



National Association of Mental Health Planning and Advisory Councils
1021 Prince Street ↓ Alexandria VA 22314

The National Association of Mental Health Planning and Advisory Councils (NAMHPAC) is pleased to join with the Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services as a member of the **National Coalition to Promote Community-Based Care Under Olmstead**.

The work of the National and State Coalitions is essential to fulfilling the promise of life in the community for persons with psychiatric and other disabilities that the community mental health movement and the ADA sought to make a reality.

The 1999 Supreme Court decision of *Olmstead v. L.C.* is an important development that further encourages community integration for all persons with disabilities. NAMHPAC recommends that federal and State governments see *Olmstead* implementation primarily as an issue of strategic planning and system change. It is our hope that *Olmstead* planning is but one piece of strategic systems change that will enhance community-based services for persons with psychiatric and other disabilities. We encourage state mental health authorities to partner with planning councils in the development of plans for the placement of individuals with psychiatric disabilities into community-based settings.

Mental health planning and advisory councils have broad federal mandates for mental health planning, advocacy and monitoring of community-based mental health systems. The Mental Health Services Performance Partnership Block Grant criteria ask States to report on efforts to move mental health consumers out of state hospitals and into the community. Planning councils are natural partners in reviewing and/or developing state plans to respond to *Olmstead*.

We know from the work of the National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (NAPAS) that state efforts related to *Olmstead* have primarily focused on individuals with developmental disabilities. Many states do not even mention individuals with mental health needs in their plans and others establish time frames for the development of mental health *Olmstead* plans that are slower than the developmental disabilities plan. These realities make the work of the **National and State Coalitions** critical.

NAMHPAC is dedicated to the task of identifying and eradicating barriers to community integration. We are prepared to work with the established mental health planning council in each State and Territory to make this effort a success. We look forward to the day when life in the community for persons with psychiatric disabilities is the expectation instead of the exception.

Across the country, planning councils bring together mental health consumers, parents, family members, advocates and others concerned with community based mental health services. NAMHPAC is the national voice for these planning councils and provides technical assistance, opportunities for state-to-state networking, and a national voice on mental health planning issues. You can contact the NAMHPAC office by calling 703/838-7522, or visit us online: www.namhpac.org.