

CLIPPINGS

A Better Parity Law for North Carolina

Over 30 states do a better job than North Carolina in providing equal insurance coverage for mental and physical illness for their citizens. North Carolina law provides limited mental health parity, requiring coverage only for state employees. But this is the year to make a change for the better and allow more of us to benefit from needed mental health and substance abuse treatment.

As any person with a mental illness or family member will tell you, these disorders are as real as cancer or heart disease. Why should insurance plans provide any less coverage because the brain needs treatment instead of the heart or the liver? The brain is arguably the most important part of our bodies, and yet we allow plans to provide less coverage for its treatment than for other physical ailments.

In addition, the recovery rates for mental illnesses are greater than those for common physical illnesses. Success rates for treating mental health disorders are 60-80 percent, exceeding the 41-52 percent treatment success rate for heart disease. For too long, we have allowed stigma and fear to prevail over science.

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- Letter from the President
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- Save the Dates 2007 Fall Institute and 2008 Annual Conference

1 Expanding parity will provide needed hope to the one in five individuals who will experience a mental illness—many of whom find it difficult to afford treatment. Studies show that only 1 out of 3 adults and even less children receive the mental health services they need to recover and to live and work in our communities.

2 As other states have realized, this legislation makes good business sense. In the workplace, major depression alone costs employers an estimated \$44 billion in lost productive work time every year. And, untreated depression has serious implications for those who live with other chronic health conditions. According to the National Business Group on Health, employees with both diabetes and depression have healthcare costs that are 4.5 times higher than those without depression.

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4 On May 5, a rainy, chilly Saturday morning, 150 people gathered at Triad Regional Park in Kernersville, NC to participate in NAMIWalks in the Triad. We had a large number of NAMI NC members and their families, board members and provider/consumer teams, all joined together by a common goal of raising awareness and funds for mental illness. What a great time we had!

7 At the time Clippings went to press, over **\$57,000** was raised for NAMIWalks, and donations are still coming in. A full report on NAMIWalks in the Triad will appear in the Fall Issue of Clippings, and will also be posted on NAMI NC's website at www.naminc.org.

NAMIWalks in the Triad



Carol Matthieu, M.Ed, NAMI NC Board President cuts ribbon as a crowd of eager onlookers gear up to start the 2.5 mile walk.

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Dear Members and Friends,

NAMI NC Board of Directors

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NAMI North Carolina is pleased to accept submissions, although guaranteed publication requires prior approval. The articles published, whether written by staff or outside contributors, are subject to editing for length, style, clarity and content. Submissions can be made by e-mail to mail@naminc.org, or by fax or mail (see back of *Clippings*) to the NAMI NC office.

NAMI North Carolina's Board of Directors recently met for the Annual Board Retreat to review the past year and plan for the one ahead. Our fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30, with our retreat usually being held in early June. The theme for the retreat was "Moving NAMI NC from Good to Great." NAMI at all levels is building on this theme to create a stronger organization, one that can deliver on its promise to carry out its mission, and have a distinctive impact over a long period of time. The two publications of Jim Collins, Good to Great and Good to Great and the Social Sectors are becoming must-reads for NAMI members as we develop leadership that builds upward from the grassroots level.

One of our goals at the retreat was to define strategies for the coming year that will continue the implementation of the NAMI NC Strategic Plan. You can view the plan on our website at www.naminc.org, and we welcome comments. My email address is below. A second goal was to enhance the effectiveness of our Board's committees by directing our energy, through carefully defined expectations, toward our Strategic Goals. And third, we wanted to better know each others' areas of strength so that we meld as a group and build the trust that we need to make decisions. I appreciate Deby's planning and hard work to make the retreat a success.

The Board approved a marketing plan for NAMI NC developed by Art Springer. The Education, Development, and Public Policy Committees defined their goals and their meeting dates for the year. The Board passed a balanced budget for 07-08 and we heard a review of our programs and office operations in the Executive Director's report.

