

## **Tune in Today to Hear Why It's Time to Take Action on Children's Mental Health**

BLOOMFIELD, Conn., June 04, 2014 - Half of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, with one in five children affected by mental illness and often not getting treatment for years. To help children and their families, schools and communities, the Cigna Foundation is sponsoring and co-hosting a forum and webcast today with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). The forum will provide steps that teachers, parents and health care professionals can take to address the growing mental health crisis among youth.

Today's forum is taking place between 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. EDT. The full agenda, speaker information and live webcast are available on the forum webpage at [www.nami.org/childrensmhforum](http://www.nami.org/childrensmhforum). Called "It's Time to Take Action: Innovative Community Approaches to Children's Mental Health," the forum includes advocates and experts from the mental health field discussing conditions, treatment, bullying and addiction. In mid-June, taped videos of the Forum sessions will be posted to the forum webpage.

"It's time to move the needle from talk to action. Cigna is pleased to shine a light on this urgent topic, as children's wellness is a priority as part of our company's corporate responsibility platform," said Stuart Lustig, M.D., M.P.H., lead medical director for child and adolescent care for Cigna Behavioral Health and associate clinical professor at the University of California San Francisco in the Department of Psychiatry.

"Suicide is the third-leading cause of death among youth, ages 10 to 24," said NAMI executive director Mary Giliberti, J.D. "Early recognition of symptoms in children and early treatment can save lives and ensures a better future."

"National dialogue about children's mental health is important, but dialogue also must lead to action. We hope the forum will help move mental health professionals and policymakers forward," Giliberti added. The forum will focus on successful, innovative and cost-effective programs that should be examined for replication nationwide to help prevent suffering and tragedy, including:

- Ensuring that schools are equipped with mental health prevention and early intervention tools;
- Early identification, intervention and care for youth with mental health conditions, and how to fill the gap in a shortage of mental health services and providers; and
- Opportunities to talk about mental health, such as the [NAMI Ending the Silence](#) program for high school students and OK2Talk.org, a social media community that promotes sharing, dialogue and resources to eliminate the barriers that often stand in the way of children with mental health conditions.

"Talking more openly about mental illness and the tangible actions that benefit children helps to remove the stigma and discrimination that often surrounds these conditions. Today's forum is a start," Dr. Lustig said.

### **About the Cigna Foundation**

The Cigna Foundation, founded in 1962, is a private foundation funded by contributions from Cigna Corporation (NYSE: CI) and its subsidiaries. The Cigna Foundation supports organizations sharing its commitment to enhancing the health of individuals and families, and the well-being of their communities, with a special focus on those communities where Cigna employees live and work.

### **About Cigna**

Cigna Corporation (NYSE: CI) is a global health service company dedicated to helping people improve their health, well-being and sense of security. All products and services are provided exclusively by or through operating subsidiaries of Cigna Corporation, including Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company, Life Insurance Company of North America and Cigna Life Insurance Company of New York. Such products and services include an integrated suite of health services, such as medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, vision, supplemental benefits, and other related products including group life, accident and disability insurance. Cigna maintains sales capability in 30 countries and jurisdictions, and has more than 80 million customer relationships throughout the world. To learn more about Cigna®, including links to follow us on Facebook or Twitter, visit [www.cigna.com](http://www.cigna.com).

### **About NAMI**

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI advocates for access to services, treatment, supports and research and is steadfast in its commitment to raising awareness and building a community of hope. To learn more about NAMI, visit [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).