

# Addressing the Growing Crises of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders in the United States

## Key Trends for Americans Facing Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders:

- **1 in 5 adults experience a form of mental illness each year.**
- **1 in 20 adults experience a serious mental illness** (e.g., severe depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia).
- **40 million aged 12 years or older report having a substance use disorder**—including alcohol use disorder and illicit drug use disorder.
- **9.2 million have both a mental illness and a substance use disorder.**
- COVID-19 made matters worse, with **2 out of 5 adults reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression**, up from 1 in 10 prior to the pandemic. ER visits for drug overdoses and suicide attempts are also 36% and 26% higher, respectively.

## Younger Americans are Also Facing Growing Challenges:

- Younger people are experiencing increases in serious psychological distress, major depression and suicidal thoughts and behaviors in recent years.
- **1 in 6 students reported making a suicide plan** in the past year, a 44% increase since 2009.
- **Children growing up in poverty are 2-3 times more likely to develop a mental health condition.**

## While Mental Illness is Growing, Patients Aren't Getting the Treatment They Need:

- **Less than half of adults with mental illness receive treatment.**
- **Just over half of youth aged 6-17 years old with mental health disorders receive treatment.**
- **The average delay between the onset of mental illness symptoms and treatment is 11 years.**
- Though prevalence of certain mental health disorders and substance use disorders are not generally higher among racial and ethnic minority groups, **these groups are often less likely to receive treatment.**

The alarming pace by which rates of mental illness, addiction and suicide are increasing across the country demands a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy to stem the tide of these crises.

The biopharmaceutical industry supports the following policies to address key barriers that impede progress against mental health and addiction in the United States:

- ✓ **Reduce the stigma** of mental illness and substance use disorders and **bolster our behavioral health workforce.**
- ✓ **Improve access to the comprehensive range of treatment services** needed to successfully manage these conditions and **make insurance work more like insurance.**
- ✓ **Enforce mental health and substance use disorder parity.**
- ✓ **Leverage and expand the appropriate use of telehealth** while ensuring safeguards protect the quality of patient care.
- ✓ **Improve care coordination and delivery** through evidence-based care integration models.

Together, these policies can represent meaningful steps toward curbing the mental health and addiction crises facing Americans today.