SPEAK UP. BE HEARD. NAMI DAY 2017.

On Monday, February 20th, the voices of NAMI storm the capitol!

NAMI members and supporters like you are the most effective people to educate our legislators about the impact of mental health conditions on our community. Join us for NAMI Day in Olympia and talk with your legislators about the dire need to invest in mental health services so that we can shape a system that works for everyone and fosters recovery. REGISTER ONLINE!

Date: Monday, February 20th (President’s Day)
Start Time: 8:30am
Location: Temple Beth Hatfiloh
201 8th Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501
Details on the day’s schedule and the 2017 Legislative Agenda inside on page 2.

150 NAMI champions from across Washington at NAMI Day 2016!
2017 Legislative Priorities

There is an urgent need to reform the state system of mental health treatment, to ensure that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives. NAMI Washington, our state organization, sets the legislative agenda each year, and NAMI Seattle, your local affiliate, engages our members in advocating to legislators about what we need in our community. NAMI Day is an important piece of our advocacy efforts and brings NAMI members from across the state together to push for change. This year, we will focus on the following priorities:

1. Protect and Increase Access to Quality Mental Health Services
   An ideal state mental health system should be comprehensive, built on solid scientific evidence that is focused on wellness and recovery. It should be inclusive, reaching underserved areas and neglected communities, and fully integrated into the broader health care system. Research has shown that timely treatment produces better outcomes and quicker recovery for individuals with mental illness. Delays in treatment can increase the severity of mental illness and consequently the intensity and cost of the services being provided. Seamless care coordination can prevent suicides, homelessness, loss of job earnings, and incarceration. Legislative issues related to protecting and increasing access to Washington State’s mental health care services will include but are not limited to:
   - Advocate a change to the Involuntary Treatment Standard from the current “imminent” standard to “substantial likelihood.”
   - Refine and monitor the Assisted Outpatient Treatment law to support effective implementation throughout the state.
   - Support the proliferation and enhancement of state funded Clubhouses.
   - Support the training, employment, and adequate compensation of Certified Peer Specialists.
   - Support funding of expanded Permanent Supportive Housing and Supportive Employment programs and services.

2. Decriminalize Behavioral Health Conditions
   In a mental health crisis, people are more likely to encounter police than get medical help. As a result, 2 million people with mental illness are booked into jails each year. Nearly 15% of men and 30% of women booked into jails have a serious mental health condition. Having a behavioral health condition is not a crime, it should be treated and viewed as what it is – a disease. People living with mental illness, chemical dependency, or both (a co-occurring disorder) do not belong in our criminal justice or corrections system – but in treatment and recovery programs.
Legislative issues related to decriminalizing mental illness in Washington State and protecting people living with mental illness who come into contact with the criminal justice system will include but are not limited to:

- Support Diversion and Re-Entry programs including the creation and expansion of community based capacity.
- Amend RCWs related to the imposition of Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs) to decrease the impact of LFOs on individuals with mental illnesses.
- Support the recommendation of the Deadly Force in Community Policing Task Force to change the RCW to hold police accountable for unjustified shootings.
- Advocate for an Independent Ombudsman for the Department of Corrections to ensure accountability in transparency and oversight.

3. Prioritize Prevention and Early Intervention

Mental illness affects young people at an alarming rate. One half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75 percent begin by age 24. What’s even more astounding is that even after an onset of symptoms, the average young person does not get treatment until eight to 10 years later. Research shows that early identification and intervention leads to better outcomes, may lessen long-term disability, and reduce costs associated with crisis treatment services, as well as avoiding years of unnecessary suffering. Family members are a central resource in the treatment of children and adults living with serious mental illnesses and should be an integral part of the treatment team and empowered to facilitate mutually agreed upon treatment team goals. Research overwhelmingly shows that when families take an active part in treatment decisions, consumer outcomes are better. Legislative issues related to prevention and early intervention care in Washington will include but are not limited to:

- Support the recommendations of the Children’s Mental Health Task Force to increase system capacity for children’s mental health care through effective system coordination and collaboration between systems serving children, youth, young adults, and their families; providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services and assessments; and supporting evidence-based, age appropriate school curricula about mental illness and behavioral health education.
- Align RCWs related to disclosure of health-related patient information with Federal HIPPA standards.
4. Ensure the Financial Stability of a Quality Mental Health Care

Washington State lacks the revenue to adequately fund its most basic services. This is because we have the most unfair and unstable revenue system in the nation. Lack of revenue combined with the recession has resulted in $12 billion in cuts and chronic underfunding for our important social service safety net programs. Legislative issues related to funding stability and the budget supported by NAMI Washington include but are not limited to:

- Advocate for the Fiscal Impact bill requiring the Office of Financial Management to include cost of not implementing programs into all Mental Health related bills.
- Advocate for the renewal of the Recording Fee Surcharge on real estate transactions to continue support for homeless service programs.
- Support the growth of the Behavioral Health Workforce by, inter alia, expanding the state’s existing professional loan repayment program.
- Protect Revenue for Health and Safety Net Services, these services should not be pitted against other critical program which allow Washingtonians to be healthy and thrive.
- Support New Revenue.

Mental Health on the National Stage

A national debate is raging over the future of health care in our country. It’s our job to make sure that mental health remains at the forefront of the conversation on Capitol Hill. The future of healthcare in America is in the hands of our elected officials.

Call your members of Congress, and ask them to protect Medicaid and insurance safeguards that help millions of Americans get mental health care.

Call (202) 224-3121, press #2 and enter your zip code.

What to say: “As a constituent, I would like the Representative to protect people with mental illness who can’t afford to lose health coverage. Please preserve the ACA, Medicaid and insurance safeguards that help people get mental health care. Thank you.”

Want to do more? Call your Senators with the same message. Dial (202) 224-3121, press #1 and enter your zip code to be connected to offices for Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell.

NAMI is non-partisan. We support policies that help people with mental health conditions and their families. To learn more about how to take action for mental health, visit www.nami.org.
GET INVOLVED! We need a few great program volunteers.

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of NAMI signature programs. We need community members like you, who bring vast and varied personal experiences to our presentations and classes. These trainings are offered at no cost to volunteers by NAMI Washington, and will give you the skills and confidence to lead a NAMI program with us in Seattle.

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Qualified: Conquering that “No way!” Feeling

By Brenda, In Our Own Voice Presenter

As I have a nearly 40 year history with bipolar, I feel qualified and interested in sharing my story with others. For the past three years, I've been free of any of the manias that had formerly affected my capabilities. When I first learned of the In Our Own Voice program, part of me really wanted to take part. Part of me was scared to do so. After I'd read about what the training entailed, I first said “No Way!” It was to take part over two intensive weekend days (May 14 and 15) in Kirkland. I would be staying in a hotel and be intensively immersed with a group of people I did not know. Could the experience kick off another mania? In living with the idea and with positive support from my psych professionals, I finally realized: Yes I can do this! And signed up for the experience. I want to share my training experience, in case there are other people in recovery who might be on the fence about the training, and publicly sharing their story through In Our Own Voice.
On Saturday morning, we met in the training room with the tables in a U shape. The first half hour was “Meet and Greet” for the 14 trainees, two trainers and the NAMI Training Coordinator. NAMI aims to have between 8 and 16 trainees per session. There were snacks and water provided to us. To handle the stress of that first half hour, I stayed at my table, writing in a journal. I was the only one doing so, but no one challenged me about this.

The two trainers took us through the very set format of an IOOV presentation, which consists of: An Introduction, Dark Days, Acceptance, Treatment, Coping Skills, and finally, Successes, Hopes and Dreams. We all practiced out loud, given a maximum of three minutes for each piece of the talk. Probably the hardest was the “Dark Days” segment. We spoke in front of all the other trainees and I feel it took a lot of courage to do so.

