

Introduction to Affiliation with Mental Health America



Welcome to Mental Health America!

- Since its inception in 1909, Mental Health America (MHA) has truly evolved as the premier organization to lead the mental health advocacy movement.
- We have affiliates in 42 states that provide support, services and education to communities in major metropolitan areas and in rural and frontier settings.
 - Our affiliates build partnerships with mission-aligned organizations in their states and communities towards meeting our joint mission and purpose.
- We partner with other national organizations to continue the social justice movement to eliminate stigma and discrimination, build equal access to treatment and therapies, and ensure inclusion of persons with lived experiences in leadership throughout the movement.
- We invite others to join us in our mission and services.

Mental Health America today reflects our 100 year history!

- **Mission:**

Mental Health America is dedicated to promoting mental health, preventing mental and substance use conditions, and achieving victory over mental illnesses and addictions through advocacy, education, research and service.

- **Vision:**

Mental Health America envisions a just, humane and healthy society in which all people are accorded respect, dignity and the opportunity to achieve their full potential free from stigma and prejudice.

Our B4Stage4 Philosophy

Much of our work is guided by the *Before Stage 4* (B4Stage4) philosophy

- **Our B4Stage4 Philosophy:**

Much of our work is guided by the Before Stage 4 (B4Stage4) philosophy – that mental health conditions should be treated long before they reach the most critical points in the disease process. When we think about diseases like cancer or heart disease, we don't wait years to treat them. We start before Stage 4—we begin with prevention, identify symptoms, and develop a plan of action to reverse and hopefully stop the progression of the disease.

So why don't we do the same for individuals who are dealing with potentially serious mental illness? Like other diseases, we need to address these symptoms early, identify the underlying disease, and plan an appropriate course of action on a path towards overall health. MHA is committed to addressing mental health Before Stage 4.

Development of MHA

- In 1900, **Clifford Beers**, a Yale graduate and young businessman, suffered an acute breakdown brought on by the illness and death of his brother. Shortly after a suicide attempt, Beers was hospitalized in a private Connecticut mental institution, and spent the next few years in various institutions.
- The deplorable treatment he received in these institutions sparked a fearless determination to reform care for individuals with mental illnesses in the United States and abroad.
- In 1908, Beers changed mental health care forever with the publication of ***A Mind That Found Itself***, an autobiography chronicling his struggle with mental illness and the shameful state of mental health care in America.
- The book had an immediate impact, spreading his vision of a massive mental health reform movement across land and oceans.

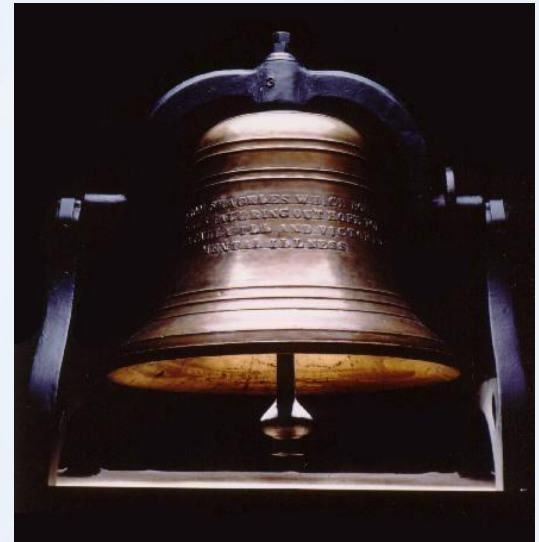
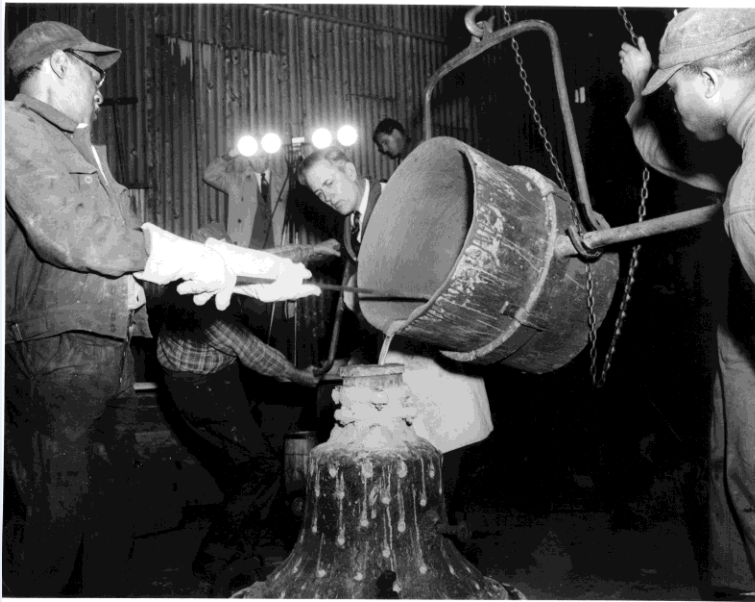
- The actualization of the movement began that same year (1908) when Beers founded the **Connecticut Society for Mental Hygiene**. **The Society expanded the following year, forming the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (1909)**.
- The Society, both in Connecticut and nationally, set forth the following goals:
 - To improve attitudes toward mental illness and the mentally ill;
 - To improve services for the mentally ill;
 - To work for the prevention of mental illness and promote mental health
- In **1920, the Committee produced a set of model commitment laws** which were subsequently incorporated into the statutes of several states. The Committee also conducted influential studies on mental health, mental illness, and treatment, prompting real changes in the mental health care system.

