



National Alliance on Mental Illness

# **nAMI** | Virginia

## 2013 – 2014 Budget Priorities

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NAMI Virginia envisions a world free of stigma and discrimination where all people impacted by mental illness get the help, hope, and support they need to live the life they deserve.

### **COVER MORE UNINSURED ADULTS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS**

**Enable more low-income adults with serious mental illness who are currently uninsured to become insured and able to obtain mental health care, as well as primary care.** Support budget amendments that expand Medicaid up to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level as expressed in the Affordable Care Act.

### **TRANSITION PEOPLE WHO ARE “READY FOR DISCHARGE” AND FREE UP VALUABLE BED SPACE**

The Governor proposed \$750,000 for FY 2014 to discharge people out of state hospitals but this amount is estimated to serve about 15 people. **Failure to discharge people in a timely manner places a strain on valuable bed space and runs counter to the *Olmstead* mandate requiring services to persons with disabilities to be provided in the most integrated setting possible.** Support budget amendments 315 #1s (Sen. Hanger), 315 #5s (Sen. Howell), 315 #7h (Chief Patron Del. Edward (Scott), Co-Patron Del. Landes), and 315 #10h (Chief Patron Del. Hope, Co-Patron Del. Landes) that add additional funding to transition more people who are “ready for discharge”.

### **PREVENT THE CRIMINALIZATION OF MENTAL ILLNESS**

Support budget amendments to expand Virginia’s capacity for therapeutic assessment “drop off” centers. These “drop off” centers divert people with mental illness from **unnecessarily entering the criminal justice system.** Virginia’s 2012 jail survey found that 24% percent of the jail population has a mental illness. Support budget amendments 315 #4s (Sen. Howell) and 315 #1h (Chief Patron Del. Yost, Co-Patrons Delegates Herring, Hope, Keam, Krupicka, McClellan, Morrissey, Sickles, Toscano, Ware, Onzlee).

## **PROMOTE CRISIS STABILIZATION FOR YOUTH EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

Support budget amendments that will provide additional funding – beyond the \$1,000,000 proposed by the Governor – to ensure that the two regions that did not receive crisis stabilization funding last year (Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads) will have adequate funding to start their programs. **Crisis stabilization can prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and ensure that kids with mental health disorders are treated closer to home and families for optimal treatment and recovery.** Support budget amendments 315 #9s (Sen. Hanger), 315 #3s (Sen. Howell), and 315 #6h (Del. O’Bannon).

## **INCREASE ACCESS TO PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR ADULTS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS**

Permanent supportive housing – affordable rental housing linked with support services – permanently ends homelessness for those with multiple disabilities while saving taxpayers money. **Permanent supportive housing is most effective for people with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders that are frequent users of hospitals, emergency rooms, and jails.** Support budget amendment 108 #3s (Chief Patron Sen. Howell, Co-Patrons Hanger, Marsh, Vogel, Wagner, Watkins) and 108 #3h (Chief Patron Del. Lingamfelter, Co-Patrons Carr, Dance, Loupassi, Peace, Scott, Edward, Tata) that add \$1.5 million in new funds for FY 2014 to prevent and end homelessness to match the Governor’s 2013 appropriation.

## **PROTECT THE MENTAL HEALTH SAFETY NET**

The Governor proposed \$1.5 million in cuts to Virginia’s psychiatric hospitals. **We oppose the proposed cuts on the basis that the hospital system is bare bones as it is and until the community-based system is more robust, any cuts to the hospital system will have an adverse effect on patient care.** Support budget amendment 319 #2h (Del. McClellan) to restore the proposed cuts. And support 319 #1h (Del. Brink), 319 #1s (Sen. Howell), and 319 #2s (Sen. Colgan) to increase funding for inpatient bed capacity at Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute from 13 to 19 beds. Funding for inpatient bed capacity at NVMHI was reduced through budget reductions in 2010.

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