



National Alliance on Mental Illness

# NAMI | Western Slope

## LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

**We need your help!** *As many of you know mental health funding is continually being cut. NAMI Western Slope is doing a letter writing campaign. This is a way we can make a difference in a simple way, but we need you all to participate. At this point, Tuesday, December 20 is the date for the Joint Budget Committee hearing on mental health issues. I have all the information below for you. How to write your letter, and where to send it. There will be two types of letters being written depending on your situation:*

**Letter 1** *For the Joint Budget committee (JBC): this letter is directly in regards to mental health funding. The JBC, is not UN sympathetic, just focused on the dollars in the budget.*

**Letter 2:** *is for the ones that funding is not the issue, so your letters will be more focused on the lack of services, access, insurance, the need for mental health courts, etc.....*

*Please note that some of your letters will be directed at both issues. If this is the case share your story, and the last paragraph should be focused on why the lack of mental health funds has affected your life. Be Very specific.*

*You might close with a wrap-up paragraph to tie lack of funding for the mental health community to the problems and thus costs to the taxpayers of the state. Try to make the case for spending money to treat up front, vs. the cost at the end - which is always more*

*ALWAYS include your contact information - name, address, phone number, e-mail address, etc. ALWAYS personally sign the letter. ALWAYS be polite, professional. Thank them for their service to the citizens of the state. Make the letter personal and sincere. Try to state why your family would benefit from services if there were more funding for mental health issues. Please keep your letter one page in length.*

**Envelopes that are hand addressed are more likely to be opened.**

**Letter 1:** (JBC) Lack of mental health funding

Put all names listed below at the beginning of your letter:

Rep. Gerou, Rep. Becker and Rep. Ferrandino  
Senator Hodge, Senator Lambert and Senator Steadman

Letters addressed to:  
Legislative Services Building (LSB)  
200 East 14th. Ave  
Denver, Co 80203  
Atten: Joint Budget Committee

I recommend the letters to the JBC be scheduled to arrive to them three or four days prior to the Dec. 20 meeting. Bear in mind that all mail going to elected officials is diverted to a bunker somewhere and scanned for contaminants - anthrax- and takes an extra day for delivery.



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**Letter 2:** For some of you funding is not the issue, so your letters will be more focused on the lack of services, access, insurance, the need for mental health courts, etc.....

Put all names listed below at the beginning of your letter:

Senator Hodge, Senator Lambert and Senator Steadman

Rep. Gerou, Rep. Becker and Rep. Ferrandino

Members of the Health and Environment committee:

Chairman, Rep. Summers, Vice-Chairman Rep. Acree

Members: Rep. Bradford, Rep. Massey, Rep. Joshi, Rep. Kerr, Rep. Brown, Rep. Kefalas, Rep. McCann, Rep. Schafer, Rep. Peniston, Rep. Fields, Charles Smith, Director, Division of Mental Health/Dept. of Human Services, Jarrod Hindmen, Suicide Prevention– Dept. Public Health & Environment

Letters are to be sent to:

Colorado State Capitol

200 East Colfax

Denver, CO 80203

**PLEASE NOTE THE LAST 3 PAGES; THIS FORMAT IS FOR YOU TO USE IF YOU NEED. PLEASE SEND IT TO THE APPROPRIATE ADDRESS DEPENDING ON YOUR RESPONSES.**

If you are not able to write a letter, here is the numbers to leave a polite phone message about the importance of funding for Mental Health\_

The members of the (JBC) Joint Budget Committee are:

Senators: Hodge, Lambert and Steadman

House: Gerou, Becker and Ferrandino.

