



Mental health
advocacy, education
and support.

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For More information

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Roadmap to Wellness Shifts the Conversation on Mental Health

CHICAGO – For those seeking mental health services, the city of Chicago is one large waiting room. We need help - desperately. To address this, in January the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Chicago and partners released *Roadmap to Wellness*, a report exploring the concrete ways leadership in the City of Chicago can advance a vision of a strong mental health system.

This report, released in the midst of Chicago’s municipal elections, calls for the City Council and the next mayor to make mental health a priority. It reframes mental health care as primary health care, and connects it to many of Chicago’s other key issues including housing, employment, violence and education. NAMI Chicago and partners make recommendations for sustainable solutions the next administration can implement, and include examples of innovative programs across the nation that are getting it right.

“Today, we are a city in crisis,” the report reads. “Children, adults, and older adults are living with untreated mental health and substance use conditions and do not have access to treatment they need. Chicago has turned into a large waiting room.”

Roadmap to Wellness charges the City to demonstrate their commitment to mental health by expanding the mental health workforce. This would include hiring a swell of staff for City departments with expertise in behavioral health and community engagement. The City should also invest in its helpers by bolstering the city Employee Assistance Program to support public employees experiencing high levels of stress.

NAMI Chicago and partners press the City with the responsibility to promote mental health within the education system and first responder agencies. They also propose the City invest in best-practice models to promoting good mental health in the community, including co-located primary care and mental health services, peer support programs, and integrated data sharing between agencies.

Roadmap to Wellness sign-ons include Breakthrough, Children’s Home & Aid, Cook County Sheriff’s Office, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, Heartland Alliance, Illinois Association for Behavioral Health, Illinois Collaboration on Youth, Illinois Psychiatric Society, John Howard Association, LSSI, MADO Healthcare, Mental Health America of Illinois, MYSI, NAMI Illinois, National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Illinois Chapter, Psychotherapy Action Network, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, The Kennedy Forum Illinois, The Mental Health Summit, Thresholds, and the Village of Niles.

To read the report, visit namichicago.org/en/roadmap.

The mission of the National Alliance on Mental Illness Chicago is to provide hope and improve the quality of life for those whose lives are affected by mental illness.