

## **2018 Legislative Action Agenda**

### **Mental Health in Schools**

Education, early recognition and intervention as well as working on prevention are keys to minimizing mental health issues that are common in adolescents and hopefully, eradicating the long-term disabilities caused by mental illness. **It is vital that New York's education system does a better job of creating a true comprehension of mental illness and mental health issues.** Proper mental health is crucial to overall wellbeing.

The early signs of serious and persistent mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder start to become identifiable in late adolescents and clinical depression (especially in girls) can become prevalent at the onset of puberty. **School staff and students must be able to recognize the warning signs of potential mental illness as well as understand the importance of early intervention.** Schools must also be given the tools to demonstrate the harmful and potential long-term mental health effects of body image issues, eating disorders, substance abuse and bullying.

**Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, school districts are now required to include mental health as part of the health curriculum.** In addition, there are now 745 school-based mental health clinics licensed by New York State Office of Mental Health to help students better access services. **NAMI-NYS believes school-based mental health clinics is an important initiative especially in underserved areas and hope to see this expanded.**

**Governor Cuomo is also proposing \$250,000 to create enhanced mental health support grants.** Community schools programs would be eligible to include mental health activities in wrap-around services. NAMI-NYS supports this initiative as well as the Governor's Five-Point Plan to Ensure No Student Goes Hungry. Hunger and other socio-economic traumas can negatively impact a young person's mental health.