



## Responses to NAMI-DE from Mike Protack

### 2008 Questions for Candidates

In response to abusive and unacceptable conditions at Delaware Psychiatric Center (DPC), legislative and executive task forces have issued legislation and recommendations to address problems in the mental health system both at DPC and in the community. NAMI Delaware supports these recommendations and welcomes the opportunity to partner with elected officials and state agencies to effect a transformation of mental health care in Delaware.

No more falling through the gaps. No more inadequate services or failing institutions. Delaware deserves a mental health system that offers the highest-quality care both in DPC and in the community. There must be a partnership between the state hospital, state agencies and community mental health providers, all of whom should offer an effective and evidence-based best practices and recovery-focused services. These should be provided to consumers (persons diagnosed with a mental illness) regardless of ability to pay.

Question 1. People with serious mental illness have been entrusted to the care of Delaware Psychiatric Center, where many have suffered from abuse and neglect. As Governor, what are your plans to implement the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force and House Investigative Committee and do you plan to privatize the State hospital?

Answer 1. As Governor I will protect all who have entrusted to our care and will enact every recommended action in the Governor's Task Force. Upon taking office I will replace every official who had anything to do with the abhorrent conditions at the DPC. Additionally, where appropriate I will demand criminal and civil action against those who committed crimes or were negligent in their duties to include previous elected or appointed officials.

My desire as Governor is to make the best care available to those who need it the most. I will evaluate the options and make a recommendation before I take the Oath of Office in January. I will commit to one thing. Assuming we keep the DPC as a state facility we will make private care an option for any patient who would prefer to opt out.

Question 2. A quality community mental health care system that provides excellent services is needed to ensure that consumers can be successfully discharged from the DPC and to minimize the need for re-hospitalization. However, the community mental health system lacks uniform standards of care, lacks crisis centers in each county, lacks rates that reflect the cost of care, and lacks funding to implement evidence based best-practice programs for persons with serious mental illness. What will you do to develop and fund a comprehensive and effective community mental health system?

Answer 2. The answer is simple-enact a Universal System like our Delacare Plan which encompasses all health care needs in a manner which requires Choice, Competition and Personal Responsibility while making sure everyone is in, no one is out and everyone pays their fair share.

Delacare is based on health care education, access and affordability for all through all ages and medical conditions. There are no gaps with Delacare as it builds Wellness, Productivity and Security.

Question 3. Lack of appropriate and affordable housing and supportive employment are two of the most significant barriers to living in the community for people with serious mental illness. Currently there are insufficient housing and employment opportunities for people with mental illness. What will you do to ensure appropriate and adequate housing and supportive employment for people living with mental illness?

Answer 3. We have proposed a very bold plan for affordable housing using all excess state property to be granted to a Community Land Trust over a ten year period. This housing proposal would positively affect home affordability issues and home access issues for all populations.

As Governor I will promote very aggressive tax incentives for companies to employ qualified people and address transportation needs for people with mental disabilities. Additionally, I will require every state legislator to identify and recruit businesses in their district to work with state agencies to accomplish this goal. The legislator's efforts will be a pre-condition for access to "street funds" for their district.

Question 4. People with mental illness are ending up in jail and prison, instead of getting the treatment and support they need to live successfully in the community. What will you do to divert people with mental illness from ending up in our criminal justice system?

Answer 4. As Governor at every level I will fund substance abuse rehabilitation and will propose changes to Delaware law for treatment of mental disabilities for persons accused of non violent crimes. Additionally, we will evaluate 'mental health' courts and their benefits and legal implications.