

**POSITION STATEMENT ON THE INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
PROMOTION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES  
IN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH**

Prevention science has demonstrated that prevention practices can *reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors*. Further, these interventions represent a *cost-effective use of resources* relative to more expensive, treatment-based approaches.

Public health promotion and prevention are *best practices* for increasing positive functioning and resilience, decreasing the risk of developing mental illness, and facilitating recovery. These practices have been underemphasized and underutilized in the public mental health sector.

The members of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) believe individuals of all ages are entitled to lives of optimal mental health and well-being.

To achieve this goal, members of NASMHPD will lead public mental health systems in the development of policies and practices for the:

- Promotion of positive mental health,
- *Earliest possible* identification and intervention in mental health problems,
- Reduction of the incidence of mental illness and suicide,
- Prevention of disability due to mental illness and co-occurring conditions, and
- Prevention of conditions commonly associated with mental illness including medical illness, substance abuse and trauma.

NASMHPD members are, therefore, committed to:

- Educating health professionals and the general public about the importance of mental health promotion and mental illness prevention practices,
- Adopting proven promotion and prevention strategies, and incorporating them into the State mental health plan.
- Supporting new initiatives with appropriate policies and dedicated resources.

NASMHPD members further commit to sustaining and improving performance in promotion and prevention activities, while meeting the demands of serving a public mental health population, by:

- Monitoring program implementation,
- Evaluating program outcomes and effectiveness, and
- Conducting surveillance of population-level indicators.

State Mental Health authorities must work with consumers, families and their advocates and providers and develop new partnerships to be successful in these efforts.

***Approved by the NASMHPD Membership on September 17, 2004.***