community hospitals, and appropriate payment rates tied to the level of acuity
- Study the root cause of individuals who are frequent utilizers of emergency services and fix that problem
- Include peers as part of the solution, including peer operated crisis respite centers
- Advocate for hospital beds being available when and where needed throughout the state
- Determine who should have been diverted from hospital care and how to get them to the right place
- Train law enforcement on crisis alternatives; using least restrictive, most appropriate services, including mobile crisis services

3. Decriminalization of mental illness

- Expand the use of mental health courts
- Eliminate the death penalty for those with severe mental illness
- Reform jail rules to provide protections to those with mental illness
- Revise Basic Law Enforcement Training curriculum Continue to expand Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) police training throughout the state

4. Getting the right service mix

- Adopt rules or statutes that require all of the services people need - from hospital beds to preventive care - are within a reasonable driving distance
- Adopt policies that limit providers from summarily ejecting people from service, or rejecting them from admission

5. Increase mental health services for the military and veterans and their affected families

Adopted by NAMI North Carolina Board of Directors 10-8-2011