Advocate

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Speaking Out at Mental Health Day on the Hill

The Mental Health Legislative Network’s annual Day on the Hill drew over 500 people to the Capitol on March 14 to urge legislators to pass important legislation to expand school-linked mental health services, invest in more supports for children and adults and ensure that insurance parity for mental health care is met.

Mental health advocates from around the state participated in the day getting updated on the status of these critical issues, visiting legislators and holding a vocal rally in the Capitol Rotunda.

“Today is not the time to be silent. Today is our day to get loud,” shouted state mental health advisory council member Rozenia Fuller as she

See “Mental Health Rally” p.3

Elk River Finally Gets IRTS Facility

People living in the Elk River area will finally be getting a residential program for adults recovering from a mental illness. After lots of input from advocates the Elk River City Council reversed itself on Feb. 22 and approved the development of an Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS) facility. The breakthrough came after nine previous tries to locate a facility in Elk River that fell through for various reasons, including community resistance. The facility will be run by ResCare MN, Inc.

Advocates Looking for Bigger Gains

The Minnesota Legislature is to complete its work by May 20. As this newsletter goes to print the first deadlines have passed but the budget bills still need to be put together. It’s too early to measure success.

Governor Walz released his budget that included increased funding in several areas of interest to NAMI members.

For children’s mental health, his budget includes over $4 million a year for the school-linked mental health program, funding to offset the loss of federal Medicaid funding for our children’s residential system and increasing the number of Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) beds from 150 to 300 beds.

There is continuation funding for the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics and an expansion of the Transitions to Community program to support people transitioning out of state-operated mental health services in a timely fashion when they no longer require this level of care, along with expanding the program to people who are committed and in a community hospital and on the waiting list for Anoka.

There is funding for provide traditional healing practices to American Indians for mental health and substance use disorders. Funding would go to Tribal Nations and five urban Indian communities.

There are changes to Substance Use Disorder treatment to provide early intervention and to realign the funding streams for residential treatment.

See “Looking for Gains” p.2
Despite being passed ten years ago, the promise of parity has not been realized. Funding for early childhood mental health, multi-generational mental health and for school-linked mental health programs. Funds are being requested to fund an online suicide prevention program for teachers and a list of programs to educate students about mental illnesses and mental health.

Increased funding for the IPS employment program and an effort to expand employment programs to meet the needs of people with mental illnesses is also moving as is NAMI's bill to provide college-linked mental health programs.

Housing continues to be a major concern and NAMI is pushing for more funding for Bridges and for supportive housing.

NAMI is again pushing for a bill to restrict the use of solitary confinement in the prisons and to reinstate the Ombudsman program for jails and prisons.

There is never one thing that we can do to build our mental health system – there must be many things in many areas to create the changes we need.

We continue to make progress because of you – so keep those calls and letters going in to our state senators and representatives. Sign up for the legislative updates to learn more about what is happening at the Capitol.
Mental Health Rally… continued from p. 1

implored advocates to raise their voices.

“We are going to make sure we are heard,” said NAMI’s executive director Sue Abderholden. “We need mental health parity enforced now, not next year or in two years. This bill needs to be passed now!”

Legislative speakers included Rep. Dave Baker who cited the critical need for enforcing mental health parity and Sen. Julie Rosen a long-time legislative voice for expanding mental health services. Also speaking on the need to build the mental health system were Senators Rich Draheim, Matt Klein, Carla Nelson and Michelle Benson along with Representatives Jim Davnie, Ruth Richardson and Hodan Hasson.

Advocates asked for increased investments in community-based programs.

Other speakers included family member Elaine Love, Jenna Erickson and Governess Simpson who shared their personal stories. NAMI’s executive director Sue Abderholden and MH Minnesota’s executive director Shannah Mulvihill addressed the crowd as co-chairs of the MHLN, and mental health providers Steven Loos and Richard Wolleat also spoke.

After the Rally advocates visited their legislators asking for increased investments in community-based programs that serve children and adults (such as school-linked mental health, children’s residential services, first episode psychosis programs, and early childhood services), along with funding for affordable and supportive housing, employment, workforce expansion and suicide prevention.

Mental Health Day on the Hill is sponsored by the Mental Health Legislative Network, a coalition of over 40 mental health organizations dedicated to improving mental health care in Minnesota.
**Landmark Mental Health Parity Case**

On March 5, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California held that United Behavioral Health (UBH), the country’s largest managed behavioral healthcare organization, illegally denied mental health and substance use coverage based on flawed medical necessity criteria.

