Telehealth Surges

Out of necessity, mental health treatment began being delivered by telehealth. While it opened up access for some, especially people who lacked transportation, there were certainly barriers such as limited minutes, no or unreliable internet, no computer or smartphone, and some people didn’t even have a landline or a simple flip phone.

A recent survey by the Minnesota Psychological Association found a wide variety of services being provided by telehealth including diagnostic assessment, therapy, day treatment, etc.

Over 76% of their clients were using telehealth the last three months, and about 17% of the respondents said that 50% or more of their clients were using audio-only telehealth. Interestingly, over 70% said that telehealth increased access to care and that there were fewer “no shows” to treatment.

One question asked if telephone services were no longer reimbursable, what would be the result. 63% stated that clients would no longer be able to access services and 53% said there would be more missed sessions.

Other entities are conducting surveys as well, including of clients. We are learning a lot from the use of telehealth and will be addressing some of these issues during the next legislative session. If you have thoughts about telehealth, look for our survey at namimn.org.

Pandemic’s Impact on Mental Health

The pandemic has had a hugely negative impact on the mental health of Minnesotans. For those who already were living with a mental illness, the impact was compounded. And for those who are from a community of color or indigenous people, the impact was even greater. COVID-19 has put a spotlight on the disparities in our community.

The uncertainty of the future, economic and housing instability, isolation, too much togetherness, fear of catching COVID-19, and grief due to cancellation of major life events such as graduations, prom, concerts, weddings and funerals has made it difficult to think about the future and has led to greater anxiety and depression. Add to this, people who are in essential jobs and are at greater risk of catching COVID-19 and parents trying to teach their children while working.

People’s stress levels are through the roof. NAMI Minnesota’s response has been to move our classes and support groups online. By the middle of June, 135 classes were provided to over 2,000 people. New classes were developed to meet the needs of the community, including focusing on building resilience and strategies to support positive mental health.

The murder of George Floyd added another layer of trauma, grief, stress and anxiety. NAMI Minnesota’s statement on racist incidents was sent out and is posted on our website. As an organization dedicated to improving the mental health of Minnesotans, addressing racism and racial violence must be part of our work. NAMI Minnesota acknowledges that racism impacts people’s mental health. And structural racism has resulted in redlining, which has led to poverty, inadequate schools, food deserts, neighborhoods bordering polluted land, blockages to home ownership and more. This has impacted people’s health and mental health.

See “Pandemic’s Impact” p.3
The pandemic had a huge impact on this year’s legislative session. Hitting the same week as the committee deadline, and with no hearings able to be held in person, it made for a strange and unusual session.

The first bills that passed during the regular session were all about addressing the needs of the state due to COVID-19. This included increased funds for food shelves, housing supports and emergency shelter grants, providing workers’ compensation for health care providers and first responders who catch the coronavirus, making sure people who are uninsured are able to be tested for COVID-19 for free and receive treatment, and authorizing pharmacists to prescribe self-administered nicotine replacement medications and opiate antagonists used for overdoses.

Some of the biggest issues were eliminating the three telehealth visit limit per week, allowing teledicine to be provided by mental health practitioners in addition to mental health professionals, and allowing other modes to be used, including by phone.

There was also legislation on making insulin affordable, making drug prices more transparent, and protecting vulnerable adults from financial exploitation. There was additional funding for rural mental health services and grants to respond to the opioid epidemic.

A bill passed that also made changes on how prior authorization can be used by health plans to ensure continuity of care and that reviews are done by someone who specializes in the condition being treated.

Guardianship laws were updated so that the person is no longer called a “ward” and there is a push for supported decision-making instead of guardianship.

The special session held in mid-June resulted in several of NAMI Minnesota’s top priorities passing. Major changes to the Commitment Act will go into affect in August.

The legislation updates language, adds all mental health professionals to the list of examiners and health officers (the people who can order someone transported and place someone on a 72 hour hold), clarifies the transport and 72 hour hold sections, ensures that someone under commitment isn’t released due to paperwork not being filed, allows jails to enforce Jarvis orders if they have the health care personnel, recognizes the role of community hospitals and providers, and more.

