Hill & Back Home Day

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead (1901-1978)
Advocacy

1. Connect
2. Tell a story
3. Points Against
4. Points in Favor
5. Ask

Back Home

Hill Day

Calls to the Capitol
Scheduling a Meeting

1. Zip code lookup:
   Representatives www.house.gov
   Senators www.senate.gov

2. Visit the Members’ official website and obtain:
   - Washington DC and/or District Office phone numbers
   - Office address at the Capitol and Back Home in district

3. Call and inquire “the name of the scheduler and the best manner to submit a scheduling request as a constituent.”
Scheduling (For Hill Day)

• Submit a scheduling request in writing via email or via an online form (some offices require form).

• Follow up with the scheduler in writing and via telephone by June 9th at the latest.

• Multiple meetings should be scheduled at LEAST ½ hours apart – the Senate chamber is a 20-minute walk from the House chamber plus security wait times may be long.
  • Schedulers will understand if you tell them you need to move an offered time by ½ hour due to a confirmed meeting on the other side of the Capitol.
Template Scheduling Email

TEMPLATE EMAIL

Dear [name of scheduler],

I am a constituent of [Title, Name]. I am writing today to request your assistance scheduling a meeting with the [Representative or Senator].

Each year advocates affiliated with Mental Health America engage with Congress to share our priorities during "Hill Day"—this year that day falls on Tuesday, June 13th. Will [Title, Name] have 15-20 minutes to meet with me on June 13th after 9:00 am to discuss mental health and health care reform?

I look forward to hearing from you and greatly appreciate your assistance!

Sincerely,

Full Name
Address
Phone
Email

*Remember to say please and thank you!*
Calling your elected official

Using the zip code lookup tool at www.house.gov/ or www.senate.gov/ an advocate may find their Representative and Senator.

Staff: Hello, thank you for calling the office of Senator/Representative X

MHA Advocate: Hi, my name is __________ and I am a constituent. I would like to share a message about the importance of protecting mental health care policies and programs.

Staff: Sure; I’d be happy to take a message for you and share it with the Representative/Senator.

MHA Advocate: Thank you. Again, my name is _______ and I am from City, State. [In a couple sentences share a personal story about you, your practice, or a loved one. In one minutes or less explain how proposals being considered to replace Obamacare and cut federal funding for Medicaid/Children’s Health Insurance will be harmful.]

End the call by thanking the staff for their time and let them know you’d like a response.
In A Meeting

• Thank the Member or staff for taking a vote or action you appreciate.

• Introduce yourself and anyone else with you.

• Share a quip about the state or provide news on a state issue.

• Focus on your talking points. It is important to stay on message: be concrete and concise.

• Tell your personal story.

• Thank the office at the end of the meeting verbally and send a follow up thank you note after visiting.
Telling Your Story

1. Keep the story to a couple of sentences

2. Think about mental health (MH) services in Medicaid or as part of the exchanges/commercial markets

3. Explain a time when you or someone you know personally benefitted from MH services

4. End the story with an “ask”
What is an “ask”? 
Asks are concrete measurable actions that may be taken by a Member of Congress to change or reinforce existing law.

What ask would benefit you & those you care about?

Please **VOTE NO** on legislation that would **remove** MH/SUD services from the required “essential health benefits” package.

**Will you commit to not cutting Medicaid funding** so MH costs won’t be shifted to states?

**Can you promise to** ensure people with **pre-existing conditions** will not be excluded from or **priced out** of coverage in any new health care bill?
Health Care Reform Priorities

MHA opposes going back to the Bad Old Days:

- Not allowing people with **preexisting conditions** to be excluded or priced out of insurance plans
- Prohibiting states from allowing **the sale of plans** that don’t designate benefits for MH/SUD as **essential** benefits
- Pricing older, sick and disabled people out of insurance markets by **eliminating community rating**
- Penalizing people who lose their coverage with a **30% surcharge** when they try to buy new insurance
Health Care Reform Priorities

MHA favors:

· Assuring that MH/SUD services remain **Essential Health Benefits**

· Protecting **parity** in all plans including: no higher copays, more stringent approval processes, or more limitations than for any other covered benefits

· Protecting **Medicaid funding** (the nation’s largest source of MH/SUD services) so that states aren’t forced to limit services, and cut enrollment
Talking Points

Budget/Appropriations

Fully fund mental health and substance use programs across all federal departments including:

- The 21st Century Cures Act
- Community Mental Health Services Block Grant
Talking Points

Medicaid

• Medicaid is the single largest payer for mental health and substance use disorder services.

• Medicaid cuts will shift costs to states forcing people out of the program and reducing services such as prevention and rehabilitation.

• Don’t force states to roll back expansion

• Allow new states to expand
Additional Talking Points

CHIP

• Reauthorize a long-term funding extension for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) which supports the behavioral health needs and overall health of children.

• Provide certainty to states while they plan their budgets as existing funding will expire September 30
Additional Resources to Dive Deeper
Medicaid Breakdown by State

“20 Percent of Americans Were Covered By Medicaid/CHIP in 2015”

Kaiser Family Foundation Fact Sheets By State

http://kff.org/interactive/medicaid-state-fact-sheets/
MHA Program

THE STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN AMERICA 2017
1 IN 5 ADULTS HAVE A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

THAT’S OVER 40 MILLION AMERICANS

MORE THAN THE POPULATIONS OF NEW YORK & FLORIDA COMBINED

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH IS WORSENING

RATES OF YOUTH DEPRESSION

8.5% 11.1%
IN 2011 IN 2014

EVEN WITH SEVERE DEPRESSION, 80% ARE LEFT WITH NO OR INSUFFICIENT TREATMENT.

MORE AMERICANS HAVE ACCESS TO SERVICES

ACCESS TO INSURANCE INCREASED

SO DID ACCESS TO TREATMENT

Healthcare reform has reduced the rates of uninsured adults with mental health conditions. HOWEVER,

19% REMAINED UNSURED IN STATES THAT DID NOT EXPAND MEDICAID.

13% REMAINED UNSURED IN STATES THAT DID EXPAND MEDICAID.

MOST AMERICANS LACK ACCESS TO CARE

56% of American adults with a mental illness did not receive treatment.

Even in Vermont, the state with the best access, 43% of adults with a mental illness did not receive treatment.

THERE IS A SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

In states with the lowest workforce, there’s only 1 mental health professional per 1,000 individuals

This includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors and psychiatric nurses combined.

LESS ACCESS TO CARE MEANS MORE INCARCERATION

Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama

had the least access to care and highest rates of imprisonment

There are over 57,000 people with mental health conditions in prison and jail in those states alone that’s enough to fill Madison Square Garden 3 times
Hill/Home Day June 13th, 2017

On the Hill:
• Advocates meet in Lobby, walk with AFSP to Capitol
• Advocates rally with legislative leaders
• Advocates visit the office of their Representative and Senators

Back Home:
• Advocates view rally at AFSP website
• Advocates call into their Representative and Senators offices
• Advocates share the personal nature of mental health reform with the Member’s staff
Questions & Comments
Thank You & Contact Us

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