



MEMO

To: NAMI Leaders
From: Advocacy & Public Policy Team
Date: Nov. 21, 2016
RE: Election Response and Plan of Action

Mental illness does not discriminate based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or political viewpoint, and neither does NAMI. NAMI is a non-partisan organization dedicated to bipartisan solutions for all affected by mental illness. We are united under one cause: to build better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

Since the election, NAMI's members have experienced a range of reactions—from optimism to uncertainty. We have heard from many who express fears about losing health insurance and benefits. We want to make one thing clear: NAMI is committed to fighting any threat that will take away mental health services and supports that people need to live full lives.

We also understand that you may be hearing questions about the future of mental health coverage. We are dedicated to keeping you informed of what is happening in the halls of Congress and the White House and how you can take action and spread the word. In response, we will be communicating regularly through both memos and Council calls.

At NAMI, we believe that building better lives starts with building a movement.

1. Steps to support your mental health

(adapted from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline tips)

- Step away from the news and limit exposure to a small chunk of time each day.
- Find solace with a community of people with whom you can openly share.
- Try to avoid confrontational conversations that might heighten your anxiety, including debates with family and friends who may have different perspectives.
- Find a routine, exercise, distract your mind with healthy activities.
- Channel your feelings into a cause or activity you find fulfilling.

2. Three ways to take action today

- [Sign up](#) for NAMI's advocacy alerts
- [Educate](#) newly-elected officials on mental illness and NAMI
- [Mark your calendars](#) for NAMI's 2017 Hill Day and National Convention, June 28-July 1 in Washington, D.C.

3. FAQ

Mental Health Reform

NAMI remains optimistic that leaders in Congress are committed to passing mental health reform legislation this year. We have strong champions across the aisle in Congress, including U.S. Representatives Tim Murphy (R-PA) and Doris Matsui (D-CA) and U.S. Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA). These champions and other Congressional leaders worked together over the past two years to pass H.R. 2646 by an overwhelming vote of 422-2. The Senate HELP (Health, Education, Labor and Pensions) Committee unanimously passed a similar bill.

Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and Medicaid

The new presidential administration and Congress are talking about repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and potential changes to Medicaid, such as block-granting the program. However, any changes to the ACA or Medicaid must move through Congress in a process that will take time and will require negotiation.

Governors in both parties have made significant investments in Medicaid and health insurance marketplaces. NAMI will be working with governors and across the aisle in Congress and with many partner organizations to preserve important insurance protections and health care coverage for people living with mental health conditions.

President-Elect Donald Trump's Stance on Mental Health

President-elect Trump expressed concern about our "nation's broken mental health system" during the campaign and committed to taking steps to fix the system. He also expressed concern about the need to improve mental health services for veterans. NAMI will work with the Trump transition team to help inform opportunities to improve mental health care. Read more in his [healthcare reform position](#).

Benefits and Federal Housing Programs

SSI/SSDI, Medicare, Medicaid and federal housing programs, such as Section 8, are governed by federal law. Changing these programs would require Congress to pass legislation, a process that takes time and will allow advocates to be heard.