



FAMILIES TOGETHER

Special End of Year Issue

NAMI NEW JERSEY  Affillate of NAMI - The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness

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2003 — A Year to Remember

NAMI NJ Advocacy A Force to be Reckoned With

The Advocacy Network now numbers nearly a thousand members representing every district in the state, who are ready to write, call or visit our state legislators and policy makers. And when NAMI calls, people are listening.

Starting in January, NAMI NEW JERSEY Advocates brought the case for increased mental health funding directly to the Governor and subsequently to the state legislature. NAMI along with our friends in the mental health community were able to win more than 13 million dollars in in-

creased mental health funding at a time when New Jersey faced with what many observers called the worst budget crisis in nearly two decades. NAMI Advocates were also able to fight back proposals to limit access to needed medications and services through the use of co-payments and preferred drug lists.

Among other NAMI inspired legislation, 45 state legislators have co-sponsored the Lien Law that is poised for passage in the new legislature. Assemblyman Blee has introduced

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Mental Illness and Criminal Justice Summit

NAMI NEW JERSEY's Mental Illness and Criminal Justice Task Force called for steps to address the plight of too many people with mental illness in prisons because of lack of funding, screening and treatment. On December 3, 2003, a summit on "Improving Care, Saving Dollars: Integrating Mental Healthcare in New Jersey's Criminal Justice System" was co-sponsored by the Task Force, along with the NJ Association of Mental Health Agencies and the support of the NJ Dept. of Corrections and the NJ Depart. of Human Services. Receiving joint support from the two departments was in itself a first step in starting a dialogue leading to constructive action.

Sylvia Axelrod, Task Force Chair, Devon Brown, Commissioner, NJ Dept. of Corrections and Gwendolyn Harris, Commissioner, NJ Dept. of Human Services welcomed the participants, including experts, advocates, leaders and staff from the Criminal Justice System & the Corrections System, the Mental Health System, the Academic and Research Community, Law Enforcement Officials, Family Member, Mental Health Consumers, and County Administrators. In the closing sessions participants identified the next steps needed to spare individuals with mental illness and their families enormous pain and suffering and improve mental health outcomes. For more information go to the NAMI NJ website at www.naminj.org.

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Articles, reports, letters, poetry, etc. are welcome for publication. NAMI NJ reserves the right to edit all materials and assumes no responsibility for errors, omissions, or opinions expressed or implied by contributors.

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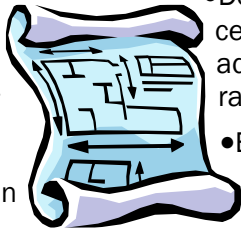


DMHS Redirection II FY '04 WORK PLAN

The Division of Mental Health Services outlined its Redirection II FY '04 Work Plan to develop community-based services in order to avert unnecessary hospitalizations and assist in hospital discharge. The objectives of the Work plan include:

Expand community-based services for persons with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

- Increase residential/detox/ rehab capacity with access directly from selected screening centers in high admission counties.
- Develop 3 regional challenge grants designed to target high inpatient users with co-occurring disorders.



Expand community-based services focused on medication-related activities

- Add client assistance funding to all 22 Integrated Case Management programs.
- Expand Advanced Practice Nurse program in all 3 regions.

Expand community-based services focused on increasing access to affordable housing with mental health support services

- Expand supportive housing for estimated 60 to 80 consumers.
- Develop 3 regional pilot challenge grants designed to increase access to existing housing; establish "home finding" activities and/or "housing specialists" across agencies; other ap-

proaches to support consumers.

Expand and/or develop community-based services targeted to specific consumer populations and activities designed to support hospital discharge or avert unnecessary hospitalization

- Augment 4 PACT Teams with a "step-down" capacity in counties with high recidivism.
- Develop/expand screening center diversion programs to 5 additional counties with high rates of hospital admission.
- Expand consumer-operated services, as well as self-management and wellness education/training in self-help centers and other settings.
- Expand/strengthen family support, training, psycho-education, and outreach services.

Develop/expand targeted community services for hospitalized patients with special needs to support discharge.

NJ DHS Commissioner Resigns

Gwendolyn L. Harris will resign as the Commissioner of the state Department of Human Services, which includes the Division of Mental Health Services and the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). Harris plans a mid-February departure and an early March start at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, where she will lead a research project on urban redevelopment.

Greystone Plan Announced

Final plans for a new 460-bed Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital have been announced, with the proposed facility expanded by 50 beds on the advice of mental health advocates. Work on the new hospital is expected to start late next year and be completed by late 2006, when the new hospital should open.

Bonding of as much as \$25 million needed for the first phase was approved last week by the New Jersey Health Care Facilities Financing Authority.

The final plan, chosen from three options unveiled in August, calls for construction of a more than 400,000-square-foot, 400-bed facility, with room for a 50-bed expansion. The new hospital will consolidate the campus, including buildings now scattered on nearly 400 acres, and allow for a more efficient operation that would include improved patient rehabilitation services.

NAMI NJ Announces Police Awards



Have you encountered a police officer in your county who has done an outstanding job when responding to mental illness crisis? Nominate that officer for a NAMI NJ Law Enforcement Education Program award, either in your county or statewide. Contact your local NAMI NJ Law Enforcement Education Program liaison for details.



SAMHAJ LIVE! on the Radio



NAMI NJ Education Program Coordinator, Aruna Rao, Dr. Anita McLean and EBC Radio Host Chaya recording a weekly call in show on EBC Radio (1680 AM), a South Asian radio station. The five week series featured lively discussions on mental health issues.

