



Nothing About Us Without Us: **Why Civic Engagement is Critical for Behavioral Health Progress**

July 10, 2024

8:00am PT / 9:00am MT / 10:00pm CT / 11:00am ET

Welcome! We will get started momentarily.

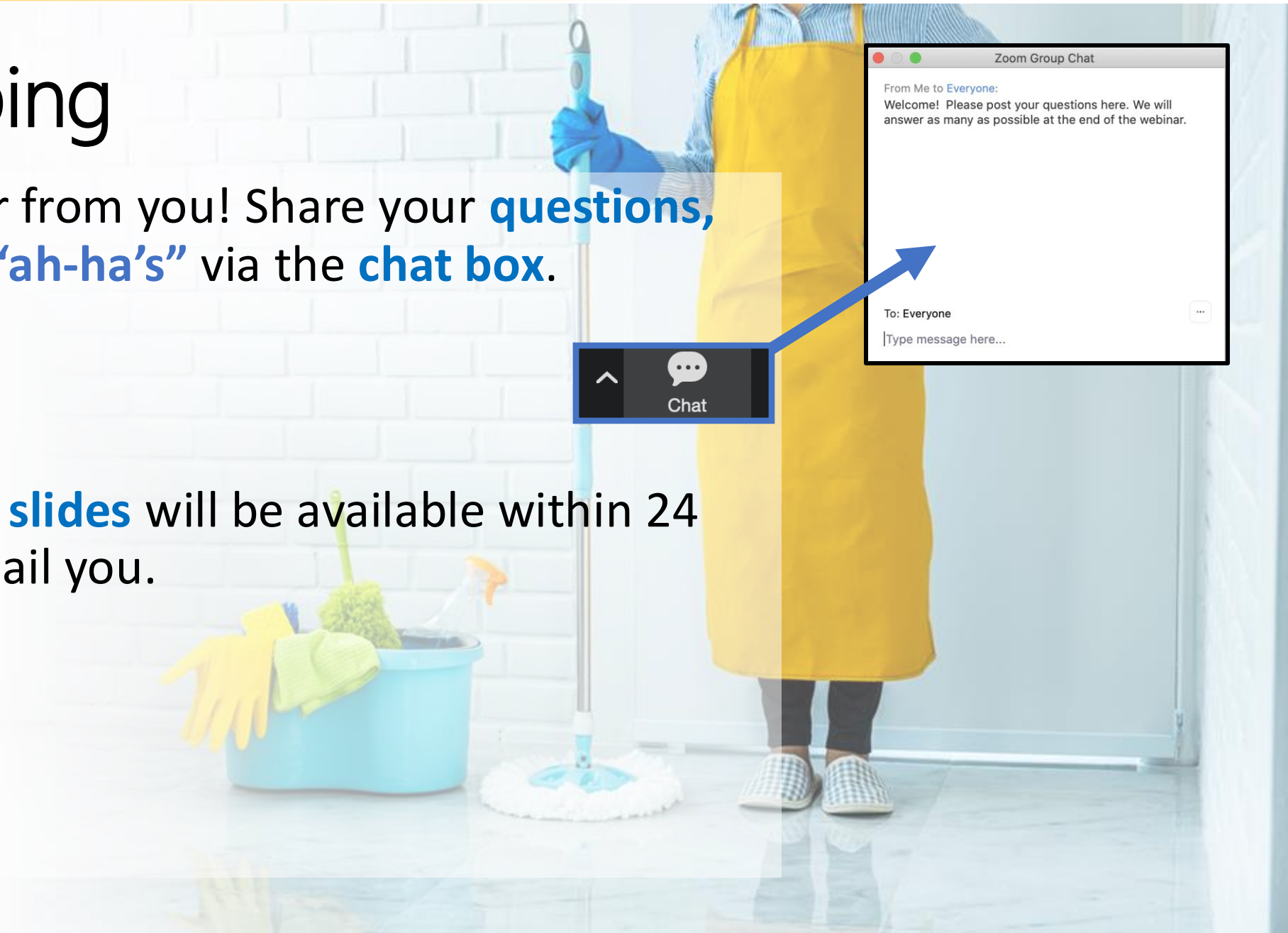
Please let us know who you are and where you are from in the chat box
(click the chat icon at the bottom of your screen).