A new section would allow counties to attempt to engage a person voluntarily in treatment before they meet the commitment standard. A detailed summary will be posted on the website.

Other legislation that passed will:

- Provide new policy language on Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities related to prior authorization and waiting lists.
- Allow children’s mobile crisis teams to provide services in a hospital or emergency room.
- Add family peer specialists to Youth Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams and other policy changes.
- Require all children entering foster care to receive prenatal alcohol exposure screenings.
- Require students in foster care to remain enrolled in their prior schools unless it is not in their best interest.
- Require students in foster care to be enrolled in a new school within seven days if they change schools.
- Arrange phone calls between parents and foster parents to better improve coordination of care, unless doing so would put the child or foster parents in danger.
- Extend the adult foster care moratorium exception that allows certain facilities to have a fifth bed.
- Remove reporting requirements for physicians providing prenatal care to a patient struggling with substance abuse.
- Allow a child to qualify for respite care even if the child does not receive case management.
- Make clarifications for the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, including language on rate methodology and managed care plans using the new prospective rate.
- Add LADCs and peer specialists to the pre-booking diversion projects.
- Make changes to meet the federal requirements under the Family

See “Legislative Session” p.4
Director of NIMH Writes on Racism

The Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) recently wrote a blog on racism and mental illnesses. Here are some excerpts.

As the Director of the NIMH, I am charged with striving to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure.

I cannot ignore the fact that this mission is not achievable without taking into account the inequalities that lead to worse mental health outcomes in underserved and minority communities.

Indeed, the trauma of racism and police violence can themselves exacerbate mental health outcomes. While the recent events have put that trauma into the national spotlight, these traumas have been occurring for generations.

I recently charged NIMH staff with developing a research plan that focuses on identifying mechanisms associated with mental health disparities and testing interventions aimed at promoting equity and improving outcomes. A draft of this plan is nearing completion and will be released within the coming months.

One of our first efforts, prompted by community input and building on a virtual roundtable, will be to strengthen research into the alarming rise in suicide rates in Black youth. We will also expand our efforts to listen to key stakeholders to ensure that our research is squarely focused on the needs of Black communities...

Systemic racism is a complex issue that affects all facets of our society; institutions and individuals can unknowingly promote or support racist practices.

The events of the past weeks make it painfully obvious to me that we cannot use this complexity as an excuse for inaction. Watching is not enough. We each have a role to play in taking concrete actions to address the mental health toll of racism on our communities and the systemic racist practices that impede the success of Black employees. We at NIMH will do our part, and we invite you to join us in this effort.

Community-Centered Approaches to Healing Racialized Trauma

Even though African Americans comprise 13% of the U.S population, data reflects that they represent 23% of those fatally shot by police officers. Trauma experienced by family, friends and the community as a result of these encounters is compounded by increased non-lethal encounters with police – resulting in emotional trauma, stress responses, and depressive symptoms.

In 2018, the African American Leadership Forum (AALF) commissioned A. Richmond and R.D. Peoples to conduct a study to determine what barriers related to healing from race-related trauma were reported by African Americans in Minnesota.

That study found that very few participants were aware of the trauma resources available in the community. Following the 2018 study, AALF conducted one-on-one interviews with nine racial trauma experts with the intent to gather information that can be used to help advance community-centered treatment of and healing from racial trauma in the Twin Cities.

Recommendations are provided in the report on how to (1) increase knowledge of race related trauma and ways to heal; (2) encourage African Americans to seek mental health resources; (3) develop community resources and services for healing from trauma; (4) create better collaborations and partnerships to meet community needs; (5) increase knowledge about healing from racial trauma within the medical community; (6) anticipate trends in work on healing from trauma and (7) share research to increase public awareness.

To read the full report go to www.tcaalf.com.

Pandemic’s Impact...

NAMI Minnesota is committed to listening, learning, and examining our work to address racism. The board and staff are identifying additional steps and actions that can be taken in terms of our programming and legislative work to promote and support the emotional well-being for all members of our community.

To read more about NAMI Minnesota’s commitment to improving outcomes, please see page 1 of this issue of Advocate.
Community Competency Restoration Task Force Reports Progress

The Community Competency Restoration Task Force was created by the Legislature in 2019 to address the growing number of people found incompetent to stand trial in Minnesota. NAMI wrote and advocated for the legislation.