- The **First International Congress for Mental Hygiene in 1930** was, perhaps, the pinnacle of Beers' career. The Congress convened 3,042 officially registered participants from 41 countries “with many more actually in attendance” for constructive dialogue about fulfilling the mission of the Mental Health Movement. The Movement was well established when Beers died in 1943.
- **In a historic merger, three organizations**, the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, the National Mental Health Foundation, and the Psychiatric Foundation “an offshoot” of the American Psychological Organization primarily concerned with fund-raising, banded together on **September 13, 1950 to form the National Association of Mental Health (NAMH)**.

- **In 1953, NAMH** issued a call to asylums across the country for their discarded chains and shackles. On **April 13, 1956**, at the McShane Bell Foundry in Baltimore, Md., NAMH melted down these inhumane bindings and recast them into a sign of hope: the Mental Health Bell.
- **In 1961, five years of participation on Congress' Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Mental Health** culminated in the release of the landmark report, *Action for Mental Health*, an influential program for improving government mental health services.
- **In 1979, the NAMH became the National Mental Health Association (NMHA)**. In 1980, NMHA's three-year leadership role in raising grass-roots support and cooperation with the federal government resulted in the development and passage of the **Mental Health Systems Act of 1980**.

- **In 1990, NMHA played a leading role in the development of the Americans with Disabilities Act** which protects mentally and physically disabled Americans from discrimination in such areas as employment, public accommodations, transportation, telecommunications, and state and local government services.
- **NMHA's massive National Public Education Campaign on Clinical Depression, begun in 1993** and later expanded into the Campaign for America's Mental Health, continues to inform Americans on the symptoms of depression and provide information about treatment.
- **The Mental Health Parity Act of 1996 was a great victory**, barring insurance companies and large self-insured employers from placing annual or lifetime dollar limits on mental health coverage. NMHA was at the forefront of all efforts to win passage of the bill.

- **In November 2006, NMHA became Mental Health America**, expanding its outreach efforts to ensure all Americans are better equipped to manage the day-to-day stressors of life and ultimately “bring wellness home.”
- Now the symbol of Mental Health America, the **300-pound Mental Health Bell** serves as a powerful reminder that the invisible chains of misunderstanding and discrimination continue to bind people with mental illnesses. Today, the Bell rings out hope for improving mental health and achieving victory over mental illnesses.
- **Over the years, national mental health leaders and other prominent individuals have rung the Bell** to mark the continued progress in the fight for victory over mental illnesses.



How We Are Organized



- A **Mental Health America affiliate** is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization that provides mental health advocacy, education and services to a specific service area, such as a state, county or metropolitan area.
- Mental Health America affiliates bring together mental health consumers, parents, advocates and service providers for collaboration and action to inform, support and enable mental wellness, and emphasize recovery from mental illness.