Welcome



Housekeeping

- We want to hear from you! Share your **questions, comments** and “**ah-ha’s**” via the **chat box**.
- A **recording and slides** will be available within 24 hours - We’ll email you.



Speakers



Jonah Cunningham
President and CEO
National Association of
County Behavioral Health
and Developmental
Disability Directors
(NACBHDD)



Kelly Davis
Vice President of Peer
and Youth Advocacy at
Mental Health America



Brandon Graham
Director, Advocacy
National Alliance on
Mental Illness (NAMI)



Vesper Moore
Chief Operating
Officer
Kiva Centers



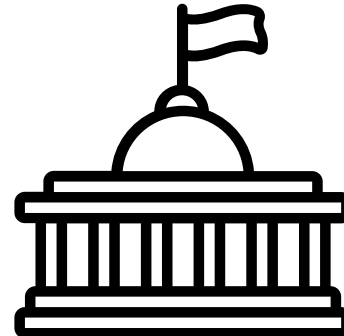
An Overview of Federal Policy Processes

JONAH C. CUNNINGHAM, PRESIDENT AND CEO

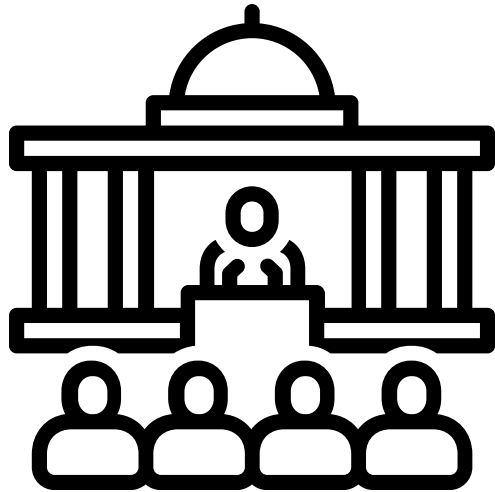


About NACBHDD

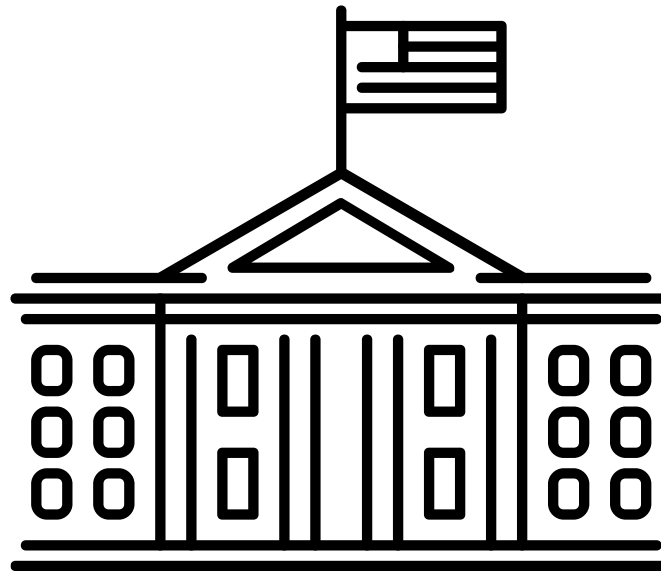
- Founded in 1989
- Represents Local Authorities
- Dual Focus on I/DD and Behavioral Health
- Affiliate of NACo



Branches of Government



Legislative



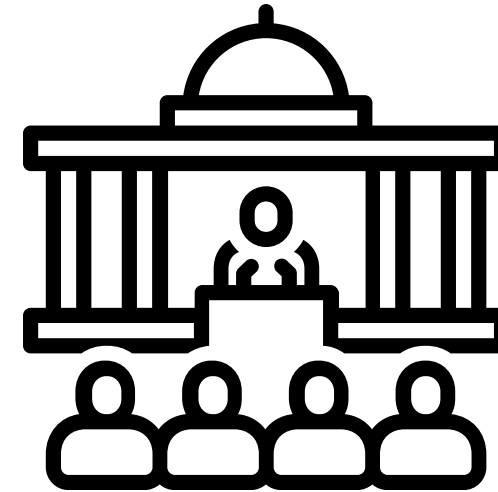
Executive



Judicial

Legislative Branch

- Senate and House
- New Congress Every 2 Years
- Bills Expire at End of Congress



