



FLORIDA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY COALITION

2022-2023 POLICY PRIORITIES

LEAD

- **988 CRISIS & ACCESS:** Support 988, the hotline for suicide prevention and behavioral health, by ensuring adequate infrastructure and staffing at all Lifeline call centers. 988 provides counseling, de-escalation and linkage to services for **quick access** to behavioral health systems that must include Mobile Response Teams and Central Receiving Centers or other Crisis Stabilization centers. Ensure Florida's MRTs and CRCs are available throughout the state.
- **PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING** for those with serious mental illness by increasing the amount of Affordable Housing money for Special Needs Populations (includes autism) to the Florida Housing and Finance Corporation. Data from supportive housing developers shows this saves lives and money by avoiding hospitalizations, use of emergency services, arrests, and homelessness – and gives recovery a chance.

COLLABORATE

- **INTEGRATE PRIMARY AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE** to improve outcomes, increase the effectiveness and efficiency of providing care, reduce costs, and improve access to adequate primary care for those living with serious mental illness.
- **SUPPORT EXPANSION OF CERTIFIED COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICS** that provide treatment for mental health and substance use as well as primary health care. CCBHCs work with other community health agencies to fill gaps in care, including crisis care, thus building upon the 988 system.
- **IMPROVE ACCESS TO CARE** by ensuring that health insurance covers behavioral health care in the same way and at the same rates as it covers other medical health care.
- **ADD MORE COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTERS** for people with mental illness to allow time to find medications that work best for them. Provide short-term (up to 3 months) as well as longer-term stays and various levels of care so that a therapeutic setting is available for each individual to move to recovery.
- **EARLY INTERVENTION:** Ensure adequate state coverage and capacity of First Episode Psychosis Programs and remove barriers for behavioral health clinicians to work on-site in family pediatric practices.
- **PEER SPECIALISTS:** Provide more trainings so that more peers can become Certified Peer Recovery Specialists for both Mental Health and Substance Use recovery. Ensure peers can earn a living wage and are not used to replace clinical behavioral health workers.
- **LIMIT SOLITARY CONFINEMENT** and *eliminate* its use for high-risk populations, including people with serious mental illness. This would lead to fewer psychiatric symptoms, lower rates of violence, improved re-entry and transitions back into the community, and increased cost savings to correctional systems. Extreme isolation can have a permanent impact and significantly increase the risk of suicide and self-injury.



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The Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of organizations that advocate for policy changes to improve the quality of life for those who live with a mental illness and/or substance use disorder in the state of Florida.



NAMI FLORIDA partners with the Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition to provide advocacy in the state.