



November 2016

A Monthly Electronic Bulletin for AAUW Leaders in Iowa
The Value of Affiliation with AAUW: By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

Welcome to this monthly electronic publication. You are invited to share this information with other members and branch leaders by forwarding it to them or providing a hard copy.

Ann Gale, AAUW Iowa President 2016-18

November 2016 Connector article from Nancy Hasenwinkel, AAUW Iowa Communications Director.

The State of Mental Health Care in Iowa

I think we have all heard the statistics: 8.1 million adults have schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, 383,000 of the mentally ill are kept in jails or prisons, nearly 1 in 5 children each year suffers a psychiatric illness, and about 23 percent of all mental health patients stayed in the Emergency Room for longer than six hours (only 10 percent of medical care patients were in the ER that long). The nationwide statistics are troubling, but in Iowa, experts are calling it a miserable situation.

According to Peggy Huppert, NAMI Iowa Executive Director, Iowa consistently ranks in the bottom five of all states in every single category of mental health programs and services. And according to a new study by the Treatment Advocacy Center, Iowa now ranks 51st in the country with just 64 state mental hospital beds. 51st! That would be last place! The 64 beds in 2016 compares with 149 beds in 2010.

Help could be on the way. In March, Governor Branstad announced \$4 million to increase the state's psychiatric residency program. The unfortunate aspect of this, however, is that psychiatrists fill their time prescribing medications. Iowa now also allows psychologists to prescribe, so that also helps. Now we need to increase the time and funds for counseling treatments.

Yes, we have all heard the statistics. But when it hits home, with a friend or family member confronting the lack of affordable mental health care, it makes a big impact. And with the ever-growing numbers, it is bound to affect all Iowans.