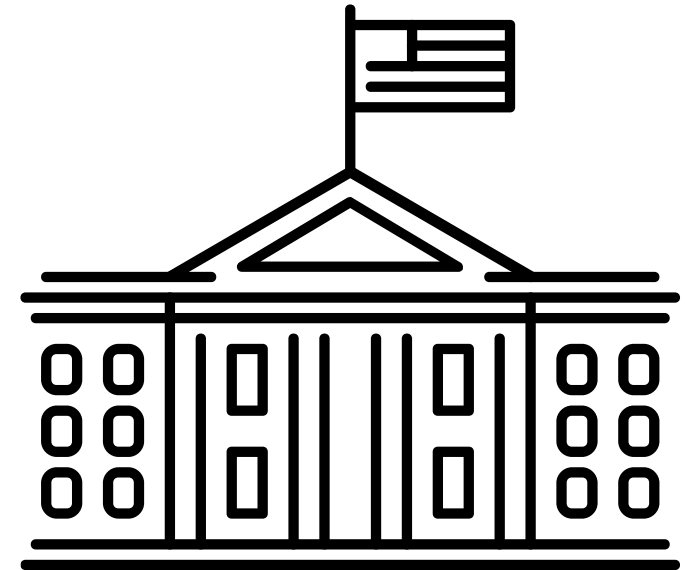


Power of the Purse

- Congress Must Pass 12 Appropriations Bills Annually
 - Pass Bills to Keep Funding Flat (CR)
 - Combine Some Bills Together (Omnibus/Mini-Bus)
 - No Bills Passed=Government Shutdown

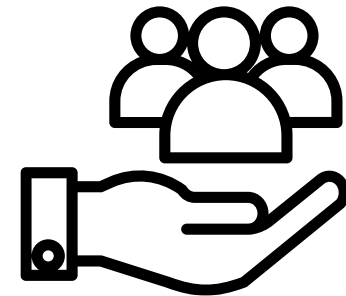
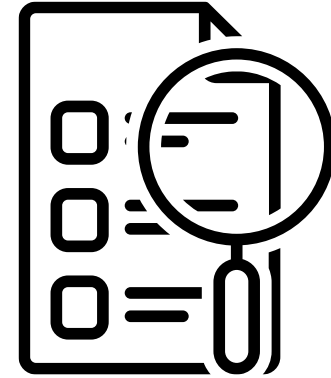
Executive Branch

- Encompasses Various Agencies, Departments, Commissions
- Issue and/or Enforce
 - Regulations, Rules, Directives
- Power Derived From Establishing Law



Role of Federal Government in Health

- Research
- Funding
- Technical Assistance
- Regulation & Oversight
- Surveillance
- Provision Of Services



Resources for Federal Policy

- [Congress.Gov](#)
- [Regulations.Gov](#)
- [Crsreports.Congress.Gov](#)





THANK YOU

- jcunningham@nacbhd.org
- NACBHDD.org





How Your Vote Impacts
Mental Health in Our Communities

Why NAMI Cares About Elections

Mental health services and supports are affected by

- **Different policy issue areas** like the economy, housing, health care, criminal justice
- **Different policymakers at all levels**, from U.S. Senators to school board members

Mental health *should* be a key issue in every election – because people are already voting on mental health.