The Task Force submitted their interim report to the legislature in February, which includes a preliminary analysis of the process and gaps in the criminal justice and mental health systems and preliminary recommendations. Some areas for further exploration are to:

• Address workforce and provider shortages in rural and culturally diverse communities.
• Increase and expand existing diversion programs, implement them at scalable levels, and evaluate their impact.
• Clarify the roles and responsibilities of state and county entities relating to competency restoration.
• Increase opportunities for education for court officials and increase cross-discipline collaborations between mental health and criminal justice professionals.
• Ascertain funding needs for community-based competency restoration services across continuums of care and secure resources.
• Establish key measures to track outcomes and expected timelines for implementation to assess whether progress is being made.

The group is chaired by NAMI Minnesota’s executive director Sue Abderholden, and will continue to meet this year and provide final recommendations in Feb. 2021. Many thanks to NAMI’s Criminal Justice coordinator Elliot Butay for writing much of the report.

NAMI Launches Criminal Justice Update

NAMI Minnesota has started a monthly e-newsletter for criminal justice and mental health professionals. The update includes news, tools, and opportunities for stakeholders to promote diversion and adequate treatment for justice-involved people living with mental illnesses. Visit https://namimn.org/education-public-awareness/e-newsletter-sign/criminal-justice-email-sign-up/to subscribe.”

Legislative Session...

continued from p. 2

First Act, such as requiring relative searches for children going into residential treatment.
• Require all teachers in Minnesota to have training in student mental health and suicide prevention (not just tiers 3 and 4).
• Require other interventions before suspending or expelling students in early childhood, pre-K programs.
• Allow a stand alone functional assessment to be done for special ed students.

The reforms advocated by NAMI Minnesota for criminal justice, especially police training, did not pass. The most important task for the legislature during the second year of a biennium (this year) is to pass a bonding bill. The need for a bonding bill, as Minnesota faces an economic downturn due to COVID-19, is even greater than usual. For the mental health community, the most important part of any bonding bill is funding for affordable housing. Unfortunately, it did not pass.

It is likely that there will be another special session in July. NAMI Minnesota is hoping that these two issues will be brought up during that time.

Many thanks to all NAMI members who called and wrote their legislators and to those who came to the Capitol to testify and personally meet with them. Your activism, your voices, ensured progress was made during a very difficult year.
NAMIWalks Virtual Kickoff Meetings Set

Learn more about NAMIWalks 2020: Join us at an upcoming Virtual Kickoff meeting.

We invite you to learn more about how to participate in this year’s NAMIWalks event, taking place on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020. This year, our modified “DIT* (Do-It-Together) Walk” event will give everyone the chance to support NAMI through fundraising, walk team building, sponsoring, and more in a new format that will combine virtual “socially distanced” components with strong connection opportunities.

Instead of our traditional event Kick-off breakfast, we’ll be hosting multiple virtual event Kickoff “coffee hours” (bring your own coffee and snacks – and all of your event questions – to these Zoom meetings), where we will fill you in on event details, including ways that you can get involved with this fun and important fundraiser for NAMI Minnesota! Each Kickoff meeting will be about one hour long.

Choose a date and time that works for you:
#1: Thursday, July 30 @ 6:30 pm (Happy Hour with Sue!)
#2: Friday, July 31 @ 9 am (Friday Funday Morning Coffee Break)
#3: Tuesday, August 4 @ 12 noon (Lunch Date)
#4: Wednesday, August 5 @ 12 noon (Another Lunch Date)
#5: Thursday, August 6 @ 2 pm (Mid-Afternoon Pick-Me-Up!)

To register for one of these events, go to namimn.org, or contact Julia at directorofdevelopment@namimn.org or 651-645-2948 x104.

Suicide Prevention Text Added to Student IDs

NAMI Minnesota led an effort this spring to engage school districts in placing the suicide lifeline and text line on the back of student IDs in the fall. The large companies who provide the IDs, such as Lifetouch, Jostens and Strawbridge all agreed to add the numbers free of charge.