Affiliate Network

- Affiliates provide public education, information and referral, support groups, rehabilitation services as well as socialization and housing services to those confronting mental health problems and their loved ones. Many also provide family advocate services to parents of children with serious emotional disturbances, mentorship or peer support for adults recovering from mental illnesses, and professional education to those working in the mental health field.
- They serve as local leaders in the support and development of consumer-run initiatives and primary prevention programs. Finally, affiliates strive to influence public policy at the local, state, and national level to assure access to fair and effective treatment for the millions of Americans suffering from

- **The value of participating in our association** expands beyond a one-to-one relationship with the national office; an affiliate is connected to affiliates around the country and draws upon their expertise and management abilities.
- **State and local affiliates work collectively** and with national staff to provide resources to increase their effectiveness in creating healthy solutions to growing problems. Because our association was built upon a social justice foundation, sharing ideas and resources around this mission are vital to our success.

- Affiliate Executives and Boards share their knowledge, skills and abilities with each other and support affiliates who are developing or experiencing difficulties.
- Our goal is to support affiliates such that they can meet their mission and the needs of the community and members.
- Our affiliate leaders participate in webinars, site visits, and conference calls designed to support each other, and in particular new and developing Mental Health America sites.
- Access to the **Affiliate Resource Center**, where resources and tools are provided; <http://arc.mentalhealthamerica.net/>.

- Regional Policy Council
- Participation on National Board and Committees
- National Mental Health Campaigns and Materials
- May is Mental Health Month Programming
- Participation on Policy Development
- Collaboration on Grants and Funding Opportunities
- Technical Assistance
- Action Alerts
- E-newsletter

1 – Leadership

- Work to achieve the MHA mission and vision of a just, humane and healthy society.
- Establish and maintain a visible, positive image for the affiliate, and ensure significant influence, so the general public will recognize it as a leading mental health and substance abuse organization.
- Include consumers, family members and mental health and substance abuse providers in staffing, leadership and/or operation of the affiliate.
- Maximize the involvement of volunteers, who represent the diversity of the community and the mental health and substance abuse fields.
- Provide input, feedback and perspective within the MHA network to help shape the direction and development of the MHA movement.

2 - Affiliate Relations

- Execute an affiliation agreement expressing compliance with national standards and policies and maintain affiliate status by completing re-affiliation paperwork, fulfilling dues obligations, and participating in a self-evaluation process.
- Participate in affiliate-to-affiliate communication throughout the MHA network

3 - Advocacy/Public Policy

- Advocate for public policies in keeping with the MHA mission through leadership, partnerships, and/or participation in coalitions

4 - Research/Services

- Establish or promote evidence-based, best, or promising practices to help put research into practice within the community.

5 - Education

- Plan and implement public education and media efforts in partnership with the other parts of the MHA network, and ensure that all materials are consistent with the messages and principles of the MHA movement.

6 - Cultural and Linguistic Competence

- Engage staff and board in the development, endorsement and implementation of a statement, guiding principles, and action plan related to cultural and linguistic competence
- Work to create a staff, board and programs that represent and respond to the diversity of the community

7 - Market Identification

- Use Mental Health America as the name of your affiliate, use the national logo and have a mission statement consistent with the national organization to help create a unified brand for the MHA movement.

8 - Administration/Organizational Maintenance

- If appropriate, incorporate and seek IRS approval as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, maintain awareness of the limitations 501(c)(3) organizations have regarding lobbying, and when necessary, take the appropriate steps to protect corporate and tax-exempt status.
- Provide annual administrative and financial reporting on a timely basis as required by law and affiliation agreements.
- Maintain required documentation for internal and external reporting.
- Comply with all federal, state and local laws and regulations, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and other standards or requirements of appropriate oversight authorities.
- Develop and implement effective and realistic strategies for financial management and operation.

- Regional Policy Council
- Online Brochures and Toolkits at Little or No Cost
- Affiliate Discount online at MHA Store
- Bi-monthly Updates (*News From National*)
- Advocacy Alerts
- Annual Conference and Regional Meetings
- Shared Revenue Opportunities

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