

# **NAMI Maryland**

## **Position Statement on Pharmaceutical Issues**

### ***1. General***

Individuals with psychiatric disorders must have access to treatments with appropriate and effective medications, including the “new generation” medications.

Decisions regarding specific medications that should be prescribed for persons with psychiatric disorders ought to be based on the clinical judgments of treatment providers, not on economic factors or ideological considerations.

Cost containment strategies that impair access to appropriate medications for those with psychiatric disorders will ultimately result in increased costs to the state and society as a consequence of increased long term inpatient treatment and the inappropriate criminalization of the mentally ill.

### ***2. Access to Medications***

NAMI Maryland supports the general concept that Medicare prescription drug legislation should be enacted that meets the needs of both elderly and non-elderly Medicare beneficiaries living with severe psychiatric disorders.

Access should not be limited by techniques employed solely to cut costs. NAMI Maryland is concerned that implementation of restrictive formularies, preferred drug lists, pre-authorization requirements, or “fail first” requirements will reduce the delivery of appropriate medication and set up barriers to appropriate care. Legislative and regulatory actions designed to cut costs should always take account of clinical considerations and best practices.

NAMI Maryland will work to obtain exemption from the prior authorization requirements of Maryland’s Pharmacy Services Regulations of all medications for mental illness. Medications that ought to be available without restriction for those with psychiatric disorders should include not only “atypical antipsychotics,” but all anti-psychotic medications, anti-convulsant medications, anti-depressant medications, anti-anxiety medications, and any other medication that is recognized to treat such illness.

NAMI Maryland supports research efforts by pharmaceutical companies to develop new and more effective medications. NAMI Maryland advocates pharmaceutical companies’ creating effective medication at affordable prices.

NAMI Maryland supports full implementation and funding of the Maryland Pharmacy Assistance Program, the Maryland Pharmacy Discount Program, and Medbank.

### ***3. Health Care Reform***

NAMI Maryland supports systemic health care reform initiatives to improve access to effective treatment, including appropriate medication. As part of such reform, an information and tracking system should be established to support physicians, acting in an official capacity, who monitor individuals served and individuals denied service. The state must provide data collection processes that make possible a reasonable evaluation of the health care system.

### ***4. Family support***

Families or primary care givers (in the absence of family) of the mentally ill should when possible be involved in the implementation of treatment plans, including those that rely on access to appropriate medication. A family cannot be a substitute for good clinical judgment or an effective delivery system, but a caring family, if provided with support, education, and information, can make a difference in successfully implementing a plan of treatment.