

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NAMI Announces Legislative Priorities for 2017**

*ARLINGTON, Va., January 3, 2017* – The National Alliance on Mental Illness ([NAMI](#)) is pleased to announce its legislative priorities for 2017 as part of our [ongoing efforts](#) to ensure that policymakers maintain a focus and continue to address the needs of the mental health community.

“Last year, Congress overwhelmingly passed the most significant mental health legislation in years. But we’re not done,” said Mary Giliberti, NAMI’s Chief Executive Officer. “We look forward to working with Congress to ensure that the progress we made serves as a foundation for improving mental health care in America.”

The 2017 legislative priorities are as follows:

**Invest in Mental Health and Innovation**

- Reject Medicaid caps or block grants that drive down innovation and force state program cuts, putting individuals with mental illness and families at risk
- Support Medicaid expansion, with income-based eligibility, to provide coverage and a pathway to self-sufficiency for individuals with mental health conditions
- Ensure insurance market reforms include mental health and substance use disorder coverage in every health plan and at the same level (parity) as other health conditions
- Increase investment at NIH and NIMH in understanding, diagnosing and treating mental illness

**Promote Early Intervention**

- Promote early intervention for serious mental illness through continued federal funding set aside in the Mental Health Block Grant to support research-based First Episode Psychosis programs

**Improve Integration of Care**

- Improve integration of health and mental health care through policies and financing that:
  - Support the Collaborative Care Model, integrating behavioral health expertise into primary care
  - Expand Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics that integrate primary care into behavioral health care clinics

**Support Caregivers, Military Service Members and Veterans**

- Support our nation’s caregivers by extending existing national caregiver support programs to include family caregivers of people with mental illness
- Increase capacity for mental health care and promote continuity of care for military service members and veterans with mental health conditions

### **End The Criminalization of Mental Illness**

- Reduce the high cost of jailing people with mental illness by investing in policies and funding to ensure that every community has:
  - 24/7 behavioral health crisis response teams
  - Subacute and respite care
  - Assertive Community Treatment and Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (ACT/FACT) teams

“These priorities will guide our efforts as we look to keep what works and improve where needed to make it better for millions of Americans who live with mental illness and their families,” Giliberti said.

### **About NAMI**

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

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