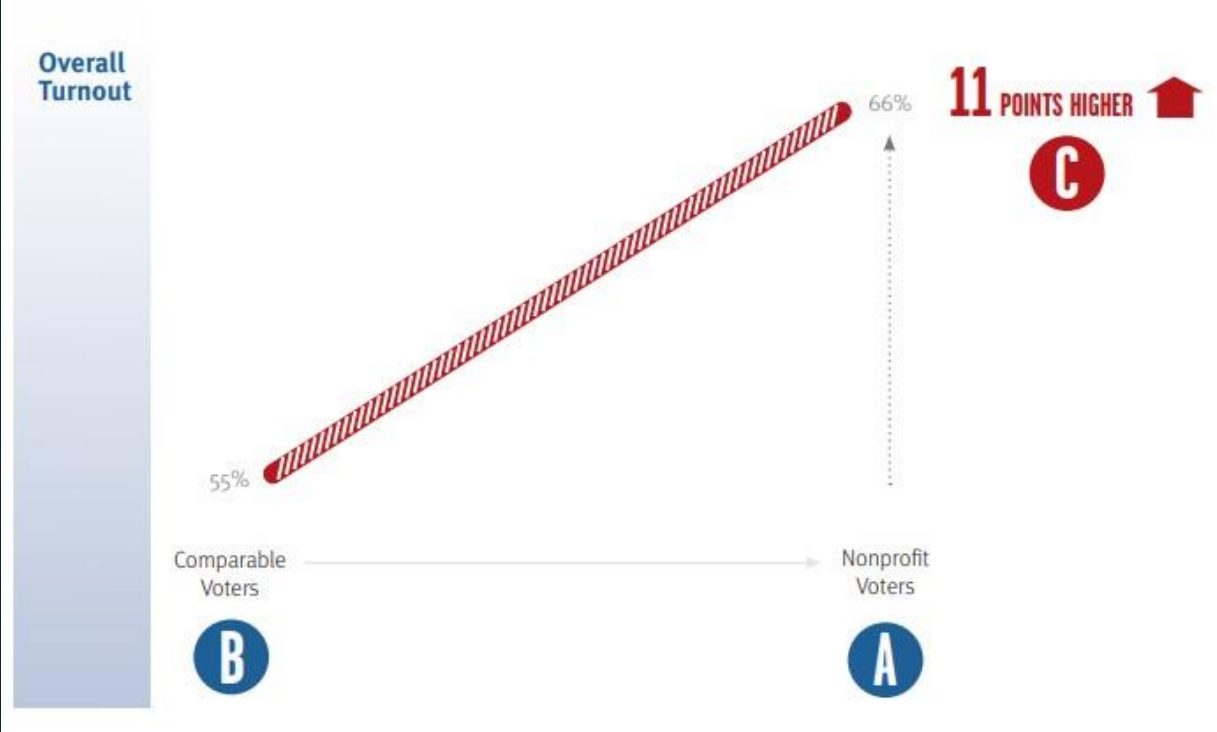
Who Nonprofits Reach

- Nonprofit organizations are uniquely positioned to reach individuals across the country who are more diverse than the general public.
- This includes communities that are historically left behind or participate in voting at lower rates.
- Because of our community trust and nonpartisan approach, the individuals that we serve, and those who serve us, are more likely to respond to our appeals to vote.

Who Nonprofits Reach: The Numbers

Nonprofit Voters Turned Out at Rates 11 Percentage Points Higher Than Comparable Voters

Based on demographically-matched registered voters (see box below).



- **2.3x** more likely to be non-white
- **2.6x** more likely to be under 25
- **1.9x** more likely to have less than \$30,000 in household income
- Nonprofit voters turned out **11 percentage points higher** than comparable voters

Source: nonprofitvote.org

The Value of Nonpartisanship

- Respects the diversity of political opinions
- Strengthens our ability to advocate across partisan lines and have relationships with diverse leaders
- Makes our organizations trusted messengers in an era defined by misinformation
- Helps advocates become informed, conscientious voters

#Vote4MentalHealth in 2024

Elections matter for people with mental health conditions and their families. Every voter can make an impact by understanding:

- The influence of policy issues & elected officials
- How to engage with candidates
- The different ways to cast a ballot in their state
- How to get involved

#Vote4MentalHealth is nonpartisan—the NAMI Alliance will never tell people what party or candidate to vote for.



Why #Vote4MentalHealth?



Help mental health advocates see the power of their vote



Empower advocates to exercise their right to vote



Create a lifetime habit of connecting voting with the mental health services and supports in their community



NAMI Elections HQ

- ***Pledge to #Vote4MentalHealth***
- Voter information & resources
- Key issues
- Engaging candidates
- Get involved resources
 - Voting Plan
 - First Time Voters
 - Election Day FAQ

Will you be a mental health voter?

Take the pledge.



