

2016 Questions to Ask Candidates

PRIORITY: INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH CARE

- 40,000 American lives are lost every year to suicide.¹ **If elected, how will you make sure everyone has access to the mental health care they need to help prevent these tragedies?**
- It's hard to get care if you can't make an appointment with a mental health professional. Most counties in America are officially designated as mental health professional shortage areas.² **If elected, what will you do to increase availability of mental health services in our community?**
- Depression or bipolar disorder is the sixth most common reason adults are hospitalized.³ **If elected, what will you do to help people get the mental health care they need to stay out of hospitals?**

PRIORITY: PROMOTE EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION

- The number one reason children under 18 are admitted to hospitals is for depression or bipolar disorder.⁴ **If elected, what will you do to help children get the mental health care they need before they reach crisis point?**
- Half of all mental illness begins by age 14, 75% by age 24, yet it takes an average of 74 weeks in the US to get care after first experiencing symptoms of psychosis.^{5,6} In the UK the delay is an average of just 7 weeks.⁷ **If elected, what will you do to help America's youth get the timely treatment that's available across the Atlantic?**

PRIORITY: REDUCE CRIMINALIZATION

- Two million Americans with mental health conditions end up in jail each year often as the result of their illness.⁸ Jails aren't designed to provide mental health care or to help people recover. **If elected, what will you do to reduce the jailing of people with mental illness?**

PRIORITY: ENFORCE MENTAL HEALTH INSURANCE PARITY

- Mental health care is still being denied by health plans at higher rates than other medical care.⁹ People can't experience recovery if treatment is denied. **If elected, how will you work to enforce mental health parity laws?**

PRIORITY: SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH CAREGIVERS

- 8.4 million Americans provide care to an adult living with mental illness and typically provide 32 hours of care each week—more than a part-time job.¹⁰ **If elected, how will you help these family caregivers?**
- About half of mental health caregivers are not satisfied with the amount or quality of mental health services in their area. It's even worse in rural areas.¹¹ **If elected, how will you help family caregivers get the support and services they need?**

References

1. Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injury (n.d.) Retrieved February 5, 2016 from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/suicide.htm>
2. Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (January 1, 2016) Health Professional Shortage Area HPSA Detail - Mental Health Care. Retrieved February 5, 2016 from <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/Tools/HDWReports/Reports.aspx>
3. Pfuntner, A., Wier, L.M. & Stocks C. (September 2013). Most frequent conditions in U.S. hospitals, 2011. HCUP Statistical Brief #162. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. Retrieved February 5, 2016 from <http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/reports/statbriefs/sb162.pdf>.
4. Ibid.
5. Kessler, R.C., et al. (2005). Prevalence, Severity, and Comorbidity of 12-Month DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62(6), 593–602. Retrieved February 5, 2016 from <http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=208671>
6. Addington J. et al. (2015). Duration of untreated psychosis in community treatment settings in the United States. *Psychiatric Services*, 66(7), 753-756.
7. Community and Mental Health Team, Health and Social Care Information Centre (2014). Monthly MHMDS Report: A special feature on the duration of untreated psychosis. Retrieved on February 5, 2016 from <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB15097/mhmds-monthly-sf-rep-june-2014.pdf>
8. Steadman, H. J., Osher, F. C., Robbins, P. C., Case, B. & Samuels, S. (2009). Prevalence of serious mental illness among jail inmates. *Psychiatric Services*, 60(6), 761-765. Retrieved February 5, 2016 from <http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/pdf/10.1176/ps.2009.60.6.761>
9. National Alliance on Mental Illness (2015). A long road ahead: Achieving true parity in mental health and substance use care. Retrieved February 5, 2016 from <https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI/Publications-Reports/Public-Policy-Reports/A-Long-Road-Ahead/2015-ALongRoadAhead.pdf>
10. The National Alliance for Caregiving (2015). *Caregivers of Adults with Mental Illness, 2015*. Retrieved February 23, 2016 from www.caregiving.org/mentalhealth.
11. Ibid.