

Policy Priorities

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Kentucky (NAMI KY) is a statewide grassroots member organization founded in 1985. NAMI KY's mission is to provide education, support, and advocacy for the well-being of all individuals affected by mental illness.

Mental Health Funding: Protect funding for the mental health system and related health and human services and advocate for increases in the state budget for services and supports that impact those with mental illness.

The budget for mental health services and supports has been cut every year for over a decade in the face of dire need, and there has been no meaningful restoration to funding, much less has the budget risen to reflect inflation or cost-of-living increases. Individuals with mental health conditions and their families have been severely impacted by these cuts, and the Commonwealth is paying the price as people who are unable to access services end up being served by much costlier systems (i.e., though hospitalization, homelessness, incarceration, and more).

Housing & Employment: Support any efforts to establish, expand, and fund supportive housing and supported employment services for those with mental health conditions throughout the Commonwealth.

Safe, stable, and affordable housing is an essential component of recovery, yet nearly a million adults with severe mental illness in the US are homeless. Supportive housing programs allow for stability during the most critical stages of recovery, combining housing with a variety of social services, educational programs, mental and physical health care, job training, intensive case management services, among many others. Research shows that another important factor in recovery is work, yet only 10% of adults with severe mental illness who are served by community mental health centers are employed. Supported employment programs assist people in obtaining and maintaining employment and Individual Placement and Support is a type of supported employment that places people with severe mental illness in competitive mainstream jobs. It integrates mental health care with employment services and includes benefits counseling and continual vocational support to ensure success.

Public Assistance Protection: Protect public assistance programs, including and especially Medicaid, from unnecessary and overly complicated barriers that would harm access by the most vulnerable Kentuckians, particularly those with mental health conditions.

There is growing interest in reforming public assistance programs, from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the federal financial assistance program for the poor, to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the federal program formerly known as food stamps, to Medicaid, which is the state-federal health insurance program for those who are low-income and those with disabilities. Because rates of mental illness among SNAP and TANF beneficiaries is much higher than in the general population, and given the fact that Medicaid is the largest payor of mental health services both in Kentucky and in the US, these programs must be protected from arbitrary barriers to access to care.

NAMI Kentucky

201 Mechanic Street
Lexington, KY 40507
Phone: 859-225-NAMI (6264)
Toll Free: 1-800-257-5081
Fax: 859-237-9078
Email: namiky@namiky.org

For more info contact:
Sarah Kidder
Advocacy Coordinator
Phone: 512-423-1749
Email: sarah@netbbc.com