Personalized Election Reminders

Key election deadlines

Early voting options

Election Day information, including how to request accommodations at the polls



Hannah,

You have options to vote other than in person on Election Day. One of those options is voting absentee. But to get an absentee ballot, you have to request it. **You have until October 23 to request an absentee ballot be sent to you.**

There are many reasons why you might want to vote absentee, like residing out of state for school, work conflicts or avoiding lines on Election Day. It's important to choose the best voting option for you to make sure you can [#Vote4MentalHealth](#).

At www.vote4mentalhealth.org/voter-resources, you can check to see if you meet the qualifications to vote absentee in VA and how to request your absentee ballot.

Don't wait – visit our website to start the process today!

Forward this reminder to 3 friends to remind them of this upcoming deadline.

Hannah Wesolowski
Director, Field Advocacy
NAMI



Register to Vote



Check Your Registration



Request an Absentee Ballot



Learn About Your State's ID Requirements



Find Your Polling Place



Sign up for Election Reminders



Learn What's on Your Ballot



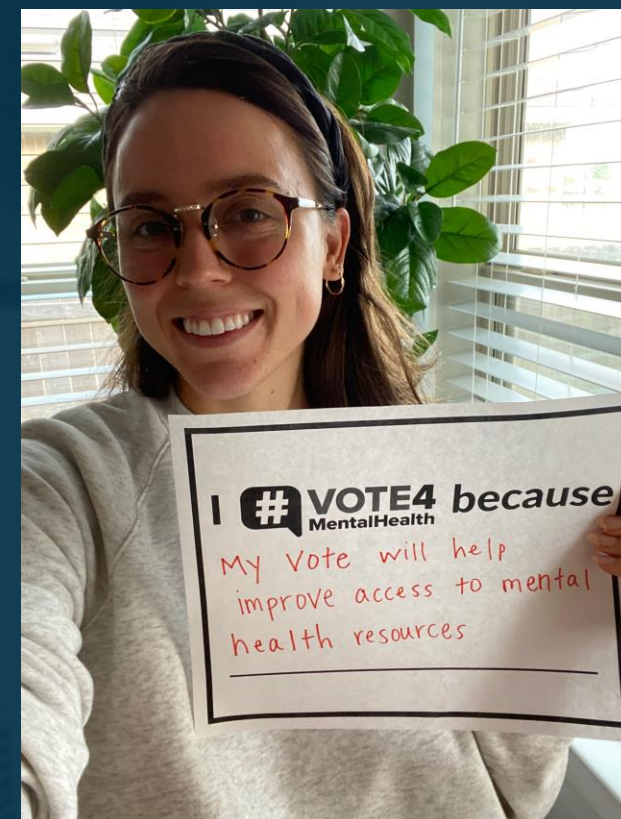
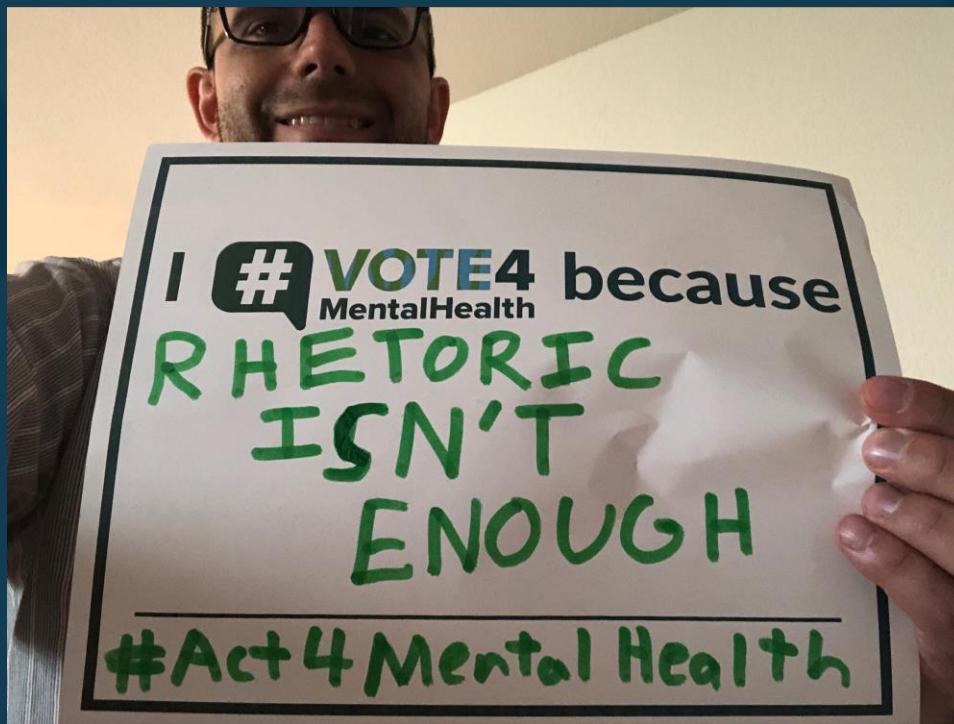
Find Your State's Early Voting Options



