



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**New Schizophrenia Policy Action Network (SPAN) will advocate for policies that improve diagnosis, treatment and care for people living with schizophrenia**

**Alexandria, VA, May 16, 2024** – The new Schizophrenia Policy Action Network (SPAN) launched today as a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization that will work to advance policies and legislation that shatter barriers to care for people living with schizophrenia. Created as an affiliated organization of the Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance, SPAN’s efforts will include:

- Serving as a nationwide catalyst, bringing allied organizations together to power a movement for change.
- Activating a nationwide network of advocates who can tell the stories of discrimination and devastation caused by our current laws and systems – as well as the stories of hope and recovery that result from proper access to treatment and care.
- Educating key audiences – including policymakers, opinion leaders and other influencers – about the need to transform our siloed system of care into one that supports survival and recovery for people with schizophrenia.
- Advancing policies to drive this transformation at the federal, state and community levels.

“Less than half of people with schizophrenia in the United States are receiving any type of treatment – and only 5% are getting the comprehensive treatment and support needed to survive and in some cases, recover,” said SPAN Chief Executive Officer Gordon Lavigne. “This is just one appalling result of our country’s devastating failure to provide appropriate care for people living with this severe brain disease.”

Schizophrenia and related psychosis disorders affect at least 1 in 100 people in the United States – or about 2 million adults. However, that prevalence is believed to be dramatically underreported, as barriers to care have resulted in many people with the disease ending up on the street, in homeless shelters and in jails and prisons. SPAN will work to eliminate this disturbing inequity.

“SPAN will bring together every part of our community and combine resources with allied organizations to advance policy changes that enable people living with schizophrenia to access the care they need and deserve,” said SPAN Founding Board Chair Mindy Greiling.

SPAN’s Founding Board of Directors are change-agent stakeholders who have successfully driven key policy changes that improve treatment and support for people with the severe brain disease:

**Board Chair Mindy Greiling, M.Ed.**, served in the Minnesota House of Representatives for 20 years, where she initiated the first state bipartisan mental health caucus after her son was diagnosed with schizophrenia. She served on state and national NAMI boards and is the immediate past president of NAMI Ramsey County. She co-chairs NAMI Ramsey County’s advocacy for Clubhouse International and is leading advocacy for more affordable housing that fits people with serious mental illnesses. Greiling’s memoir, *Fix What You Can: Schizophrenia and a Lawmaker’s Fight for her Son*, was published in 2020, and she co-hosts the podcast *Schizophrenia: Three Moms in the Trenches*.

**Board Vice Chair Linda L. Mimms, M.A.**, has been an advocate for reform in public policy, law, insurance and treatment protocols for people living with serious neurobiological brain disorders for more than 12 years. She began her career as a lobbyist on Capitol Hill, worked for the U.S. State Department in Boston and then as U.S. Sen. Alan J. Dixon’s Government Affairs/Legislative Analyst Assistant in Chicago and Washington, D.C. Linda has published numerous booklets and articles and has been a featured speaker about schizophrenia and barriers to care at multiple national meetings and conferences. Linda’s podcasts, commentaries and editorials addressing the lack of a continuum of care and criminalization of people with serious brain disorders – one of the greatest injustices of our time – have been published nationally and locally.

**Board Secretary-Treasurer Michael Wolfe, B.B.A.**, spent nearly 37 years at Johnson & Johnson in executive management positions, with a strong focus on patient advocacy leadership responsibilities across brain health and neuroscience. He held leadership roles in sales, sales management, marketing, payer, policy and advocacy (patient, professional and trade organizations) and built and led several innovative and successful internal and external coalitions. He also held commercial, Medicaid and state mental healthcare system responsibilities across New York and New England.

**Board member Bethany Yeiser, B.S.**, is president of the CURESZ Foundation, which she co-founded with Henry Nasrallah, M.D., in 2016. CURESZ stands for Comprehensive Understanding via Research and Education into Schizophrenia. Bethany was a scholarship winner, researcher and violinist before she became severely mentally ill and homeless during her senior year of college in 2003. Maintaining a high level of recovery for 15 years, she is a motivational speaker and the author of *Mind Estranged: My Journey from Schizophrenia and Homelessness to*

*Recovery* (2014). Bethany also publishes a blog called “Recovery Road” on PsychologyToday.com. Her second book, *Awakenings: Stories of Recovery and Emergence from Schizophrenia*, was released in February and was co-authored by Dr. Nasrallah.

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### **About the Schizophrenia Policy Action Network**

The Schizophrenia Policy Action Network (SPAN) is a separately incorporated advocacy affiliate of the Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance. As a 501(c)(4), SPAN is able to further engage with lawmakers by working with elected officials and candidates to take bold action to address the unmet needs of the schizophrenia community. SPAN develops and advances policies to shatter the barriers to recovery by enhancing care, increasing research and improving support for people living with schizophrenia. SPAN works at the federal and state levels to advance the public policy priorities of the schizophrenia community.