After weeks of testimony, U.S. Chief Magistrate Judge Joseph C. Spero found that UBH had created internal policies aimed at effectively discriminating against patients with mental health and substance abuse disorders in order to save money.

The Judge’s findings reinforce what NAMI members have experienced for decades. Even with parity laws, people with mental health conditions too often find that, even if their plan “covers” mental health services, they are denied the most appropriate and effective treatment.

While this is just a first step, it is a monumental win for people with mental health conditions. NAMI hopes these findings will have an impact on how plans make medical necessity determinations for people with mental health conditions. As Angela Kimball, National Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, told the *New York Times*, “This should put health plans on notice that they simply can’t make up the rules as they go along.”

This decision provides an opportunity to call for an end to discrimination against covering mental health treatment. Urge your elected officials to enforce the federal parity law.

**Tailored Therapy Improves Immigrant Outcomes**

Research on the health outcomes of immigrants needing mental health and substance use treatment shows a reduced likelihood that they will receive evidence-based care. These barriers, and the lack of evidence-based care are a reality for people in the Latinx community – and result in poorer outcomes.

A team of researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital, and others, recently tested a novel preventive intervention designed to provide culturally tailored treatment for Latinx immigrants with both mental health and substance misuse symptoms that incorporates evidence-based practices. Called IIDEA (Integrated Intervention for Dual Problems and Early Action),

IIDEA reduced substance use and mental health symptoms for participants who initially screened with moderate to severe symptoms. Lead author Margarita Alegria, PhD, chief of the Disparities Research Unit noted, “These results point to the potential for tailored therapy...to improve outcomes.”

*(Adapted from a Mass General press release, Jan. 11, 2019.)*

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**NAMI Trains Peer Support Specialists**

On Feb. 2 & 3, NAMI trained a group of Peer Support Specialists on NAMI Connection methods so they could bring it back to their work and better facilitate support groups.
Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day Celebrations Set

National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day for 2019 is observed on Thursday, May 9.

Each year, National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day seeks to raise awareness about the importance of children’s mental health and show that positive mental health is essential to a child’s healthy development. Observance of Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day shines a national spotlight on the importance of caring for every child’s mental health.

This year the Substance Abuse and Mental Health services Administration, SAMHSA’s theme for Mental Health Awareness Day is “Suicide Prevention: Strategies That Work.” SAMHSA will focus on the impact that suicide has on children, youth, young adults, families, and communities. SAMHSA will showcase evidence-based strategies to connect those in need to information, services, and supports that can save lives.

This year NAMI Minnesota will observe Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day by presenting a mental health education and suicide prevention program entitled Ending the Silence in high schools around the state.

Ending the Silence is a 50-minute presentation that teaches high school students the warning signs of mental illnesses and suicide, and how to help themselves or a friend who may be experiencing some of the warning signs.

The training consists of a 25-minute power-point presentation facilitated by a trained NAMI presenter, and includes a 15-minute presentation by a young adult who lives with a mental illness who talks about their road to recovery.

Each school has the option of hosting the Walk a Mile In Our Shoes mental health day activity to accompany the Ending the Silence presentations. The Walk a Mile In Our Shoes activity occurs during the lunch school lunch break. Information is available and students are invited to sign a pledge describing how they will help themselves or a friend who may be experiencing mental health challenges.

The Walk a Mile In Our Shoes event and Ending the Silence presentations have proven to be effective in initiating the discussion and providing resources to students about suicide mental illnesses and prevention strategies.

Super Saturday Champions Children’s Mental Health

NAMI Minnesota hosted its annual spring Super Saturday to address awareness of children’s mental health on March 9. Despite reports of impending bad weather, over 100 parents, caregivers and educators came out to participate in classes hosted by NAMI Minnesota staff, St. Paul Public Schools and the Guzmán Law Firm.

For some participants, self-care in addition to mental health was at the center of their learning. The Wellness Series class invited participants to share their own self-care techniques by writing down their personal care tips on a post-it and adhering them to a wall.

Attendees visited resource tables at NAMI’s Children’s Super Saturday on March 9.

Through this exercise, participants were able to share their personal tips on self-care and obtain other practical ideas to use within their daily life.

Other classes included Trauma Informed Care, Understanding the Children’s Mental Health System and Mental Health Crisis Planning for Children and Families. NAMI also screened its new 15-minute video “Mental Health Crisis Planning for Families,” which helps parents learn to recognize, prevent, plan for, and manage their child’s mental health crisis.