Key Partnerships



Share Why *You* #Vote4MentalHealth



<https://vote4mentalhealth.org/whyivote/>



Learn “How To” & the Rules

- Elections toolkit, developed in partnership with Nonprofit VOTE
- Resources for responsibly executing candidate forums or candidate questionnaires
- Resources for hosting candidates at events
- Regular information on voting options and how to vote safely



<https://vote4mentalhealth.org/get-involved/>

Templates & Toolkits



MENTAL HEALTH CHECKS ALL THE BOXES

- HEALTH CARE
- EDUCATION
- JOBS + THE ECONOMY
- CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- SUPPORTING VETERANS

NOW IT'S UP TO YOU TO CHECK THE LAST BOX

- VOTE4MENTALHEALTH

LEARN MORE + TAKE THE PLEDGE AT
[VOTE4MENTALHEALTH.ORG](https://vote4mentalhealth.org)

#VOTE4MentalHealth

What's on the ballot in 2024?

435 U.S. House seats	34 U.S. Senate seats
1 President & Vice President	11 Governorships
85 State legislature chambers	1000s of local candidates

#VOTE4MentalHealth

Learn more & get involved at vote4mentalhealth.org



<https://vote4mentalhealth.org/get-involved/>



Spread the Word



“Mental Health Is on the Ballot” (1:54)



“Elections Are About Mental Health” (0:47)

