



### **For Immediate Release**

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## **NAMI Applauds Passage of Landmark Mental Health Reforms**

*ARLINGTON, Va., November 30, 2016* – Today, the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](http://www.nami.org) (NAMI) applauds a significant victory for the mental health community with the passage by the U.S. House of Representatives of HR 34, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act.

HR 34 will improve mental health care in America and reduce the unnecessary incarceration of people living with mental illness. The bill, which incorporates key provisions from the “Helping Families in Mental Health Act” (HR 2646) that passed the House in July, represents a new level of Congressional commitment to improve mental health care in our nation. This bipartisan effort will advance solutions to the mental health and substance abuse crisis that exists in communities across our country.

“One out of five Americans experience a mental health condition each year and at least half of them do not get the care they need,” said NAMI Chief Executive Officer Mary Giliberti. “Mental illness affects everyone – individuals, family members, veterans, first responders. We applaud the passage of HR 34 as a solid start to advancing mental health care for all Americans and call on the U.S. Senate to swiftly follow with a strong bipartisan vote to send this legislation on to the President.”

HR 34 incorporates advances that have the potential to shift mental health care in the right direction by breaking down barriers for individuals and families to access mental health services, expanding the availability of evidence-based practices and focusing on outcomes. HR 34 will also improve integration and program coordination across multiple federal agencies that serve people with mental illness and remove discriminatory impediments to mental health care. Finally, HR 34 addresses the needs of people with mental illness who become entangled in the criminal justice system.

Every year, NAMI hears firsthand, through thousands of calls to our HelpLine and other communications, from people who are struggling with their mental health and accessing care they need and deserve. HR 34 is an important step to address this crisis – which is illustrated by work force shortages, lack of community based services and hospital beds, and the highest suicide rates in 30 years.

“NAMI congratulates the U.S. House of Representatives for their significant efforts to improve mental health care in our country. We are particularly grateful to Representatives Tim Murphy (R. PA) and Eddie Bernice Johnson (D. TX) for their tireless leadership and advocacy to get this important legislation passed. Congress has clearly heard the hundreds of thousands of messages from NAMI advocates and members of the mental health community who never faltered in their call for improving programs and removing federal barriers to mental health care,” 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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