

Sample Federal Legislator Letter

The Honorable (first name) (last name)

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Subject Line: Please Support Life-Saving Congressional Actions for Those Living with Schizophrenia and Related Disorders

Dear (Representative/Senator) (last name):

I am writing on behalf of the Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance (S&PAA) to enlist your support in the fight to urge Congress to make positive change into the research and treatment of schizophrenia and related disorders. As a patient advocacy organization, S&PAA is committed to saving lives by changing the treatment paradigm for all people affected by schizophrenia-related brain diseases which involve psychosis.

A new analysis from S&PAA titled “Societal Costs of Schizophrenia and Related Disorders” reveals the staggering direct and indirect costs of caring for the estimated 2.65 million people in the U.S. living with schizophrenia. The research, commissioned by S&PAA, reveals that schizophrenia cost the U.S. an estimated \$281.6 billion in 2020, with a significant amount of direct costs due to health care, incarceration, supportive housing, and homelessness.

The report underscores the devastating failure of the behavioral health care and social services systems to provide appropriate medical care for people living with schizophrenia, highlighting the urgent need for policy changes to promote comprehensive solutions. We need to know the total costs of living with and caring for schizophrenia. We require a better treatment paradigm, one that recognizes the disease as a neurological condition and addresses it accordingly. To get there, we need to fully understand all the impacts of the disease, how it is currently managed, and what those costs are.

I am calling on you to help take these specific actions to help improve public policy priorities for those living with schizophrenia and related disorders:

- Direct the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to collect accurate prevalence and incidence data by conducting a system-wide epidemiologic study on schizophrenia and serious mental illness, thereby updating the first Epidemiologic Catchment Area (ECA) program of research commissioned in 1977
- Significantly increase the annual NIMH clinical research budget allocations for evidence-based studies with the best potential to improve outcomes for individuals with schizophrenia
- Reauthorize the 21st Century Cures Act to include funding for priorities that serve individuals living with schizophrenia

Individuals with schizophrenia have a right to accurate care, appropriate services, and supportive resources. Please join us in our fight to improve the treatment paradigm for and end discrimination against individuals with schizophrenia.

Thank you,

[Your name]

Sample State Legislator Letter

The Honorable (first name) (last name)

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Subject Line: Please Support Life-Saving Actions for Those Living with Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Within Our State

Dear (State Representative/State Senator) (last name):

As a resident of (insert name of state) and one of your constituents, I am writing on behalf of the Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance (S&PAA) to enlist your support in the fight to urge our state's legislature to make positive change into the research and treatment of schizophrenia and related disorders. As a patient advocacy organization, S&PAA is committed to saving lives by changing the treatment paradigm for all people affected by schizophrenia-related brain diseases which involve psychosis.

A new analysis from S&PAA titled "Societal Costs of Schizophrenia and Related Disorders" reveals the staggering direct and indirect costs of caring for the estimated 2.65 million people in the U.S. living with schizophrenia. The research, commissioned by S&PAA, reveals that schizophrenia cost the U.S. an estimated \$281.6 billion in 2020, with a significant amount of direct costs due to health care, incarceration, supportive housing, and homelessness.

The report underscores the devastating failure of the behavioral health care and social services systems to provide appropriate medical care for people living with schizophrenia, highlighting the urgent need for policy changes to promote comprehensive solutions. We need to know the total costs of living with and caring for schizophrenia. We require a better treatment paradigm, one that recognizes the disease as a neurological condition and addresses it accordingly. To get there, we need to fully understand all the impacts of the disease, how it is currently managed, and what those costs are.

I am calling on you to help take these specific actions to help improve state-level public policy priorities for those living with schizophrenia and related disorders:

- Collect and report state and local level costs including demographics (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) as well as diagnostic and entitlement data for all support services provided to individuals with schizophrenia
- Include funding for Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) programs involving medication, social services, and supportive housing
- Increase funding for Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for police to better de-escalate mental health crises

Individuals with schizophrenia have a right to accurate care, appropriate services, and supportive resources. Please join us in our fight to improve the treatment paradigm for and end discrimination against individuals with schizophrenia.

Thank you,

[Your name]