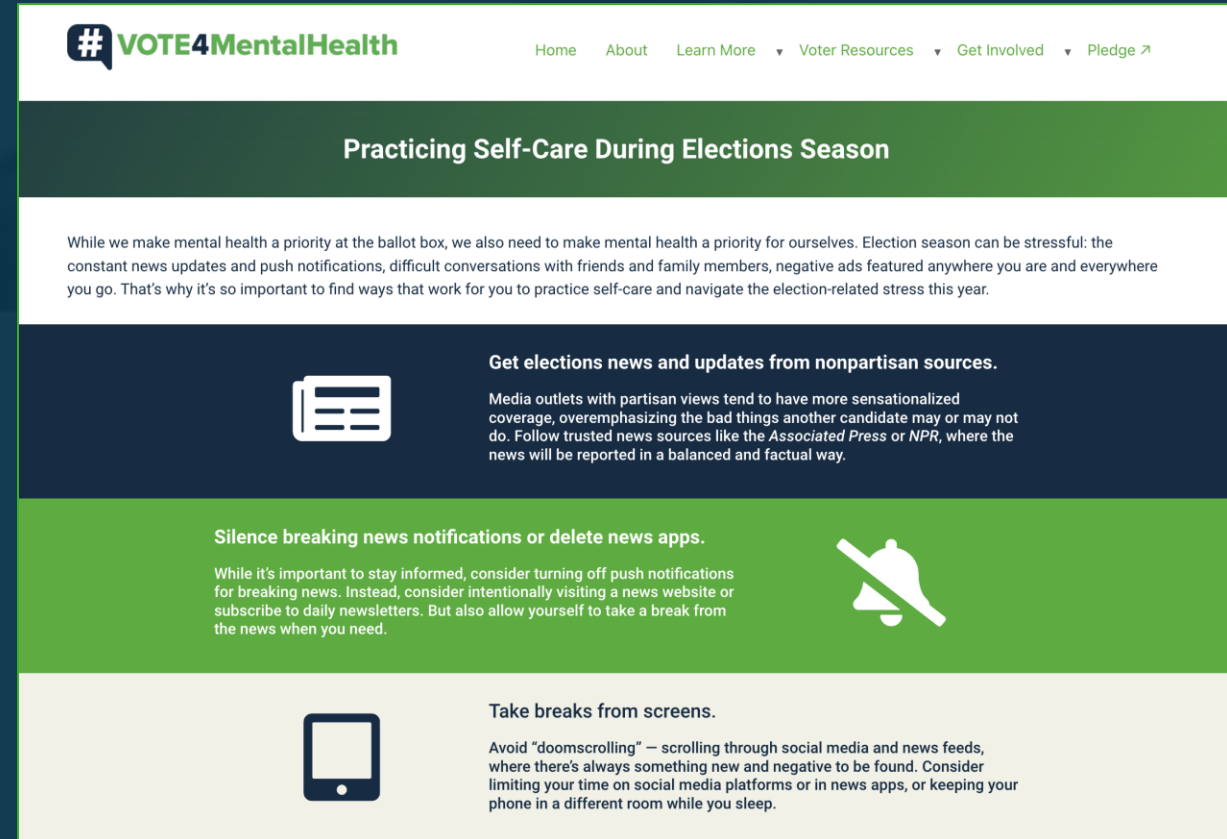


<https://vote4mentalhealth.org/get-involved/>



NEW: Election Stress & Self-Care

Visit & share
vote4mentalhealth.org/selfcare
with your friends and family for
reminders on practicing self-care
during this election season



#VOTE4MentalHealth

Home About Learn More Voter Resources Get Involved Pledge ↗

Practicing Self-Care During Elections Season

While we make mental health a priority at the ballot box, we also need to make mental health a priority for ourselves. Election season can be stressful: the constant news updates and push notifications, difficult conversations with friends and family members, negative ads featured anywhere you are and everywhere you go. That's why it's so important to find ways that work for you to practice self-care and navigate the election-related stress this year.

Get elections news and updates from nonpartisan sources.

Media outlets with partisan views tend to have more sensationalized coverage, overemphasizing the bad things another candidate may or may not do. Follow trusted news sources like the *Associated Press* or *NPR*, where the news will be reported in a balanced and factual way.

Silence breaking news notifications or delete news apps.

While it's important to stay informed, consider turning off push notifications for breaking news. Instead, consider intentionally visiting a news website or subscribe to daily newsletters. But also allow yourself to take a break from the news when you need.

Take breaks from screens.

Avoid "doomscrolling" — scrolling through social media and news feeds, where there's always something new and negative to be found. Consider limiting your time on social media platforms or in news apps, or keeping your phone in a different room while you sleep.

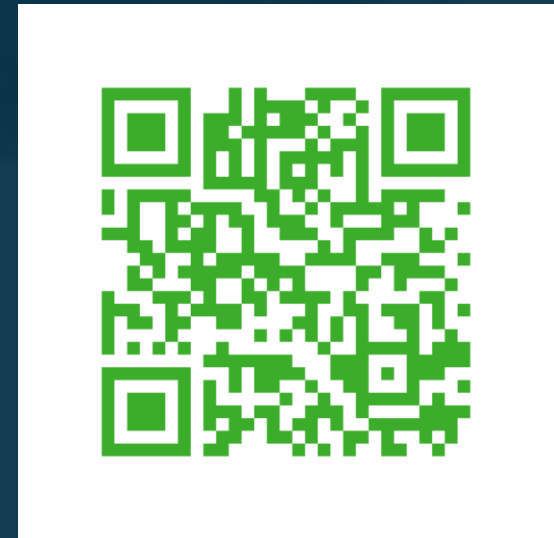


Thank you!

Brandon Graham
Director, Advocacy
NAMI National
bgraham@nami.org

Learn more and take the pledge to
#Vote4MentalHealth

vote4mentalhealth.org



Engaging the next generation

Kelly Davis, MS
VP of Peer and Youth Advocacy



Young people are the future (and present)

Despite often being dismissed or ignored by leaders, young people are a critical political force in the United States.

