

NAMI Texas 2011 Legislative Agenda

Overview: Save taxpayers dollars by preventing the criminalization of mental illness through minor modifications to existing statutes involving:

- Inpatient and outpatient commitment
- Emergency detention
- Competency restoration
- Adapting insanity defense for severe mental illness
- State and locally funded community care
- Parole reform to pay for it

Commitment Law: Make it possible for judges to ensure that Texans with severe mental illness receive necessary medications and case management services through temporary outpatient commitment.

Emergency Detention: Ensure that Texans with severe mental illness are not turned away from psychiatric hospitals when they are suicidal or dangerous to others or too unstable to protect themselves from the results of untreated mental illness and facilitate peace officers taking such Texans to a hospital rather than jail.

Competency Restoration: Ensure that if a Texan with serious mental illness is arrested that there is a quick and reliable method to determine whether the individual is competent to stand trial and that if the person is found to be incompetent that he or she doesn't further decompensate in jail waiting for a hospital bed to open up.

Adapting Insanity Defense for Severe Mental Illness: Allow Texans who cannot appreciate their conduct is wrong or are unable to control their behavior because of their mental illness to be hospitalized rather than imprisoned.

State and Locally Funded Community Care: Clarify that state and local government authorities are responsible for persons with serious mental illness, including providing medication and case management services and a minimum standard of mental health care.

Parole Reform: Save state taxpayer dollars by allowing parole officials to consider parole at an earlier time for non-violent offenses, including for state jail felons, who have no right to good-time credit or parole. Prison costs \$50 per day per inmate versus \$3.51 per day for parole. Inmates with mental illness cost \$100 to \$137 per day.