

NAMI Colorado's Public Policy Committee (PPC) aims to be nimble and has thus been authorized to take official NAMI Colorado position on bills relating to the priority agenda below. Rather than delayed by requesting board approval, if any legislation that fits within the priority agenda, PPC is empowered to identify a position (support, oppose, amend or monitor). When policy issues arise outside the agenda, PPC will request NAMI Board vote on a position or to allow PPC to identify a position. We continue our commitment to full parity, access and advocacy for those who need it the most. The NAMI Colorado board has approved the following areas for the policy agenda:

1. Housing (includes number of civil beds, step down, and transition/navigation services)
2. Taxes (as designated to support other NAMI policy priorities)
3. Education (policies that identify, respond to, or support mental and behavioral health in school-related issues)
4. Homelessness
5. Criminal Justice/Jail Reform
6. Medicaid and related subjects

Disentangle the criminal justice system

In Colorado a person with mental illness has a 4 -fold greater chance of ending up in our criminal justice system rather than in treatment. To rely on the criminal justice system for treatment increases the stigma and discrimination towards this population because now they have both mental illness and a criminal background.

- NAMI supports the increased use, development, and funding for diversionary programs and transitional services including case management and supported housing for people with behavioral health conditions who have criminal justice system involvement.
- NAMI supports the restoration of a sufficient number of public civil beds to create access to inpatient care for qualifying individuals in who meet the criteria for involuntary commitment and cannot be served in an outpatient setting.
- NAMI supports increased case management services for the many non-dangerous persons who are unable to handle their own case management and require oversight to access and maintain their services.



Medicaid, Housing, Education and Other Public Funding Priorities (i.e., community transitions, transition beds, diversion)

- NAMI supports the creation of a Behavioral Health Administration to consolidate the fragmented system of care that currently exists. NAMI also advocates for CMHC to provide mental health services instead of RAE.
- NAMI Supports legislation that educates teachers and provides resources to schools for appropriate referrals for behavioral health issues. NAMI also supports legislation that enhances, rather than interferes, with parents' ability to care for their child.
- NAMI supports ongoing or expanded use of Medicaid, Federal stimulus dollars, and State surplus revenue toward jail and ER diversion, services in public institutions (e.g., schools and jails), access and housing for those affected by mental illness.
- Nationwide, over 20% of persons experiencing homelessness have a serious mental illness. Significant evidence shows that people with a serious mental illness are more likely to reach recovery if supported housing is available. NAMI Supports the inclusion of supported housing in treatment planning for persons with a serious mental illness.