Several districts that do not have IDs requested posters and other materials instead. We hope this small effort to make sure students know who to call will help.

Other organizations collaborated with NAMI including: Mental Health Minnesota, SAVE, MN Association for Children’s Mental Health, MN Administrators of Special Education, MN Association of School Administrators, Governor’s Children’s Cabinet, MN Department of Education, MN Youth Council, MN School Board Association and the MN School Social Worker Association.

QPR for Agricultural Communities

NAMI will hold Question, Persuade & Refer (QPR) suicide prevention classes tailored for agricultural communities on July 23, Aug. 6, Aug. 20, Sept. 3 and Sept. 17. All are from 3:00-4:30 p.m. The classes help people learn three steps anyone can take to help prevent a suicide. To register, see “Classes” at namimn.org.

NAMI News & Notes

NAMI offers a variety of one-hour online classes for employers. The classes cover topics on how to “mind your mental health” during the pandemic. If your place of work is interested, please contact us.

Two Minnesota psychiatrists, Dr. John Simon and Dr. Kathryn Cullen, were recently recognized with NAMI national’s Annual Exemplary Psychiatrist Awards for “walking the extra mile” with their clients and supporting community mental health advocacy efforts.

NAMI Minnesota has produced a new booklet on co-occurring disorders – mental illnesses and substance use disorders. It covers information on commonly used drugs, screening, assessments and treatment. This was made possible with a grant from DHS.

Nominees for the NAMI Minnesota Awards are being sought. The awards recognize individuals or organizations that have demonstrated extraordinary work and advocacy on behalf of our mission. Get details at namimn.org.

If you have a workplace giving program such as Thrivent Choice or the United Way, please consider designating your contribution to us. NAMI Minnesota is also a member of Community Health Charities (CFC Code: 26549).

NAMI’s Mental Health Crisis Planning for Children booklet has just been updated. Find it under “Publications” at namimn.org.

NAMI’s State Conference on Nov. 14 may be held as a virtual conference. Please check namimn.org for updates.
This year, NAMIWalks Minnesota becomes ...

NAMI Minnesota D.I.T. Walk 2020

(Do-It-Together)

IT’S NOT DIY — IT’S DIT!

NAMIWalks Minnesota is a beloved tradition that’s been raising critical funds for NAMI for sixteen years. Thousands of people join together to support each other and raise awareness about mental illnesses. This year, safe distancing has necessitated a radical re-envisioning of this experience. This year we’ll rely on DIY creative expression, but with a NAMI twist of “do it together.”

OUR MOVEMENT — YOUR WAY

The NAMI Minnesota DIT Walk will bring together thousands of committed advocates to end discrimination and promote good mental health in a most difficult year. We’ll have family teams, corporations, health systems, social services providers, student groups, and more. We will comply with safe distancing and provide an experience that allows for movement of any kind and a feeling of community and togetherness.

Mental illness is a flaw in CHEMISTRY not character

OCD is not about neatness. It is a legitimate illness.

With 100% of our fundraising events in 2020 cancelled due to COVID-19, your help fundraising for the walk is critical to the continued existence of NAMI Minnesota.

Please don’t wait! Register now at:

www.namiwalks.mn/2020
NAMI Minnesota DIT Walk: Two Ways

Walk Your Way

With the current state of the world, some of our walkers will want a simple way to participate. If this is you, you can join for the opening and closing broadcast ceremonies. You’ll be invited to take pictures of yourself or your group walking (or in other movement) in your neighborhood or home and share those photos on social media. You could also tour the works of the next group by car. This will be family-friendly and low-impact.

Parade in Place

For the same reasons, some folks will choose to go “all in” for a creative, exciting, community-building experience with a unifying message. You creative types will create parade floats of your own design in your front yard, outside your workplace, or at a local park, collaborating with others in the safe-distancing-sized group that is allowed at the time. We will provide inspiration and resources for fun, exciting, outlandish, experiences. Think your own personal tropical island, or a flock of pink flamingoes, hundreds of pinwheels, chalk art, balloon sculptures, a hammock “nap garden” or a tree-to-tree zipline.

www.namiwalks.mn/2020

Saturday, September 26

11 AM TO 3PM     EVERYWHERE, MN

JOIN US AT THE LARGEST MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS EVENT IN THE MIDWEST
Free Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Training for Educators

Minnesota teachers and school staff are now able to take Kognito At-Risk Training for PK-12 Schools at no cost! Kognito is an up-to-date virtual mental health and suicide prevention training. Trainees will have the ability to effectively recognize, respond, and help students in distress.