Their phone numbers at the capitol are:

All numbers begin with 303-866-\_\_\_\_\_

Hodge: 4855

Lambert: 4835

Steadman: 4861

Gerou: 2582

Becker: 2906

Ferrandino: 2911

*For those of you who have the capability of emailing I am requesting that you email NAMI Western Slope a copy of your letter. This will help us know how many letters are being sent. The email address is [namiwesternslope@gmail.com](mailto:namiwesternslope@gmail.com).*

*We thank you all for your help and letting our voice be heard. If you have any questions or need help with your letter, please contact Leslie at NAMI Western Slope 462-3989 or [namiwesternslope@gmail.com](mailto:namiwesternslope@gmail.com).*

*Sincerely, Leslie Kent  
President, NAMI Western Slope*

## **Letter 1:** (JBC) Lack of mental health funding

### **EXAMPLE**

Date:

Greetings Joint Budget Committee:  
Rep. Gerou, Rep. Becker and Rep. Ferrandino  
Senator Hodge, Senator Lambert and Senator Steadman

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Mental Health Diagnosis if you have one, or if you are a family member what is the diagnosis of your loved one.

*ALWAYS be polite, professional. Thank them for their service to the citizens of the state. Make the letter personal and sincere. Try to state why your family would benefit from services if there were more funding for mental health issues. Please keep your letter one page in length. BE VERY SPECIFIC why the lack of mental health funding has affected your life. If you can tie the lack of funding for the mental health community to the problems and thus costs to the taxpayers of the state. Try to make the case for spending money to treat up front, vs. the cost at the end - which is always more*

***Your Signature*** ALWAYS personally sign the letter.

**Envelopes that are hand addressed are more likely to be opened.**

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Legislative Services Building (LSB)  
200 East 14th. Ave  
Denver, Co 80203  
Atten: Joint Budget Committee

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**Letter 2:** Funding is not the issue, so your letters will be more focused on the lack of services, access, insurance, the need for mental health courts, etc.....

## **EXAMPLE**

Date:

Re: Disparities in Mental Health Services in Colorado

Greetings Senator Hodge, Senator Lambert and Senator Steadman  
Rep. Gerou, Rep. Becker, Rep. Ferrandino, Rep. Summers, Rep. Acree, Rep. Bradford,  
Rep. Massey, Rep. Joshi, Rep. Kerr, Rep. Brown, Rep. Kefalas, Rep. McCann, Rep. Schafer,  
Rep. Peniston, Rep. Fields, Charles Smith and Jarrod Hindmen,

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Mental Health Diagnosis if you have one, or if you are a family member what is the diagnosis of your loved one.

*ALWAYS be polite, professional. Thank them for their service to the citizens of the state. Make your letter personal and sincere. Share your story, this letter needs to be more on an emotional basis. We need them to feel the lived experience of what we go through, and how the lack of services, access, insurance, the need for mental health courts, etc..... Has really affected our lives.*

*If you can tie lack of funding for the mental health community to the problems and thus costs to the taxpayers of the state. Try to make the case for spending money to treat up front, vs. the cost at the end - which is always more*

**Your Signature** ALWAYS personally sign the letter.



*4. Have you ever been homeless because you were unable to access treatment for your illness? Please describe your situation and why you were unable to obtain treatment. Was the criminal justice system involved at any point? If the criminal justice system was involved, describe why and how this came about.*

*5. Was there ever a time when you had difficulties with or were unable to obtain your mental health medications? Please explain.*

*6. Are you presently receiving disability medical benefits (Medicaid, Medicare)? If you are not receiving disability benefits, do you have other health insurance? If you don't have other health insurance, is it because:*

- you have applied for health insurance and been turned down as a result of your mental illness?*
- you cannot afford the premiums for health insurance?*
- you cannot work full time therefore you do not qualify for employer health insurance benefits?*
- you cannot work at all due to your mental health issues therefore you cannot afford insurance?*
- Other reasons. Please explain.*

*7. Have you ever been involved in the criminal justice system? Have you ever been incarcerated or spent time in jail for failure to pay a fine, for not showing up at a hearing, for loitering, for a DUI etc? If so, did you receive a mental health evaluation? Did you see a doctor while incarcerated? Were you prescribed or given any medications while incarcerated? Please describe your experience with the criminal justice system.*

*8. If you were ever charged with committing an offense or crime, were you sentenced in a regular or mental health court? If you were sentenced in a mental health court, was it a positive or negative experience? Explain why.*

*9. Have you ever been diagnosed with having a co-occurring disorder (a mental illness in combination with substance abuse)? If so, did you try to get help for your addictions? What happened?*

Thank you for your time and attention to these issues.  
Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email: