



# FLORIDA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY COALITION

## 2021-2022 POLICY PRIORITIES

### LEAD

- **988 CRISIS & ACCESS:** Support 988, the new national hotline for suicide prevention and behavioral health by ensuring adequate infrastructure and staffing at all Lifeline call centers. 988 will go into effect July of 2022 and will provide a behavioral health response for behavioral health crises, providing de-escalation and linkage to services. An effective behavioral health crisis response system must include Mobile Response Teams and Central Receiving Facilities. Ensure Florida's MRTs and CRFs are available throughout the state.
- **PEER SPECIALISTS:** Establish Certified Peer Recovery Specialists as essential in the continuum of care and ensure they can earn a living wage.
- **EARLY INTERVENTION:** Promote First Episode Psychosis Programs, Mental Health Screenings in Pediatric Practices, and fully Integrated Health Care (as seen in Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics).
- **FAMILY HOMES:** Promote more AHCA-licensed Adult Family Care Homes that provide up to five beds in family settings for people with disabilities, including serious mental illness.

### COLLABORATE

- **EXPAND AFFORDABLE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING** for people with serious mental illness. Save lives and money by avoiding incarcerations, hospitalizations, use of emergency services, and homelessness—and giving behavioral health treatment a chance.
- **EXPAND MEDICAID** to cover another 1.2 million uninsured Floridians. States that expanded their Medicaid programs saw greater improvements in access to mental health services and medications, and a 44% average decline in uninsured mental health hospital stays.
- **INTEGRATE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE** in primary-care settings and Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, and support their expansion throughout the state.
- **END THE DEATH PENALTY FOR PEOPLE WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS** who, when committing a crime, had significantly impaired ability to appreciate the consequences or wrongfulness of their actions, exercise rational judgment, or control their conduct in conformance with the law. *People with developmental disabilities are already excluded from Florida's death penalty.*
- **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.

**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 individuals and families living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders in the state of Florida.

Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition - 5205 Greenwood Avenue, Suite 110 - West Palm Beach, FL 33407

Contact: Gayle Giese, President - [gayle@flmhac.org](mailto:gayle@flmhac.org)

[www.flmhac.org](http://www.flmhac.org)



National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NAMI Florida**

NAMI Florida partners with FLMHAC to provide Advocacy in Florida.