

New National Poll Shows Bipartisan Voter Support for Improved Care for Serious Mental Illness and Congressional Action

Survey shows voters believe the health care system is failing people with serious mental illness, want policymakers to make mental health care a top priority.

ALEXANDRIA, VA, UNITED STATES, May 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A [new national survey](#) commissioned by the Schizophrenia Policy Action Network (SPAN) shows voters across the political spectrum believe the nation's mental health care system is failing people with serious mental illness and want policymakers to make mental health care a top priority.



The survey, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and Lake Research Partners, leading bipartisan public opinion polling firms, shows overwhelming public support for improved access to care, insurance coverage, hospital capacity, and federal funding for serious mental illness, including schizophrenia and other psychosis spectrum disorders.

"Families living with schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses know what this poll makes clear: the system is not working," said Gordon Lavigne, CEO of the Schizophrenia Policy Action Network. "The system too often fails to provide timely, evidence-based care, leaving individuals and families without the treatment and support needed for long-term stability and recovery. Voters are not divided on this issue. They want action, they want treatment to be covered like physical health care, and they want policymakers to stop letting people fall through the cracks."

[Key findings](#) from the survey include:

- 97% of voters rate mental illness as an important issue, but only 18% of Americans rate access to mental health services in the country positively, and just 4% believe that those with serious mental illness are getting adequate care
- 93% believe health insurance companies should be required to cover mental health care

similarly to physical health care

- 85% believe Medicare and Medicaid should cover schizophrenia and other psychosis spectrum disorders in the same way treatments for cancer are covered
- 88% support increasing federal funding for health programs for serious mental illness, including 84% of Republicans, 85% of Independents, and 93% of Democrats
- 78% say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who made mental health care a top priority
- 69% of voters believe that policymakers should focus on regulating health insurance practices that make it harder to get the care and treatment people need

The poll also finds that voters recognize serious mental illness as a treatable medical condition and understand that, with early intervention, appropriate treatment, and community support, many people living with schizophrenia or other psychosis spectrum disorders can manage symptoms, maintain stability, and live productive, meaningful lives.

At the same time, voters identify cost, inadequate insurance coverage, and limited availability of services as major barriers to care. More than half of those polled cite the high cost of treatment and medication as a top barrier, while 44 percent cite inadequate insurance coverage.

“These findings should be a wake-up call for Congress and state leaders,” said Bethany Yeiser, a member of the Board of Directors of SPAN, who lives with schizophrenia. “The public understands that serious mental illness is treatable. They also understand that treatment is too often out of reach because of cost, insurance barriers, workforce shortages, and a lack of available care. Policymakers have a clear mandate to expand access, strengthen coverage, and invest in services that help people get care before they reach a crisis.”

There is also strong support for policies that would expand the care infrastructure for people with serious mental illness. Seventy-five percent of voters said the federal government spends too little on health services for serious mental illness, and 85 percent said they would support legislation to significantly increase funding for services that help people access the care and treatment they need.

The [poll findings](#) come as communities across the country continue to face consequences of inadequate access to timely, specialized mental health care, including avoidable emergency room visits and hospitalizations, housing instability, criminal justice system involvement, and preventable health deterioration.

When presented with information about the impact of serious mental illness on homelessness and the criminal justice system, voters were most concerned that 67 percent of unhoused

individuals live with a mental health disorder and that people with untreated serious mental illness are 16 times more likely to be involved in fatal encounters with law enforcement.

“Too many families are forced to wait for a crisis before their loved one can get help,” said Marc Pomper, a family caregiver and SPAN board member. “That is not care. It is a failure of policy. This poll shows Americans want a system that provides treatment earlier, covers care fairly, and gives people living with serious mental illness a real chance at stability, recovery, and dignity.”

Voters across the political spectrum agree that the current system is not meeting the needs of people living with serious mental illness. We encourage individuals across the country to reach out to their elected officials and call for stronger mental health resources, better access to treatment, and policies that ensure care is available before a crisis occurs.

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The Schizophrenia Policy Action Network (SPAN) is a separately incorporated advocacy affiliate of the Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance. As a 501(c)(4), SPAN is able to further engage with lawmakers by working with elected officials and candidates to take bold action to address the unmet needs of the schizophrenia community. SPAN develops and advances policies to shatter the barriers to recovery by enhancing care, increasing research and improving support for people living with schizophrenia. SPAN works at the federal and state levels to advance the public policy priorities of the schizophrenia community.

Kelly Broadway
Schizophrenia Policy Action Network
info@span-scz.org

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