



## Joint Statement in Response to Initial Story in Globe Spotlight Series on Mental Health in Massachusetts

July 1, 2016

We are deeply concerned that the initial Spotlight series story on Massachusetts' mental health care system has done long-term damage by perpetuating the false impression that individuals with mental health conditions are inherently violent.

The facts show that they are not any more prone to violence than any other group, and while we acknowledge the tragic incidents reported by the Globe, we strongly believe that the Globe series, by linking mental illness and violence in such a sensationalistic way, will increase the stigma that has long plagued individuals with mental health conditions and their families.

As individuals in recovery, family members, service providers and legal advocates, we know that recovery is possible and access to a broad range of services is essential to meeting the needs of individuals living with a mental illness. We also know that tens of thousands of people living with a mental illness in Massachusetts lead full and productive lives every day. It's unfortunate that the initial Spotlight report did nothing to highlight these individuals.

As advocates for restoring and revitalizing the Commonwealth's mental health system, we call for greater investment of resources targeted to significant gaps in early intervention, treatment services and recovery supports for individuals, families and their communities. Massachusetts has time tested talent and service and program successes that can serve as essential building blocks in this critically needed reform.

**Signed by:**

Association for Behavioral Healthcare

Center for Public Representation

Children's Mental Health Campaign

Disability Law Center

Health Law Advocates

Massachusetts Association of Behavioral Health Systems, Inc.

Massachusetts Association for Mental Health

Massachusetts Psychiatric Society

Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The Transformation Center