



We are delighted to invite you to the symposium, *Anticipate and Act: Prevention and Strengthening Mental Health in the Netherlands and Beyond*, taking place on June 19, 2025, at the UMCG in Groningen. This event is jointly organized by a consortium of partners with extensive networks across the Netherlands.

This special gathering will bring together leading experts, policymakers, professionals, and individuals with lived experience to engage in a critical conversation about shaping the future of mental health prevention.

Why this symposium?

Mental health prevention is a pressing topic in the Netherlands and beyond. Leveraging the experience of the *Mentaal Gezond Groningen* programme, we aim to share insights from Groningen, reflect on national initiatives with contributions from *MIND US*, *Nationaal Plan Hoofdzaken*, and the *Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health*, and build on the outcomes of related events to deepen the conversation on mental health prevention policy.

What is our goal?

During the symposium, we will explore how mental health prevention can be effective and we will work towards embedding it firmly in policy and practice. The day will feature inspiring talks from (inter)nationally renowned experts, opportunities to expand your network, and interactive break-out sessions where we will collaboratively identify concrete next steps to drive meaningful policy change.

What is on the agenda for the day?

In the morning there will be keynote lectures by Ricardo Muñoz, Jochen Mierau and others. These lectures are in English.

In the afternoon there will be two rounds of breakout sessions. These are partly in English and partly in Dutch.

We will conclude the day with a debate (in Dutch) with insights from policymakers, practitioners and experts on how to achieve real change.

By attending, you will be part of a dialogue, helping to shape policies and strategies that can make a real impact on mental health prevention, both locally and internationally.

Join us in Groningen on June 19, 2025, and together we will work to make mental health prevention a priority for future policies.

Program

09.15 Reception and registration with coffee/tea

10:00 Opening

Robert Schoevers, chair

Wiro Niessen, dean and member Board of Directors UMCG

10:10 On the Road to a World Without Clinical Depression: 65 years and counting...

Ricardo Muñoz

Professor Muñoz will present data showing that, in terms of knowledge, we are halfway down the road to a world without depression. That is, with current methods, we can prevent or treat up to 50% of clinical episodes of major depression. However, in terms of practice, we are scarcely at the beginning of that road. He will interweave the scientific aspects of his talk with the personal sources of his interest in preventing depression worldwide.

10.50 The Economic Potential of Mental Health

Jochen Mierau

Mental health is a crucial factor in economic productivity, with its impact felt not just through treatment costs but through lost workforce potential. Mental health challenges follow a clear socioeconomic gradient, meaning that closing the health gap is essential for unlocking economic potential. Moreover, true health does not stem from healthcare alone but from proactive mental health protection. To move forward, we must enhance our understanding of effective protective measures and address the political barriers posed by industries - such as social media, gambling, and alcohol - whose business models contribute to mental health risks. A shift in policy and commitment is imperative.

11.30 The importance of prevention in Mental Health

Manouska Molema

11.40 The approach of 'Mentaal Gezond Groningen' project

Frederike Jörg

Mentaal Gezond Groningen is a regional prevention program with a clear ten-year goal: reducing the prevalence of mental disorders by 10%. The project brings together professionals, policymakers, researchers, and citizens in a vibrant cross-sector learning network to share knowledge and drive change. Through smart investments in prevention, strong data infrastructure, and continuous learning, the initiative puts the well-being of every Groninger at its core. This keynote will highlight its mission, early successes, and the roadmap for a mentally healthier future.

12.00 Lunch

13.00 Break-out sessions round 1

14.00 Switch time

14.05 Break-out sessions round 2

15.05 Break

The program continues in Dutch

15:30 Debat: 'Preventie van mentale gezondheidsproblemen: Hoofdzaak, Hoofdbreker of Hoopgever?'

Panelleden: Monique van den Eijnden (MIND), Jochen Mierau, Henk Nijboer (Provincie Groningen) Robert Schoevers en Frederieke Vriends (MIND Us)

In dit panelgesprek gaan experts op het gebied van landelijk en regionaal beleid, ervaringsdeskundigheid, zorgverlening en wetenschap in gesprek. Het belang van mentale gezondheid, de unieke benadering die preventie van mentale gezondheidsproblemen vraagt en de rol in de preventie vanuit de verschillende perspectieven komen aan bod.

16.15 Samenvatting van de dag

Marie-José van Tol

16.25 Afsluiting/Closure

Frederike Jörg

16.30 Hapje en drankje/Drinks

17.30 Einde/End

Faculty

Dr. F. Jörg, Program Leader Rob Giel Onderzoekcentrum (RGOc), Universitair Centrum voor Psychiatrie UMCG and Program Director Mentaal Gezond Groningen

Prof. dr. J.O. Mierau, Professor Public Health Economics, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen en UMCG and Scientific Director LifeLines

M. Molema, Alderman Municipality of Groningen

R.F. Muñoz, Professor of Psychology, Emeritus at the School of Medicine of the University of California, San Francisco, and Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Palo Alto University

Prof. dr. R.A. Schoevers, Professor of Psychiatry and Head Universitair Centrum voor Psychiatrie UMCG

Prof. dr. M.J. van Tol, Professor of Cognitive Neuropsychiatry UMCG and Chair Steering Committee Nationaal Plan Hoofdzaken

Organization

The UMCG Wenckebach Instituut for Education and Training in cooperation with Mentaal Gezond Groningen, Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health, MIND Us, Nationaal Plan Hoofdzaken and the Universitair Centrum Psychiatrie UMCG.

Local Organizing Committee

Frederike Jörg, Program Leader Rob Giel Onderzoekcentrum (RGOc), Universitair Centrum voor Psychiatrie UMCG and Program Director Mentaal Gezond Groningen

Kaying Li-Kan, postdoc, Universitair Centrum Psychiatrie UMCG and Mentaal Gezond Groningen

Gabriela Matouskova, Project Leader, Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health

Emma Oosten, Program Manager MIND Us

Robert Schoevers, Professor of Psychiatry and Head Universitair Centrum voor Psychiatrie UMCG

Marie-José van Tol, Professor of Cognitive Neuropsychiatry UMCG and Chair Steering Committee

Nationaal Plan Hoofdzaken

Marian Tuinenga, Manager Centre for Continuous Medical Education, UMCG Wenckebach Instituut for Education and Training

Ymke van der Wal, Project Leader Mentaal Gezond Groningen

Target audience

Policy makers (national, regional and local)

Care and welfare providers: mental health care, (municipal) social teams (WMO & Youth Act)

Educational institutions

Employers

Experts by experience

Professionals from various care and social disciplines

Other interested professionals

Language

The language of communication during the morning program is English. The break-out sessions are partly in Dutch and partly in English. During the debate, the language of communication is Dutch.

Accreditation (for Dutch participants only)

The program has been accredited by the ABAN (all clusters), FGzPt, LV POH-GGZ, VSR and Kwaliteitsregister V&V with 5 points.

Travel Information

[Global Consortium Depression Prevention 2025 - Venue, travel and accommodation](#)