

KEY ELEMENTS TO A COMPREHENSIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM

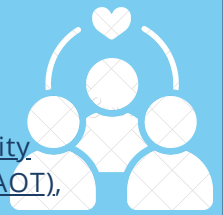
Mental health conditions are common and recovery is possible. And there is a critical and urgent need for our state's behavioral health care system to ensure all Washingtonians can access prevention, early intervention, care, and supports for behavioral health.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Washington recognizes that there have been significant investments and improvements to the state's behavioral health system. However, many Washingtonians still face crises in the face of systemic barriers that impede access to recovery. Change is still critically needed to adequately and effectively fund services; decriminalize mental illness, address the rising rates of homelessness, bolster meaningful accountability, and holistically meet the needs of people with behavioral health conditions. **Again, recovery is possible. This can be achieved by continuing to build a comprehensive system of care.**

NAMI Washington's key elements to a comprehensive behavioral health care system include:

1. INCREASE ACCESS TO A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

- Treatment should be individualized, coordinated, comprehensive, and accessible in each community; inclusive of wrap-around and integrated care.
- Require and expand best evidence-based models, such as [Program for Assertive Community Treatment \(PACT\)](#) programs, and access to practices, like [Assisted Outpatient Treatment \(AOT\)](#), that can reduce hospitalization and criminalization for all counties' community treatment.



2. FULLY FUND THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM

- Invest in a responsive system with low wait times in accessible locations across the state.
- Require and enforce insurance coverage for behavioral health treatment and insurance coverage parity.



3. PRIORITIZE PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

- Provide accessible, early screening for behavioral health conditions with early appropriate, treatment such as in school and university-based services.
- Care should be recovery focused by promoting stable housing, employment, crisis respite, peer support, and empathetic connections to others.
- [Every \\$1 invested in behavioral health prevention and early intervention programs can save the state \\$2 to \\$10.](#)



4. DECRIMINALIZE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

- Ensure effective diversion resources are available statewide.
- Invest in crisis diversion programs and [Designated Crisis Responders \(DCRs\)](#).
- Expand access to [Crisis Intervention Teams \(CIT\)](#) statewide.

