NAMI | Montgomery County PA

National Alliance on Mental Illness

BUDGET ADVOCACY 2022

1,710,371 people in Pennsylvania live in a community that does not have enough mental health professionals.

In February 2021, 39.8% of adults in Pennsylvania reported symptoms of anxiety or depression. 25.7% of these Pennsylvanians were unable to get needed counseling or therapy.

1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6–17 experience a mental health disorder each year.

98,000 Pennsylvanians age 12–17 have depression.

As a member of **NAMI Montgomery County PA** and an advocate for mental health, I am writing to urge you to support the proposed $36 million increase in the Mental Health Base line item as part of the 2022-23 budget that the legislature is now considering. Base funding is crucial to ensure that our communities are equipped to handle the needs of anyone impacted by mental illness. The funding provides student assistance programming in schools, housing, various types of mental health treatment, crisis services and more.

The **NAMI Montgomery County PA** affiliate works to educate, advocate and support anyone impacted by mental illness. The pandemic has had an enormous impact on the mental health and well-being of Pennsylvanians. This increased demand for mental health services combined with the impact of long-term underfunding of these crucial services has pushed our mental health safety net to the breaking point.

One mother called our affiliate asking for help for her teenage daughter. She attempted to access services through our community mental health system and was told the waiting list for treatment was full. This is unacceptable. We would never make a cardiac or cancer patient wait for treatment like those seeking mental health treatment are forced to do.

There has not been an increase to mental health funding in more than ten years and it is time to prioritize the mental health of Pennsylvanians. Now more than ever, vulnerable Pennsylvanians need these services. Support the proposed increase in Mental Health Base funding and give help and hope to those in our communities.

Thank you.