I was the oldest person there with the longest history of dealing with a mental illness. The youngest? A woman in her twenties, who’d just experienced her first manic “break”--Wow! To complete this two day event, I felt I really needed to be gentle with myself and balance the stresses of the sessions with my own self-care. So I tended to distance myself from the down time social opportunities with the group. Again, no one complained about this deliberate distancing of mine. I was accepted as an individual with an individual's needs, and that meant worlds of positivities to me!

NAMI offered a free dinner Saturday at a local restaurant. I felt it was very gracious for the organization to do so. However, I opted instead to pay for a solitary dinner at the Denny’s next to the hotel. That decision suited me well.

The Sunday experience was much easier. The hard stuff, like sharing our “Dark Days” was behind us, plus we knew each other better than the day before. Our session ended prior to the 4:30 PM that was allotted. At the end, the trainers made a ceremony of handing out individual certificates that showed each of us that we were now official IOOV presenters. Then we all lined up on a staircase for a group photo. Then it was time to go home.

One of the trainers had said that for her, the best coping mechanism was in sharing her experiences of having a mental illness with others. During this weekend, we all did that in spades! For me (and the others?), it was a very empowering experience. I came home thinking--- “You did it, Brenda!”. It was a personal, but not manic high. And that feeling of achievement has stayed with me to this day.

If you’ve been “thinking about” volunteering to lead a NAMI signature program, there’s no time like the present! To learn more about NAMI before you take the plunge, join us for our next Meet & Greet on February 14, or our next volunteer orientation on February 16. Details are available at www.namiseattle.org/events.
Upcoming Events

February 11: Youth Mental Health First Aid
Downtown Seattle Association, Tower Building
1809 7th Ave., 3rd Floor
Register at: www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge, or is in crisis. Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders. Registration is $100 per person. Scholarships available for King County residents at www.namiseattle.org/scholarship-application.

February 14: Meet & Greet
NAMI Seattle Office
802 NW 70th St., Seattle WA 98117
www.namiseattle.org/events

Celebrate Valentine's Day with coffee, comraderie, and activism! Meet NAMI Seattle staff, tour our office, and learn all about how you can get involved this year. Be sure to RSVP to katiem@namiseattle.org.

Frequently Borrowed Books:

-I'm Not Sick, I Don't Need Help!
By Xaviar Amadar

-Stop Walking on Eggshells: Taking Your Life Back When Someone You Care About Has Borderline Personality Disorder
By Paul Mason MS and Randi Kreger

-An Unquiet Mind
By Kay Redfield Jameson

To become a member, visit:
www.namiseattle.org/membership

Want to support the library?
We are in need of two tall, six foot bookshelves like the one pictured above. If you have a shelf you would like to donate, please email katiem@namiseattle.org.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Phinney Neighborhood Association
Difficult Conversations Series
Unlisted: A Story of Schizophrenia
Movie & Discussion (Free!)

Why do we see so many people with mental health conditions on the street and without treatment? Delaney has seen her father in this state, living with paranoid schizophrenia, and for 10 years chose not to have a relationship with him. Unlisted depicts Delaney’s journey, now as a doctor, to bring her father back into her life. Following the movie, GSC Social Worker Carin Mack (January 31) and NAMI Seattle Program Coordinator Katie Mahoney (February 16) will lead participants in a discussion exploring the themes of mental illness, family, and the nature of personal and societal responsibility.

Tuesday, January 31
Movie: 10:30am-11:30am
Discussion (after lunch): 12:45pm-2pm
Greenwood Senior Center

Thursday, February 16
6:30pm-8:30pm
Phinney Neighborhood Center Room 6

For questions or to RSVP, please call Ariel at 206-297-0875, email arielb@phinneycenter.org, or visit phinneycenter.org/classes.