Throughout the event participants visited resource tables staffed by area providers, and noted their appreciation in attending concurrent classes over one day, including having multiple classes and resources available in Spanish. NAMI plans to host its next Super Saturday for Children’s Mental Health this fall.
Beyond the Baby Blues Conference Set for May 21

Beyond the Baby Blues is a full day conference designed to educate professionals and families about mood disorders and anxiety before, during and after pregnancy.

This year’s conference includes a keynote presentation from trauma specialist Resmaa Menakem, (MSW, LICSW, S.E.P), several breakout sessions, and a networking lunch. It will be held Tuesday, May 21 at the University of Minnesota Continuing Education Center, 1890 Bufford Avenue, in St. Paul.

Beyond the Baby Blues is put on by NAMI Minnesota, the University of Minnesota School of Social Work, Minnesota. Sponsors as of this writing include the Star Legacy Foundation, the Postpartum Counseling Center, Empowered Health Chiropractic, the Family Development Center, and the Postpartum Support Minnesota.

Classes in Spanish

NAMI Minnesota is now offering several mental health classes in Spanish in Dakota County, and recently held two classes in Spanish as part of its recent Super Saturday for Children’s Mental Health. The event was very well received and through surveys some participants requested more classes in Spanish.

NAMI continues working alongside local providers and agencies to help build the trust and expansion of services for multicultural communities. Efforts in Dakota County continue to focus on connecting with the area’s Spanish community, doing outreach, developing and offering classes and participating in local events. For information on partnering in these efforts, contact NAMI’s parent educator Fanny Fernandez at 651-645-2948 x133 or ffernandez@namimn.org.

Mobile Mental Health Crisis Team Honored

Resmaa Menakem, last year’s NAMI Award winner for Professional of the Year, is an educator on trauma.

Crookston’s Mobile Mental Health Crisis Response Team (MCRT) was recognized in February for responding to over 1,800 calls in 2018. They also did 575 in-person assessments. The efforts covered crisis line calls in eight counties as well as in-person intervention and assessments in Polk, Red Lake, Mahnomen and Norman counties.

The Reaching Out to Serve Award, which has been given out by RiverView Health for more than 30 years, is for “serving the region while demonstrating innovativeness voluntary of self-initiated efforts.”

“Their team responds at all hours of the day and night to meet and speak with our patients to help assess what their needs are and make recommendations for continued care,” said Kristin Pearcy, director of RiverView’s Emergency Department in an interview for the Crookston Times. “They handle themselves with the utmost professionalism and compassion. Their jobs are certainly not easy, and their working days are long, but their dedication to their patients and their families shines through as they assist those in need.”

The MCRT has also been a major contributor to RiverView’s implementation of Zero Suicide, a system-wide organization commitment to safer suicide care. The Crookston Times also reported that MCRT members have provided education, training and support for employees and been part of a collaborative effort to provide similar training to the local public to help “empower everyone to help someone in need.”

Postpartum Support Minnesota is offering two scholarships to professionals or students working with expectant mothers and new parents. Ideal candidates will be working with underserved populations. Questions regarding Beyond the Baby Blues, including sponsorship and exhibitor inquiries, should be directed to Suleiman Adan at sadan@namimn.org or 651-645-2948 x128.

The conference is approved for up to 4 CEUs for social workers. To register or get more information on breakout sessions, go to namimn.org.
We cordially invite you to our 26th Annual Spring Gala, celebrating NAMI’s work championing justice, dignity and respect for children and adults with mental illnesses and their families.

**Hope Springs Eternal**
NAMI MINNESOTA GALA

**SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2019**
**HILTON MINNEAPOLIS**

1001 Marquette Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403-2440

Silent Auction & Cocktails | 5:30PM
Dinner & Program | 6:45PM
Dancing with High Brow & The Shades | 8:30-10PM
Research Dinner Highlights Individualized Treatments

NAMI Minnesota and the University of Minnesota Dept. of Psychiatry hosted its annual Research Dinner on February 26 in Roseville. The event was attended by nearly 100 community members, professionals, and researchers. Researchers from the Dept. of Psychiatry gave presentations on their current studies. Justin Anker spoke about his research on treatments for substance use disorder and mental illnesses. Sophia Albott discussed transcranial magnetic stimulation as an option for treatment resistant depression, and Christine Conelea presented on individualized treatments for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in children and youth.

Online Smoking Cessation Training for Providers

Did you know that even though the rest of the nation has seen significant declines in smoking rates over the past decade, people living with mental illnesses have been predominantly left out? Smoking continues to be the leading cause of death for this population.

As part of its expanded efforts to improve the health of people living with mental illnesses, NAMI Minnesota has created a three-hour online training that discusses smoking cessation strategies with mental health providers, and other providers, to address smoking stigma and encourage change.