Two of your Board members, Floyd McCullough and Joe Donovan, announced they are stepping down. In Floyd's letter, he said that working with our Board and the NAMI NC Staff has been a profound pleasure and a rewarding experience. We know that as he changes his schedule a bit, he will still be a force in advancing our cause. Joe is moving to Utah to be with his family. We look forward to hearing about new initiatives for mental health consumers in the west as he works to accomplish many of the same projects he has been a part of in North Carolina. We thank them both for their loyal and valuable service to NAMI and to the mental health consumers and their families in our state. If you are interested in learning more about our Board and would consider serving, please contact me.

As you have come to know Deby Dihoff in the first six months she has been with us, I am sure that you share the Board's confidence in her. We are working hard at NAMI North Carolina to make the mission of support, education, and advocacy have real meaning for citizens in our state. NAMI is uniquely positioned to advocate for those with severe and persistent mental illness. Thank you for all that you do in your families, your communities, and statewide for NAMI.

Carol Matthieu, M.Ed.
President, NAMI North Carolina Board of Directors
dcc102@yahoo.com

DONATE TO NAMI NORTH CAROLINA ONLINE

**Contributions to NAMI NC can now be made online by going to the NAMI NC website at www.naminc.org.
*Thank you in advance for your support.***

NAMI's Peer-To-Peer Education Course is Up and Running at NAMI NC

NAMI NC is thrilled to offer the **NAMI Peer-To-Peer Education Course**. This unique, experiential learning program is for people with any serious mental illness who are interested in establishing and maintaining their wellness and recovery. Peer-To-Peer consists of nine two-hour units and is taught by a team of three trained "Mentors" who are personally experienced at living well with mental illness.

NAMI NC held its first weekend-long training session on May 11-13, 2007 in Raleigh. We were pleased to have NAMI National Peer-To-Peer instructors Deanne Green and Darla Guy teach the course. Twenty-two participants from Alamance, Charlotte, Durham, Four Seasons, Moore, Nash, Rowan, Wake, Wilmington, and Wilson Affiliates were trained as Peer-To-Peer Mentors. These "Mentors" are eager to implement the nine-week program in their communities. For more information about the Peer-To-Peer Education Course, contact Brenda Piper, Program Director at bpiper@naminc.org or (919) 788-0801.

Mission in Action: A Testimonial from NAMI NC's Helpline

NAMI NC's Helpline continues to be a first line resource for hundreds of families across the state in dealing with the uncertainties and challenges of living with mental illness. Here is one way our Helpline Manager Gloria Harrison puts our mission of support and education in action on a daily basis:

"A man called about his teenage son who was living with his ex-wife. He felt the boy was lazy and irresponsible. The son stayed up all night most nights, and didn't want to get up in the morning. He had trouble keeping up at school. He also lost most of his friends and had no extra curricular activities anymore. The father revealed that his son had been treated for Attention Deficit Disorder most of his school life, but had been given a new diagnosis of bipolar disorder. I talked to him about the illness, referred him to several websites, and sent him literature. After much heartbreaking discussion, the father gradually realized that this was a serious illness which was still not under control, and the symptoms his son was showing were quite common with this disorder. The father is now a member of a NAMI NC affiliate and has attended the Family to Family education course."

A Better Parity Law *(Continued from page 1)*

In our classrooms, over twenty percent of our children have a diagnosable mental health or addictive disorder and too often they lack the treatment they need to succeed at school. Nearly half of our teenagers who have a mental health disorder drop out of high school—the highest rate of any disability group. The National Institute of Mental Health reports that half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, but there are long delays before people receive the help they need.

Congress is considering federal legislation to equalize coverage for mental and physical illnesses. But Raleigh cannot wait for Washington DC to act. We don't know when a bill will pass Congress and we need a solution now that meets our needs here in North Carolina.

