Where We Stand:

NAMI believes that all people with mental health conditions deserve accessible, affordable and comprehensive health care. NAMI supports state efforts to expand Medicaid, as indicated in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), to provide important mental health services and supports to more low-income adults.

Why We Care:

Access to coverage and care is essential for people with mental illness to successfully manage their condition and get on a path of recovery. Medicaid is a lifeline for much of that care as the nation's largest payer of mental health and substance use condition services, providing health coverage to more than one in four adults with serious mental illness.

Through Medicaid coverage, people with mental health conditions can access critical services like therapy, inpatient treatment and prescription medications. Before the ACA, many people with mental health conditions did not qualify for Medicaid unless they were pregnant, elderly or qualified for disability benefits.

To ensure all lower-income Americans can access health insurance, the ACA expanded Medicaid eligibility to adults with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level, including many with mental illness.

By allowing people to qualify for coverage based on income, rather than a disability determination, Medicaid expansion removes barriers to coverage for many people with mental illness. This helps them receive the mental health services they need to thrive in their communities.

Medicaid expansion was originally a requirement of the law, but a Supreme Court ruling in 2012 made the Medicaid expansion optional for states.

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To date, more than two-thirds of states have elected to expand Medicaid. States that have not expanded their Medicaid programs have left millions of Americans with mental illness without any affordable option for health insurance.

To learn more about NAMI's work on this issue, visit
www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities