

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
CSG GOVERNING BOARD/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION
ON TRANSFORMATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

- WHEREAS,** Approximately 20 percent of the population has some form of mental illness in any given year, with five to seven percent of adults having a serious mental illness and five to nine percent of children having a serious emotional disturbance; and
- WHEREAS,** Mental illnesses are a leading cause of disability in the United States, costing \$71 billion in direct treatment costs and another \$79 billion in indirect costs due to lost productivity; and
- WHEREAS,** Public funding makes up 57 percent of mental health care spending compared with 46 percent of overall health care spending; and
- WHEREAS,** Access to new medicines, clinical interventions, community-based care and social services have transformed mental health care in recent years and have enabled more individuals with mental illness to make progress toward recovery and participate fully in family life, work, education and their communities; and
- WHEREAS,** Stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness continue to hinder many Americans from seeking and receiving appropriate treatment, thereby delaying recovery and preventing some individuals from leading full and productive lives; and
- WHEREAS,** Mental illness treatment does not receive the same attention and level of financing as treatment for other physical illnesses does, and access to high quality, cost effective, ongoing care is not a reality for many individuals with mental illness; and
- WHEREAS,** Mental health care, particularly for serious and persistent mental illnesses, requires not just medical treatment but also often requires housing, education, transportation and income support services; and
- WHEREAS,** The vast majority of funding for mental illness services comes from the federal government through multiple agencies with varying requirements, while primary responsibility for the organization and delivery of services lies with state and local governments; and
- WHEREAS,** The fragmentation of financing and delivery of services across multiple agencies and levels of government results in a tremendously complex, fragmented, inconsistent and inefficient system that is unable optimally

and consistently to promote recovery and independence for individuals with mental illness and disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The Council of State Governments' Eastern Regional Office has led an unprecedented effort to bring criminal justice and mental health professionals together to create consensus on processes for addressing the many issues related to how individuals with mental illness are dealt with by the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health has called on federal, state and local governments as well as a broad group of stakeholders to work toward the transformation of the mental health system; and

BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED that The Council of State Governments urges the President, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, other federal executive branch agencies, and members of Congress to work in collaboration with the States to restructure and improve the financing and delivery of health and social services for individuals with mental illness, particularly for adults and children with serious and persistent mental illness and emotional disturbance, through the following:

1. **Integration and Coordination of the Services** – Governments should work together to create a seamless, coordinated system of mental health and social services that enable individuals with mental illness to live and work in their community.
2. **Harmonization of Funding and Eligibility** – To improve the integration and coordination of services, state governments need greater flexibility as well as harmonization of federal funding and eligibility requirements across programs that assist individuals with mental illness, such as Medicaid, mental health, transportation, education, housing and other federal-state assistance programs;
3. **Omnibus State Mental Health Waiver** – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should create an Omnibus State Mental Health Waiver that would simplify the process states must go through by creating a template to get permission to implement innovative, cohesive, client-centered mental health systems at the state level and improve the coordination of programs and services across health and human services programs.
4. **Criminal Justice - Mental Health System Collaboration** – States and the Federal government should work together to assist the criminal justice and mental health systems in developing processes that adequately address the mental health needs of individuals that are incarcerated including funding and program support for diversion programs, treatment during incarceration, and treatment and supports upon release into the community. This partnership should also study ways to provide treatment for the mentally ill at high risk of committing crimes so the crimes would not be committed.

Adopted this 26th Day of October, 2003, at the
CSG Annual Meeting and State Leadership Forum
In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Governor Mike Huckabee
2003 CSG President

Representative Daniel Bosley
2003 CSG Chair