This past year, we have seen countless newspaper articles about those with mental illnesses ending up in emergency departments, homeless, in the criminal justice system and in our state hospitals. Untreated and under-treated mental illness is taking a terrible toll on our families and our communities.

HB 973 finally passed the house this year, a huge benchmark. In the past it has passed the Senate, but not the House. Although the small business and insurance industries have been successful in amending the bill to delete substance abuse coverage and to limit coverage to companies of 25 or more employees, we do know that even with these changes, it is more than people with severe mental illness have now. We will continue to fight to strengthen this legislation in future sessions. We could not have gotten to where we are now without the tremendous help from the grass roots membership – that was just incredible!

It's time for a better parity law. Let's hope we have one by the time Clippings arrives at your home.

Debra G. Dihoff, MA, Executive Director



NAMI North Carolina welcomes **Claudia Krueck**, our new Office Manager/Bookkeeper. Her background includes marketing, operations and administrative management, and human resources. She has worked with international corporations such as Novartis and IBM and has been instrumental in the start up of several small businesses. She likes to read, cook, travel, work in her garden, and on occasion dances until dawn. Her daughter is an Architectural Historian and photographer here in Raleigh and her son is a Realtor and a studio musician in Austin, Texas.

NAMI North Carolina also welcomes **Jennifer Rothman**, the new Young Families Program Director. She is a recent graduate from North Carolina State University with a BA in general psychology. Prior to coming to NAMI NC, she worked as a teacher in a daycare setting for over six years. Jennifer is excited to be in a position that benefits children and adolescents. Jennifer has been married for 3 years. She loves doting over her two cats, going to the movies, trying new restaurants and spending quiet nights at home catching up on her favorite shows, "House", "Grey's Anatomy," and "Ellen."



NAMI Walks in the Triad *(Continued from page 1)*

Walk Day went smoothly and without a hitch thanks to our Walk Manager, Susan Gerson and Marsha Frazier, Assistant Walk Manager both with FisherHelms, Inc.; the NAMI NC State Office staff, Deby Dihoff, Sauda Zahra, Gloria Harrison, Brenda Piper and Claudia Krueck; two wonderful Senior Interns from Elon College, Melissa and Emily, and a pool of NAMI NC volunteers. This great and fun group helped with registration, hanging banners, posting signs, distributing tee-shirts that went to all walkers who collected \$100 or more, picture taking and much more. And all with a smile on their faces!

No event is complete without a wonderful MC. Once again, Chris Horne with Carolina Realty shared his time and passion for NAMI with all of us. Chris came through loud and clear thanks to Sandy and David Burnette, who provided the PA system. Sandy, with her son's help, had it up and running perfectly well before kick-off time.



Our fundraising success is largely due to the tireless efforts and dedication of the Walk Team Captains who kept the momentum high across the state and raised awareness about our NAMI NC's mission in their communities. We cannot thank our team captains enough for their commitment and support.

The success of this year's Walk was certainly a team effort. Susan did a stellar job of keeping us on track with the enormous details and coordination needed to put on such an event. NAMI NC extends a big thanks to Susan and EVERYONE who contributed in some way to make 2007 NAMI Walks in the Triad a huge success!



Watch for more information about this year's Walk in the next Clippings. Also visit the NAMI NC website at www.naminc.org for more photos and additional information.



(Left to right) Chris Horne, MC for the Walk and Susan Gerson, NAMI Walks Manager pause from the day's activities to take a photo. Nancye Bryan, NAMI NC Board Member is in the background.

Welcome Johnston County Affiliate

NAMI NC is thrilled to welcome Johnston County as our newest Affiliate. Marilyn Lundin is the President and the affiliate already has 6 members. Marilyn received the Robert Bryan Fellowship and will use the \$3,000 stipend to support the affiliate. Marilyn has been busy getting Johnston County Affiliate up and running. In May, she gave a presentation on the new affiliate at the Johnston Memorial Hospital psychiatric unit and also distributed brochures and talked to local residents about NAMI and the affiliate at a recent community event. Johnston County Affiliate can be reached at P.O. Box 713, Clayton, NC 27538. We welcome Johnston County Affiliate to the NAMI NC family.

