

NAMI's Statement Regarding President Trump's Recent Comments On Mental Health Care

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In recent days, there has been a lot of rhetoric by the President and the NRA about "crazy people" and a desire to return to the days of the "institutions." These comments reinforce inaccurate and negative stereotypes and create barriers to having real conversations about how to improve the mental health services that lead to recovery and participation in American society by people experiencing mental health conditions.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness fights for a more understanding and accepting world for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness, and for a mental health system that provides the care and support they need to do well in school, work and life. All Americans should have coverage for mental health care and access to treatment when needed.

Psychiatric institutions were closed historically for many reasons, including unsafe treatment of patients and deplorable conditions. Today, we see many youth and young adults languishing in emergency rooms and law enforcement officers are forced to respond to crises because mental health services are frequently not available. There is a need for high-quality inpatient care, including as a last resort, court ordered treatment.

Solutions to this crisis also require more than inpatient care. There are many common sense approaches that we know are effective and that can be implemented now to improve access to mental health services along a continuum of care for youth who are at risk. These include:

- Implementing intensive community-based mental health interventions for youth and young adults with the most serious mental illnesses.
- Integrating mental health in primary care and in schools so that mental health treatment is readily available.
- Increasing access to high-quality inpatient treatment through repealing the exclusion in Medicaid for paying for these beds and increasing reimbursement along with required outcomes.
- Ensuring a well-funded and strong mental health system through fully funding the Medicaid program and requiring private health insurance to provide adequate coverage for mental health and substance use treatment.

NAMI would welcome the opportunity to meet with President Trump and work with his administration on steps for improving mental health services in America. We were proud to participate in the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee for Serious Mental Illness. This report provides the Administration with a blueprint for fixing our nation's broken mental health system, including improving services for children and youth who are at risk.

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