Kognito At-Risk training modules contain elementary, middle and high school grade levels, which makes it appropriate for all staff at every grade level. Participants engage in role-playing simulations, interact with virtual students showing signs of mental distress, and receive tips from virtual coaches. This training can be completed in one hour.

Educators can use this program to fulfill the suicide prevention training requirement per MN statute 122A.187, as determined by your designated school district, and a certificate of completion will be distributed for each simulation.

This training initiative supports the Minnesota Department of Health’s mission to grow a community of leaders to help protect, maintain and improve the health of all Minnesota students.

To learn more about general information sessions or to view contact information, visit the Minnesota Department of Health website at health.state.mn.us and search Kognito.
NAMI Affiliates Hold Virtual Meeting

NAMI Minnesota hosted an all-affiliate virtual meeting June 17, focused on action in the time of COVID-19. Over 20 affiliate leaders, and 2 volunteers from developing affiliates, exchanged ideas for taking action despite the limitations of the pandemic. The group discussed options to promote awareness by helping members tell their stories virtually, continuing educational efforts by holding classes online, and engaging in advocacy efforts such as planning for candidate forums in the late fall.

Affiliate leaders also explored options for participating in NAMIWalks on Sept. 26 while learning about this year’s virtual format. This will include the same fundraising efforts as always, while also allowing participants to walk safely on their own the day of the event in communities across the state. Affiliate leaders decided to continue connecting remotely with their peers across the state, scheduling periodic upcoming affiliate meetings to share information and learn about topics including volunteer recruitment, fundraising, and grant writing.

In Sympathy

NAMI offers its condolences to the families of Judy Bemis and Tom Koch who passed away earlier this year. Both served on NAMI’s board. Judy created Open Door peer support groups for anxiety and panic disorders and co-wrote the popular book “Embracing the Fear.” Tom was a passionate educator who taught in the Hopkins and Wayzata school districts and at the University of St. Thomas.

Grants Keep Us Growing

Grants supporting NAMI Minnesota’s mission received from Dec. 17, 2019 to June 11, 2020. Unless specified, the grants shown are for General Operating.

**IRIS CIRCLE ($10,000+)**
- Hugh J. Andersen Foundation – East Metro
- Mike & Linda Fiterman Family Foundation – Support for Local COVID-19 Response Efforts
- Liberty Diversified International (LDI) – Support for Local COVID-19 Response Efforts
- ECMC Foundation – Youth Mental Health
- F.R. Bigelow Foundation – Outreach to Spanish Speaking Communities
- Bentonson Foundation – Criminal Justice Issues

**VISIONARY ($5,000-$9,999)**
- Foundation for Development of People, Gregory & Leota Brucker
- King Family Foundation – Young Adult Groups and First Episode Programs
- Janssen – Family-to-Family

**BENEFACTOR ($1,000-$4,999)**
- The Robert Karels and Sandra Robinson Charitable Fund
- David D. Dayton Revocable Trust
- Paul and Ann Capeder Family Fund
- First Light Asset Management Charitable Fund, a donor-advised fund
- Terhuly Foundation, Inc.
- Sandy Family Foundation

**SUPPORTER ($500-$999)**
- Rick & Barb Burrock
- Thomas and Sue Telander
- Robert and Susan Jenkins

Special Tax Deduction

Did you know that with the new CARES Act you can take an “above the line” tax deduction up to $300 for charitable donations? This creates a great opportunity to donate today to NAMI Minnesota. Talk to your tax professional for more details.
van Wagener Financial Services in Eden Prairie and its employees donated $4,000.

The friends of Bill Oehlers held their annual bowling tournament to honor his memory and raised over $2,000 for NAMI.

Champlin Park High School’s LEO Club raised awareness in their school, and $3,000 for NAMI Minnesota.