The training allows providers to learn techniques such as motivational interviewing and test their knowledge and skills using interactive activities. It helps individuals have practical experience and highlights the perspectives of people living with a mental illness and their journey toward smoking cessation.

NAMI is seeking three mental health organizations that are also dedicated to reducing smoking rates for people living with a mental illness. If you are interested in partnering with NAMI, please contact Hayley Smith at hsmith@namimn.org or 651-645-2948 x198 or Cat Gangi at cgangi@namimn.org or 651-645-2948 x127.

Be a NAMIWalks Sponsor

NAMIWalks Minnesota is gearing up for another fantastic year. Sponsor the largest mental health awareness walk in the state and support NAMI’s work. Partner with us as a corporate or individual sponsor for this inspiring event. To find out how, contact Amy Brit at 651-645-2948 x112 or abrit@namimn.org.

Affiliates Prepare for Mental Health Month

Local NAMI affiliates across Minnesota are preparing for May is Mental Month. For information about your local affiliate or to get involved, contact affiliates@namimn.org.

NAMI Ramsey County is collaborating with the St. Paul Police Department’s mental health unit for a presentation to community members on May 2, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. at St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Avenue, in St. Paul. Space is limited. RSVP at https://mental-illness-law-enforcement-tickets.eventbrite.com.

NAMI Dakota County is collaborating with The Heart and Mind Connection for a screening of “The Ripple Effect” on May 14 from 7-9:00 p.m. at Mary Mother of the Church in Burnsville.

NAMI Washington County will hold a Game Day on Sunday, May 19, from 3:00-6:00 p.m., at Trinity Lutheran Church, 115 N. 4th St., in Stillwater. Enjoy snacks and board games at this free event. All ages are welcome. For information call 651-645-2948 x126.

NAMI Hennepin County is working with a local theater company, Table Salt Productions, to host a variety show specially created for their affiliate on May 31 from 7-8:00 p.m. at Bryant Lake Bowl in Minneapolis.

NAMI Duluth is preparing a series of presentations at local libraries on understanding depression to promote mental health awareness in May.

NAMI has set up many presentations for May. For details, see namimn.org.
Researchers have shown that a type of magnetic resonance imaging — called neuromelanin-sensitive MRI (NM-MRI) — is a potential biomarker for psychosis. The NM-MRI signal was found to be a marker of dopamine function in people with schizophrenia and an indicator of the severity of psychotic symptoms in people with this mental illness in a study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

“Disturbances affecting the neurotransmitter dopamine are associated with a host of mental and neurological disorders, such as schizophrenia and Parkinson’s disease,” said Joshua A. Gordon, M.D., Ph.D., director of NIMH. “Because of the role dopamine plays in these disorders, the ability to measure dopamine activity is critical for furthering our understanding of these disorders, including how to best diagnose and treat them.”

Despite the utility of this tool for detecting neuron loss in neurodegenerative illnesses, NM-MRI had not yet been shown to provide a marker of dopamine function, nor had its utility been demonstrated in individuals without neurodegenerative illnesses. In this study, Guillermo Horga, M.D., Ph.D., of Columbia University, New York, and colleagues conducted a series of validation studies to show that NM-MRI can serve as a marker of dopamine function in individuals without neurodegenerative disorders.

A next critical step was to show a connection between NM-MRI and dopamine function. The researchers collected measurements of dopamine release capacity (as measured using positron emission tomography (PET) and NM-MRI data from people without neurodegenerative illnesses. Individuals with a higher NM-MRI signal had greater dopamine release capacity in the striatum (a core component of reward, motor, and cognitive systems). The researchers also found that NM-MRI signal in the substantia nigra was associated with functional MRI measures of regional cerebral blood flow.

Lastly, the researchers examined the link between NM-MRI signal and psychosis severity, finding that more severe symptoms of psychosis were associated with higher NM-MRI signals in the nigrostriatal pathway of individuals with schizophrenia and in those at-risk for schizophrenia.

Psychosis is associated with dopamine system dysfunction, characterized by greater dopamine release and synthesis capacity in the striatum. The findings suggest that NM-MRI is capturing this dopamine dysfunction, supporting the role of NM-MRI as a potential biomarker for psychosis.

In describing the future directions of their research, Dr. Horga said, “We are now extending this work to see if we can detect abnormalities in neuromelanin signal that help us predict which individuals are more likely to develop a psychotic disorder among those who already show early symptoms of psychosis.”

