

# access to treatment

Everyone deserves access to quality mental health services in their own community.



- Only 41% of adults in the U.S. with a mental health condition received mental health services in the past year. Among adults with a serious mental illness, 62.9% received mental health services in the past year.
- Secure and consistent access to effective treatment options is crucial for people with mental illness. Without treatment, individuals may struggle considerably, their conditions may worsen and they may even become a danger to themselves or others. Therefore, treatment should be easy to find, affordable and quickly available.<sup>1</sup>
- People with mental health conditions deserve access to all treatments approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH), and prescribed to them by a qualified health professional. Treatments include medication, evidence-based services and supports.
- Marginalized racial and ethnic groups are less likely to receive mental health treatment and African Americans are less likely to receive accurate diagnoses than their Caucasian counterparts.<sup>2</sup> A more diverse workforce would likely provide not only more culturally appropriate treatment, but language skills to match those of patients. A federal commitment to the outreach and educational support necessary to build a truly diverse mental health workforce is a critical policy recommendation for decreasing disparities in mental health care.<sup>3</sup>
- Socio-economic factors also play a part and can make treatment options less available. If Wisconsin accepted federal funds for BadgerCare, more Wisconsinites could access affordable mental health care. If Medicaid rates are increased, service providers could serve the growing number of eligible individuals on Medicaid.

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(1) Access to Treatment. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from <http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Public-Policy/Access-to-Treatment>

(2) African American Mental Health. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from: <http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Diverse-Communities/African-Americans>

(3) Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2010). 2010 National Healthcare Disparities Report. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from <http://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqrdr/nhdr10/index.html>