- **41 million Gen Zs are eligible to vote in this election.**
- Young people are **facing compounded failures of public policy**, including climate, mental health, social media, and education.
- Young people stand to face significant **long-term consequences** of current policy decisions.

They are especially important for mental health

Recent surveys have shown:

- [Healthcare is the #2](#) issue for young voters (18-29)
- Mental health is a [top social issue](#) for Millennials and Gen Z
- 21% of young people want to learn more about [how to change mental health laws](#)

Pathways to engagement



Access to Information: Young people may not know about voting processes and how elections influence mental health.

Representation: Young people and their voices are often excluded in policy conversations.

Agency: Many young people do not have faith in government or that their actions make a difference.

Access to information



Provide information about **how to vote**.

- *Host in-person and virtual voter registration drives*
 - *Rock the Vote has [a guide](#) on how to do both!*
- *Provide updates on voter registration and early voting deadlines, especially for those targeted by voter disenfranchisement.*

Share resources about **how mental health intersects with policy**.

- *Host a partnered event or workshop on the intersection of mental health and policy change*
 - *MHA hosts virtual [Youth Town Halls](#) to educate young people on urgent policy issues.*
- *Promote plain language guides that simplify the issues .*

Youth representation



Partner with young people and youth organizations

- Include young people and youth voices in your advocacy.
- Leverage your resources (space, funding, etc.) to support young people in doing mental health and voting community outreach
 - *Active Minds is collaborating with MHA for an on-campus rollout of the Vote Like Your Mental Health Depends on it Campaign*

Use online campaigns for quick action

- Amplify social media campaigns encouraging youth to share why voting matters to them.
- Organize easy-to-participate initiatives like online petitions or advocacy drives in collaboration with aligned organizations.



Building agency

Help young people to **share their perspectives**

- Amplify youth voices and how they have led and imagine change to inspire others
- Work with young people to feature their voices in local, state, or national media and events
 - *Ben Ballman, MHA young leader, alongside MHA staff and research on [school mental health days](#)– leading to lots of outreach from other youth and increased attention*

Create spaces for mental health **conversations with officials**

- Collaborate with youth to identify and engage in opportunities for direct conversations, like Town Halls
 - *We are looking for opportunities to connect college students and local mental health leaders as part of our campaign*
- Help facilitate or support young people in direct conversations with leaders



What can you do?

Encourage youth voter registration by providing logistics and amplifying or creating opportunities to register.

Collaborate with youth and youth-serving organizations in whatever ways you can, whether that is community education, offering space, or promoting their work through your networks.

Make noise in voter and youth mental health policy conversations by leveraging your network, elevating youth ideas, and creating spaces for dialogue with decision makers.

THANK YOU!

Reach out :)
kdavis@mhanational.org



EMPOWERING VOICES: MENTAL
HEALTH ADVOCACY AND CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT





ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

- Partner with local Mental Health and Disability Advocacy Organizations.
- Identify priority bills in your state.
- Often focus is on protecting the rights of individuals with mental health challenges, increasing funding for community-based mental health services, improving access to care.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- **Public Hearings and Forums:** Residents can participate in public hearings and forums organized by state agencies
- **Task Forces and Advisory Boards:** Involvement in task forces or advisory boards





GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS

Campaigns and Rallies: Grassroots movements organize campaigns and rallies to raise awareness and pressure policymakers to address mental health issues. These can be organized by advocacy groups, community organizations, or coalitions.

Social Media and Online Campaigns: Leveraging social media platforms to spread awareness, share personal stories, and advocate for policy changes is another form of civic engagement.

COLLABORATION WITH INSTITUTIONS

Partnerships with Schools and Universities:

Collaborations with educational institutions help integrate mental health education and services into the academic environment. This includes training educators, providing student support services, and conducting research on mental health issues.

Health Care Providers and Systems: Engagement with hospitals, clinics, and other health care providers aims to improve the integration of mental health services into primary care and other health services.



RESOURCES

Legislative Apps and Services

- Tracking Services: Use legislative tracking services and apps like TrackBill, BillTrack50, or GovTrack. These services offer customized alerts for specific types of legislation.

Websites

- [TrackBill](#)
- [BillTrack50](#)
- [GovTrack](#)



Let's Talk....

