

Saving Money & Lives

FY2024 Funding for Study on the Costs of Serious Mental Illness

The public mental health system in our country is struggling to meet the needs of Americans with schizophrenia and other severe mental illnesses.

This citizen population experiences extraordinarily high rates of severe illness and premature death. But they are often blocked from proper treatment and as a result, end up in county jails, state prisons, homeless shelters, community hospital emergency rooms and even nursing homes.

This can lead to more severe disease – and burdens our governments and healthcare system with enormous financial expenditures. In 2021, in the absence of up-to-date data, S&PAA financed the Societal Cost of Schizophrenia and Related Disorders study, which found **that the cost of schizophrenia to the United States exceeds \$281 billion each year.**

This is the cost of “re-institutionalizing” people with schizophrenia into inappropriate, wildly expensive settings – where their health actually gets worse.

These expenses do not even include federal or state grant programs or the costs of research funding.

On a bipartisan basis, Congress built on S&PAA’s study by enacting Sec. 1124 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, PL 117-164 which authorized the Department of Health and Human Services to undertake a comprehensive nationwide study on the cost of serious mental illnesses. The following proposal would provide financing for that study.

FY 2024 Serious Mental Illness Study Funding

Pursuant to Section 1124 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, PL 117-164 the Committee allocates \$8 million and directs the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation to select an outside contractor to conduct a thorough study of the cost impact of serious mental illnesses in the United States.

This study shall take a multi-systemic approach examining the fiscal implications of untreated or poorly managed schizophrenia and other severe mental illnesses on the health care system, criminal courts, and penal facilities, including county jails, housing programs, and nursing facilities. Because of the breadth of the proposed study, the Committee anticipates that the inquiry will require several fiscal years to complete.