(Excerpted from a Feb. 20, 2019 NIH Press Release.)
Fundraisers by Others Support NAMI’s Work
Do it Yourself fundraisers support NAMI’s work, help raise awareness and bring in new people to build our movement. If you would like to hold a fundraiser for NAMI Minnesota, contact Dinah Dale at ddale@namimn.org or 651-645-2948, x104.

• Fidelity Charitable hosted a poker game to benefit local charities, and the winner was Kevin Hanstad who donated $4,500 to NAMI Minnesota.
  • We received $3,635 from birthday fundraisers on Facebook that Karen Wilkerson, Pat Croal, Tori Tracy, Susan Smith and Heidi Stone respectively held on our behalf.
  • Kevin Hanstad and Randy Reinke held a party in their home and raised $2,931 from their family and friends.
  • Isabel Taufen, a student at Maple Grove High School, organized a concert with music provided by students to raise awareness of the need to support those living with mental illnesses and their families. The proceeds of $1,570 from the ticket sales went to NAMI Minnesota.
  • Trinity Lutheran Church presented a $1,305 donation in appreciation of NAMI’s work for families with loved ones living with mental illnesses.
  • An annual bowling tournament held in memory of Bill Oehlers by his college friends raised over $1,300 for NAMI Minnesota.
  • The employees of Great Northern Twin Cities, LLC selected NAMI as their favorite charity, and donated $1,042 to our cause.
  • Rank Crankers, a digital advertising and search and analytics agency, made a gift of $660.00.
  • The Last Man Standing Club raised $500 from their members who are WWII veterans.
  • Spark Salon in Maple Grove raised $435.00 by donating a portion of their proceeds to NAMI.

Grants Keep NAMI Growing

IRIS CIRCLE ($10,000+)
• State of Minnesota Arts Board – For a Story Portrait workshop, using art about losing a loved one to suicide to promote understanding and healing

VISIONARY ($5,000-$9,999)
• Monroe, Charlotte and Barbara Shine Family Fund – General Operating

BENEFACTOR ($1,000-$4,999)
• Brown Family Foundation – General Operating
• Carney Family Partnership – General Operating
• David D. Dayton Trust – General Operating
• The McCarthy Family Charitable Fund (matching) – General Operating
• Margaret A. Cargill Foundation – General Operating
• Mary L. Hammerly Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation – General Operating
• Tracy Family Foundation – General Operating
• The Williams Donor Advised Fund – General Operating

Wellness Video
A video was made of NAMI wellness staff members discussing smoking cessation strategies with Sue Mitchell (R) at her home.

Tributes (Dec. 13, 2018 to Mar. 8, 2019)

In Honor of

Alexander Berger
From
Brian & Gail Berger

Andrew Dickenson
From
Catherine Guisan & Stephen Dickenson

Becky & Tom von Fischer
From
Ben von Fischer

Betty Leenig
From
Kathy Leenig

Carol Dolan
From
Virginia Johansen

Colleen Martin & Justin Miller
From
Erica & Eliot Fisher

Deane Manolis, M.D.
From
Andrew Murray

Debra Thome
From
Katherine Voss

Elhan Pleszykolan
From
Michelle Love

Family & Friends
From
Ed & Kathy Schoenecker

Fran O’Connor
From
Patrick O’Connor

Holly Bedient
From
Diane Bedient

Jack Amole
From
Patrick Amole

James G. Boulger, PhD
From
Peter Boulger

Jasper Hardin
From
Allyson Perling

Jennifer McNertney
From
Edward & Marilyn McNertney

Joan Panneton & Bill Shaw
From
Kristine Bisanz

John M. Trench
From
Daniel Trench

Karen Neiss
From
Kristen Andersen

Lois Kavanagh
From
Theresa & Kevin Kavanagh

My Daughter
From
Mary Kay Humbert

Olivier Caigne & Richard Little
From
Elizabeth Chainge

Our Brother
From
Mary & Kevin Archer

Rich & Julie Varda
From
Kenton Varda

Sandy Heidemann & Jim Stengel
From
Mark Stengel

Serenity Silvers
From
Rand Silvers

Sheila Novak
From
Patrick Kelly

Sue & Stanley Boram
From
Cathy Melton

Sue & Brian Abel
From
Anne Dormanen

Staff at Hennepin Health Care
Partial Hospital Program & Wm Jepson Day Treatment
From
Jodi Rogness

3rd Hr. 7th grade English class, Saint Ambrose of Woodbury Catholic School
From
Christine Deignan

651-645-2948 or 1-800-NAMI-HELPS | namihelps@namimn.org | namimn.org
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Looking Ahead
July is Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

Visit namimn.org for more information about upcoming classes, support groups and events