

## NAMI Maryland Legislative Session Update – January 31, 2020

The Maryland General Assembly legislative session is less than a month in and up to about 1400 bills introduced in the House and Senate. As a reminder, legislators have until the first week of February to file their legislation on time, and we expect the next few weeks will bring more than 1,000 additional bill introductions to review.

### **Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Cuts Update**

This past week, NAMI continued to focus on urging the legislature to restore the 2% budget cuts in the behavioral health budget proposed by Governor Hogan. We met with Senators and Delegates on the budget committees and also the state's top budget analysts when it comes to behavioral health and Medicaid to get some more insight on restoring these harmful cuts. The most encouraging report on the budget this week comes from the Mental Health Association's Legislative Briefing last night. Senate Budget & Taxation Committee Chairman Guy Guzzone told the assembled crowd he was committed to restoring these cuts.

A 2% funding gap might not sound like a lot, but rising demand behavioral health services means every dollar counts. Marylanders are losing their lives to overdose deaths and suicides at alarming rates, and with 300,000 Marylanders relying on the state's public behavioral health system we must do all we can to support our providers and programs while pushing for better access and insurance coverage – especially for behavioral health.

### **What's NAMI Supporting?**

Below are bills NAMI plan to support, but please note, this is not a comprehensive list. The deadline for bill introductions is more than a week away and bill review takes time. As more bills are introduced, bill numbers, full text and hearing dates are rolling in. Please keep an eye on these weekly reports for additions to this list. If any of these bills interest you or you have insight or testimony you'd like to share on any issues being considered this session, please get in touch with us.

### **DIVERTING INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

#### **SB 305/HB 607 (Augustine/Charkoudian) Crisis Intervention Team Center of Excellence**

This legislation is one of NAMI's top priorities. Very similar legislation introduced last year, which passed the House, and we're glad to bring it back again this year. The bill would create a CIT or Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Center of Excellence in the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, helping to coordinate ongoing CIT efforts underway in the Behavioral Health Administration, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, and local jurisdictions across the state, including most county and municipal law enforcement agencies.

Creating a coordinating body would help improve law enforcement response to individuals with mental illness, secure grant funding for training and connection to services, and take CIT efforts in Maryland to the next level. The benefit of CIT is that it provides law enforcement-based crisis

intervention training for helping those individuals with mental illness. In addition, a robust CIT program works in partnership with those in mental health care to provide a system of services that is friendly to the individuals with mental illness, family members, and police officers.

**SB 441/HB 332 (Hayes/Bagnall) Mental Health - Emergency Facilities List - Comprehensive Crisis Response Centers, Crisis Stabilization Centers, and Crisis Treatment Centers**

**MENTAL HEALTH PARITY PACKAGE – BETTER ACCESS TO SERVICES AND PROTECTING CONSUMERS**

**SB 334/HB 455 (Augustine/Kelly) Health Insurance - Coverage for Mental Health Benefits and Substance Use Disorder Benefits - Treatment Criteria**

This legislation would require a report from health insurance carriers and other health plans in Maryland detailing federal Parity Act compliance. The goal of the bill is to help advocacy groups like NAMI and state insurance regulators identify gaps in federally-required coverage, including reports about:

- In-network benefits and out-of-network benefits, substance use disorder coverage, prescriptions drug coverage, and other information.
- Specific information about all covered and not covered mental health benefits and treatment limitations.
- The numbers of plan members receiving mental health and substance use disorder services and more.

**SB 484 (Klausmeier) Health Insurance - Provider Panels - Coverage for Nonparticipating Providers**

**HB 541 (Lopez) Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Training Requirements - Hate Crimes**

NAMI Maryland serves on the Office of the Attorney General’s Hate Crimes Task Force, and this legislation would provide more education to law enforcement about how to effectively report and react to hate crimes. Hate crimes can target and occasionally involve individuals with mental illness and it’s important that law enforcement is sensitive to that dynamic.

**SB 545/HB 656 (Young/Lewis Young) Pharmacists - Administration of Self-Administered Medications and Maintenance Injectable Medications**

Medications are a powerful tool in treating mental illness. With appropriate treatment, the success rate for mental health disorders is 60-80 percent, exceeding the treatment success rate for heart disease. Medication adherence is often key to experiencing recovery. Barriers to getting effective and well-tolerated medications can result in poor outcomes for persons with mental illness. NAMI supports this legislation that would permit pharmacists to administer long-acting injectable behavioral health medications.

You can review any of these bills by clicking on 'Legislation' and selecting House or Senate and typing in the bill number. House bills begin with HB and Senate bills begin with SB.

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/>

### **Meetings and bill hearings**

You can tune into briefings and bill hearings via the General Assembly website by clicking on 'Meetings,' selecting the right day, and scrolling down to the committee where the meeting is occurring. Click on the video camera icon to stream or view past recordings.

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Finally, please take a moment to register for advocacy day on [February 27, 2020](#) if you haven't already.