



## **2019 Legislative Action Agenda**

### **Access to Proper Psychiatric Services and Medications**

NAMI-NYS firmly believes in a person centered approach to treating psychiatric disorders. **Integral to the goal of person centered care is the ability of people living with a mental illness to access the most appropriate treatments to advance their specific recovery.** Though this sounds obvious, too many people are facing a myriad of obstacles to accessing services and medications.

Though medication is not needed for everyone living with a psychiatric disorder, for those who do require medication, it is of the utmost importance that they receive the medication their psychiatric provider determines to be most appropriate for their individual recovery.

**Prescriber prevails is especially important in treating psychiatric disorders.** Specific mental illnesses can impact each person differently. Each case must be viewed and handled uniquely with doctors reviewing specific symptoms and other medications that person is taking. This is crucial as antipsychotic and antidepressant medications are not clinically interchangeable and many people with a mental illness also have co-occurring physical ailments, and drug-to-drug interactions also must be considered when changing medication for someone with mental illness. **Both private insurance providers and the Medicaid system are threatening “prescriber prevails.”**

NAMI-NYS is extremely concerned by these threats, which include the practice of drug formulary switching by insurance providers during a contract year, as well as the continued weakening of prescriber prevails language under Medicaid.

Drug formulary switching, also known as *Non-Medical Switching* (NMS), is when a private insurance provider changes what prescription medications they cover during a contract year. This is not only dangerous, but it is deceitful to consumers. **This is why NAMI-NYS has long supported legislation (Bill number pending) which would regulate drug formulary switching.** Last year, legislation to regulate NMS passed unanimously in the Assembly, but the chair of the Senate Insurance Committee would not bring the legislation up for a vote.

**The Governor’s budget proposes eliminating prescriber prevails from all medication including psychiatric medication. We urge the legislature to reinstate this in the final budget.**

It is also crucial that people have the easiest access to the treatments that best advance their recovery, this includes **injectable psychiatric medications which are especially beneficial as they make adherence easier. This why NAMI-NYS supports legislation (Bill number pending), which expands the scope to allow a pharmacy to administer injectable medications.**

Finally, it is also critical that people know what’s in the generic medication they are taking. **This is why NAMI-NYS supports legislation which amends the public health law and the education law, in relation to generic drug products.**