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## Hillary Clinton proposes mental health care reforms

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“Too many Americans are being left to face mental health problems on their own, and too many individuals are dying prematurely from associated health conditions,” according to her [proposal](#). “The next generation must grow up knowing that mental health is a key component of overall health and there is no shame, stigma, or barriers to seeking out care.”

Her multi-faceted strategy includes:

- improving early diagnosis and intervention, emphasizing the needs of children and students;
- boosting investments in brain and behavioral research to discover new mental health treatments;
- \$50 million annually for suicide prevention at colleges and universities;
- increasing community-based treatment options;
- enforcing federal laws requiring health insurers offer mental health coverage that is on par with other benefits;
- increase housing and job opportunities; and
- training police officers in crisis intervention for people with mental health problems, and offering treatment for non-violent, low-level offenders instead of jail.

In developing her plan, Clinton campaign staff sought input from a number of sources, including the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), an advocacy group for Americans affected by mental illness. In a memo to the group’s state leaders, Angela Kimball, NAMI national director for advocacy and public policy said, “The Clinton plan creates a new bar for candidates for the Oval Office” and praised its emphasis on early intervention and mental health parity. (Were Clinton’s opponent, Republican Donald Trump, to release a mental health reform plan, Kimball said NAMI would provide a detailed analysis.)



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster, File

Clinton’s call for better housing is also important, said Jennifer Mathis, director of policy and legal advocacy at the [Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law](#), a legal advocacy group that represents people with mental disabilities.

“People with serious mental illness are cycling back and forth between the streets, the emergency room, jails, shelters and psych hospitals,” she said. “Without a place to live, it is very hard for people to address their mental health issues.”

Congress has also signaled its willingness to improve mental health care. In July, the US House of Representatives passed the [Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act](#). The Senate health committee passed the [Mental Health Reform Act](#) in March and committee chairman Lamar Alexander, a Tennessee Republican, is optimistic that the Senate will vote on it this year. “Chairman Alexander thinks members should be able to finish their work soon and pass legislation to address America’s mental health crisis—which affects one in five adults in our country, with 60 percent not getting the help that they need,” said an Alexander spokesperson.