



## **NASMHPD-NASADAD Joint Statement**

On behalf of the leadership of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) and the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), we are announcing our respective organizations' renewed commitment to work jointly and collaboratively in order to improve the lives of the people we serve. This important work arrives at a critical juncture in our nation's history given current State and federal fiscal climates, passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Act (MHPAEA). Both organizations believe that innovative and sustained improvements in service delivery are inextricably tied directly to the support and leadership of State mental health commissioners and State substance abuse agency directors. We look forward to this collaboration as we magnify our collective voice and impact in working with people with, at-risk of, or in recovery from substance use disorders or mental health problems and their families, the provider community, the federal government and other stakeholders.

Our respective members plan, implement and oversee the publicly funded mental health and substance abuse service delivery systems, which serve millions of people on an annual basis in all 50 States, the District of Columbia (D.C.) and territories. In particular, State substance abuse agency directors and mental health commissioners improve the quality and efficiency of health promotion, prevention, treatment and recovery services. Further, NASMHPD and NASADAD members play a vital role in the financing, design, development, implementation, data reporting and evaluation of mental health and substance use disorder services within this rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

With the passage of MHPAEA and PPACA, it is anticipated that more people will have access to services for substance use disorders and mental health problems. As a result, many opportunities and challenges exist as we seek to implement these and other initiatives. As a result, we believe it is critical for federal and State governments to work directly in partnership with our Associations and members in order to affect mental health and addiction policy changes and improvements at the community level.

A strong partnership between NASADAD and NASMHPD is especially important as changes are considered to the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) Block Grant and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant. The SAPT Block Grant represents the cornerstone and foundation

of the nation's substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery system. The CMHS Block Grant is critical to State mental health service innovation. Our two Associations note the importance of maintaining these two distinct programs in order to ensure that a public safety net is available for the vulnerable people we serve. In addition, both NASADAD and NASMHPD recognize the need to carefully and deliberately consider potential adjustments to each Block Grant in light of the health reform law. We remain concerned, however, that precipitous changes before fully understanding how the current political and fiscal environment will impact the implementation of the law will negatively impact service recipients.

Furthermore, we strongly urge key federal agencies, including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) to regularly dialogue with our Associations to identify technical assistance needs that will help to prepare both the mental health and substance abuse fields for the provisions of the law that will go into effect in 2014. These agencies play an important role in building a bridge to 2014, which will help NASADAD and NASMHPD members navigate the law and find ways to build up the mental health and substance abuse infrastructure.

Our two Associations stand ready to provide leadership during this historic time. As a result, we announce our renewed commitment in working toward common objectives that promise to improve the well being of the people and families we serve and the public health of our nation's citizens.