NAMI NJ Affiliate Leadership Conference

NAMI NJ sponsored its Affiliate Leadership Conference on November 1 at the Somerset Holiday Inn. Though not the first of such conferences that bring together NJ's Affiliate Leaders and potential Leaders, the event was the most ambitious and enthusiastically received to date.

The day-long program included a morning plenary presentation on the importance of Affiliates having goals and NAMI NJ's Strategic Planning. Following lunch, an interactive afternoon plenary discussed "Programs for Raising Awareness and Reducing Stigma." Workshop offerings for the approximately 100 attendees included: Advocacy and NJ's Family Support Plan; the Role of Family-to-Family Education in Affiliate Development; Affiliate Newsletter Publication; Brochures and Website Development; Cultivating

Members with Young Children and Adolescents; Stimulating Active Affiliate Involvement and Leadership; Working with the Media; Speakers' Training; Ideas for Affiliate Educational Programs and Participation in the NJ October 10, 2004 Walk, "*Freedom from Stigma.*"



Save the Date!

- **NAMI NJ Annual Conference on May 15, 2004**
- **NAMI NJ Walk for Freedom from Stigma on October 10, 2004**
- **NAMI Convention on September 8-12, 2004**

NAMI NJ Launches Chinese Self-Help Group

NAMI NJ has added to its existing multicultural outreach programs with CAMHOP NJ, a program to outreach New Jersey's Chinese speaking population. CAMHOP in Chinese resembles the word for the Golden Crane, an ancient symbol of health and serenity. People of Chinese origin are the second largest group of Asian descent in the state, and experience great difficulty coping with serious mental illness because of language and cultural barriers. CAMHOP NJ has initiated a self-help group that meets at the New Brunswick Public Library on the first Wednesday of each month. *(For more information, contact Maggie Luo at the NAMI NJ office.)*

Spanish Family-to-Family Program

As part of our effort to improve access to quality mental health services for Hispanics, the New Jersey Mental Health Institute (NJMHI) and NAMI NEW JERSEY held a series of open houses for the Changing Minds, Advancing Mental Health for Hispanics/NAMI NEW JERSEY Family-to-Family Project. Through the project, Spanish-speaking trainees will receive training to provide the NAMI Family-to-Family Program in Spanish. *(Spanish-speaking family members interested in receiving training should contact NJMHI at 609-838-5488, ext. 212.)*

NAMI NJ Consumer Recovery Education Programs

NAMI NJ has sponsored "In Our Own Voice – Living With Mental Illness" presentations for NAMI affiliate and IFSS programs in 19 counties. Over 25 consumers have been trained to provide presentations, and the program is seeking more opportunities to present in high schools, colleges, and other non-mental health settings. Peer-to-Peer, a nine week consumer recovery course, graduated its first class of eight students. NAMI members from four counties participated. The course will run again this spring.

For information about consumer outreach programs, or to schedule a consumer outreach presentation call NAMI NJ Consumer Outreach Liaison Jay Yudof at 866-464-3267 or e-mail jjudof@hotmail.com.

NAMI NJ Educating Professionals

The NAMI NJ Education for Professionals Program uses the wisdom gained by family members to teach mental health professionals from the unique perspectives of its presenters. The program is designed to increase positive connections by enhancing understanding and collaboration. The "voices" who speak in this training are those of a consumer, a family member, and a family member who is also a professional. They each share their personal, diverse experiences. as does a staff member of NJ's Intensive Family Support Services Program (IFSS) who describes the consultative model of support and education available to families through IFSS.

NAMI NJ Task Force on Children Formed

NAMI NJ has developed a Task Force on Children, composed of family members of children with mental illness, four NAMI NJ Affiliate Presidents, a psychologist, a medical doctor, a teacher, a former school administrator and a social worker. The purpose of the Task Force is to assess the current resources of NAMI NJ and its Affiliates statewide and determine the organization's role with respect to addressing the problems of families of children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral problems.

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legislation that would fund model jail diversion programs.

A new Family Support Plan for the Families of Persons with a Serious Mental Illness was adopted through the NAMI convened Family Support Workgroups. The plan sets out goals and objectives to improve the lives of people with a serious mental illness and their families. Among the plan's priorities are improved health care, better coordination between the mental health and criminal justice systems and greater emphasis on teaching about mental illness in the public schools.

On a national level New Jersey is known as having one of the most "mental health friendly" Congressional delegations in a large part due to the work of NAMI NJ Advocates. 12 Representatives and both of New Jersey Senators are co-sponsors of the Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act of 2003, which would enhance the provisions of mental health parity for federally regu-

Families Providing Mutual Support & Education

As a grassroots, self-help mutual aid organization, having trained family members facilitate their own support group conveys a message of competence, caring and ownership. To date, eleven of our local Affiliate groups have received training in facilitating a NAMI Family-to-Family Support Group. In 2003 NAMI NJ has also trained seventeen new Family Educators and sponsored 25 Family-to-Family Education courses throughout the state.

lated insurance plans. In consultation with NAMI, nearly every New Jersey representative has introduced or co-sponsored legislation to improve the lives of persons with a serious mental illness. Senator Corzine has introduced the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 that would extend the provisions of mental health parity to Medicare. Congressman Smith has been a leader in enhancing mental health treatment for veterans. Congressman Ferguson has championed the needs of children as a major proponent in reauthorizing IDEA. Congressman Frelinghuysen, a longtime NAMI NJ friend, has become one of Congresses leading proponents of housing for persons with a mental illness.

A great deal of progress has been made in the past year, but a great deal remains to be done. For those interested in learning more or joining the NAMI NEW JERSEY Advocacy Network, contact Phil Lubitz, the Advocacy Program Director at (732) 940-0991 or plubitz@optonline.net.