

# RESPONDING TO MENTAL HEALTH MISINFORMATION

## 1) THE GREATEST BARRIER FOR AMERICANS SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT IS LACK OF ACCESS

- **Access, not excess, is the true crisis.** Millions of Americans cannot get the treatment they are seeking because of cost, workforce shortages, or inadequate insurance coverage. Framing the problem as “over-medication” distracts from the real issue—35% of adults and 50% of children and teenagers who needed mental health care report *not being able to access it*.
- Supporting Medicaid supports the mental health of Americans. Medicaid is the backbone of our nation’s mental health system and funds more treatment and recovery services than any other program or insurer. Approximately ⅓ of the individuals who rely on Medicaid are children.
- In addition to protecting Medicaid, other data-driven policies which improve access include mental health parity laws, workforce investments, telehealth expansion, and reducing stigma and discrimination.

## 2) PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATIONS ARE SCIENTIFICALLY SUPPORTED—RECENT POLITICAL ATTACKS MISREPRESENT THE EVIDENCE

- Major governmental and nongovernmental organizations alike affirm that psychiatric medications, when prescribed and monitored by qualified clinicians, are **safe, effective, and can be lifesaving**.
- Mental health conditions, including substance use disorders, can be profoundly disabling. For many people, the best outcomes occur when a combination of interventions are utilized, including medication, psychotherapy, social support, and lifestyle interventions.
- As with all medications, psychiatric medication may cause side effects. For those most frequently prescribed, serious adverse effects are *uncommon* and their overall risk profile is *comparable to widely used medications* for chronic physical illnesses like high blood pressure or diabetes.

### 3) HIGH-QUALITY CARE DEPENDS ON SHARED DECISIONMAKING BETWEEN PATIENTS AND THEIR CHOSEN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

- Patients and physicians alike are alarmed by attempts to expand government involvement into personal health decisions.
- Federal efforts to collect or analyze personal health information without consent—such as HHS’s recent proposal to track individuals with autism—are *alarming and raise serious ethical and privacy concerns*.
- The best care occurs when treatment decisions are made **collaboratively between patients and their chosen health care professionals**, free from political or bureaucratic influence.

### REFERENCES

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*The Committee to Protect Public Mental Health supports psychiatrists, patients, and communities in responding to unprecedented attacks on access to life-saving mental health services.*