Tributes

In Honor of

7TH GRADERS OF ST. AMBROSE CATHOLIC SCHOOL
From Christine Deignan

SUE ABBERHOLDEN
From Russell and Rebecca Fraenkel

PAUL YOUNGBERG
From Barb Youngberg

DAVID AND MARY ZIEGENHAGEN
From Paul and Carolyn Venet

ANDREW ZUREK
From Foulad & Nancy Azam Ann Fairbaim

PETER VON GROSSMAN
From Lynne Aussarre

MATTHEW WMF
From Paul & Patricia Sackett

ALAN WAUGH
From Lisa Griebel Jean Ross

ART WINDMEIER
From Faith Gratze

MATTHEW T. WYZIKOWSKI
From Lynn Luftus

LIBBY LINCOLN
From Lisa Harcombe-Minser

EILANE LOVE
From William Lynch

A LOVED ONE WHO STRUGGLED THIS YEAR
From Natalie Gries

COLLEEN MARTIN AND JUSTIN MILLER
From Eliot Fisher

MARC MADEL
From Paul and Ann Capeder

ASHLEE MILLER
From Lindsay Grabb

MINNESOTA VETERANS
From Cathy Johnson

JOSEPH MOOREN
From Seta Magen

SUSAN SJOBERG DICKO
From Peter Oko

ALEX AREDALL
From Faith Oremland

OUR COLLEAGUES
From HealthPartners

PAIGE, MARK, AND TRISH
From Benjamin Leo

THE PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA THAT NEED HELP DURING THIS TIME
From Jennifer Helm

APRIL PETERSON
From Valerie Swanson

TERRY ROLAND
From Scott Sexton

TAYLOR ROSE U
From Daniel Voie

LOGAN SAX
From Melissa Sax

STEVE AND BECKY SCHNEIDER
From Andrew Schneider

DR. MICHAEL SHEA
From Paul Sween

SISYPHUS BREWING
From Benjamin Stengold Jeffery Stroeb

BOB SWANSON AND DONNA SWANSON
From Leslie J. Erickson

LYNNA SHUMPTER
From Paul Sween

MARC MASTEL
From Carol and John Quinn

THE MHLN AND NAMI LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MILLER
From651-645-2948 or 1-800-NAMI-HELPS namihelps@namimn.org namimn.org

Fundraisers by Others

Thank you to all of our Do It Yourself (DIY) fundraisers!

- Trinity Lutheran Church in Lindstrom raised $1,650 for NAMI Minnesota through a special offering matched with funds from a bequest given by a member, the late Pearl Nelson.
- Fifth graders at St. Pascall Regional Catholic School raised $55 through a used book sale for NAMI Minnesota.
- Minneapolis Hash House Harriers raised $965 to move our mission forward.
- Michelle Horan donated $496 in proceeds from innerDialogue apparel sales to NAMI Minnesota.
- The All Together Auction, a weeklong online auction collaboration by artists and small businesses, raised more than $11,000 for NAMI Minnesota.
- Callie and Barbara Burch with Catie and Rita Thoemke helped to raise $410 for NAMI Minnesota through a Simley High School fundraiser.
- The University of Minnesota’s MNP Administrative Center raised $595 through ongoing fundraising efforts for NAMI Minnesota.
- Sisyphus Brewing raised over $130 by asking for donations to support NAMI Minnesota while providing masks.

Securian Financial Employees Back NAMI

Employees of Securian Financial, along with the Securian Financial Foundation, donated more than $59,000 to NAMI Minnesota through a generous parking abatement program. Employees generously chose to donate what would have been their parking fees for the month of June, and the collective effort was matched dollar for dollar by the Foundation.
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CALENDAR

July - Minority Mental Health Awareness Month
21 NAMI Volunteer Orientation, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
30-Aug. 6 NAMIWalks Kickoff Virtual Meetings

August
25 Angst, Movie & Discussion on Children’s MH

September
10 World Suicide Prevention Day
26 NAMIWalks Minnesota DIT Virtual Walk

October
4-10 Mental Illness Awareness Week
10 World Mental Health Day

Looking Ahead
(This event may become a virtual conference.)

Visit namimn.org for more information about NAMI Minnesota's Online Classes, Support Groups and Events.