NAMI Forsyth County has taken a leading role in offering CIT training for law enforcement officers. Two training sessions have been held and 42 officers have been trained. NAMI Forsyth hopes to have 4 training sessions per year. NAMI Forsyth has donated \$2,500 for the courses. The courses are led by Pam Forrester, Forsyth Mental Health Association and NAMI NC leaders, Louise Whealton, Billie Gilfillan, and Ken Farrington. NAMI Forsyth County also has two active support groups and will be offering the Family-to-Family course beginning in September.

NAMI Four Seasons participated in Celebrations of Courage events held in Transylvania and Polk Counties in May. NAMI Four Seasons will be partnering with Western Carolina for their annual picnic on August 5.

NAMI High Country has been busy with a variety of community activities. To kick off Mental Health Awareness Month in May, they held a Second Annual "Voices of Hope" Benefit Dinner and Silent Auction and raised over \$1,000 to help support the Family to Family course in the fall. They also had an In Our Own Voice (IOOV) Presentation in May at a local church. NAMI High Country's Appalachian State University Diversity Celebration in April included a "Stop Suicide Now" campaign targeted at college students.

NAMI Moore County is hosting its second annual *Pathway to Awareness* Weekend in Pinehurst September 29 and 30 to precede Mental Illness Awareness Week. This year's activities will focus on educating the public on Schizophrenia. Former *Washington Post* investigative reporter Pete Earley will discuss his book *Crazy, A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness* on Saturday, September 29 at 7:30 p.m. at Sandhills Community College. On Sunday afternoon at the Pinehurst Village Hall, Dr. Mary Mandell, a national NAMI award-winning psychiatrist with FirstHealth of the Carolinas, will answer specific psychiatric/medical questions from the audience. Other activities include Mr. Earley's book signing, food and music, a 2-mile stroll around the park, and a Celebration of Courage floral display. The weekend finale is the *Candles in the Sky* observance, which is a huge helium balloon release honoring and/or remembering our loved ones, friends, and associates affected by a mental illness. Everyone in North Carolina is invited to these free events. Call 910-255-3038 for further details.

NAMI New Bern received a check from the Home Life Division of the New Bern Women's Club. Sherry Springer, President, accepted the check on behalf of NAMI New Bern. The event was covered in the Sun Journal, New Bern on Tuesday, June 5, 2007.

NAMI Rowan County president Sarah Boyd received a technical assistance grant from the NC Council of Community Programs to establish a consumer generated business. Sarah will create a Resource Center for the Brain in Rowan County to will offer medical education for people interested in learning about normal brain function and disorders of the brain that affect a person's health. (See photo at right.)



(Left to right) Deby Dihoff, NAMI NC Executive Director joined NAMI Rowan County members Susan Agner, Sarah Boyd, Mary Scheller and Joyce Parra at the awards luncheon held on April 19 in Raleigh.

In Memoriam

Wayne Wilson, husband of Vicki Wilson (NAMI Randolph County) passed away on May 25. NAMI NC extends its condolences to Vickie and her family.

NAMI NC wishes to recognize individuals and organizations who have contributed to NAMI NC during the period from July 1, 2005 – June 15, 2007. We are deeply appreciative and grateful for their generous support.

Memorials and Honorariums will be recognized in the Fall issue of Clippings.

Founder's Circle (\$10,000 +)

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Heroes in the Fight Award Winner and Nominees

Tracy Mixson, CPS (NAMI Western Carolina) received the Heroes in the Fight Award - Individual Community Supporter. Kent Goddard (NAMI Wake) presented Tracy with her award at the Heroes in the Fight Recognition Luncheon on June 21 in Raleigh. Tracy is an active mental health advocate serving consumers and their families since the mid-1990s.

NAMI NC also congratulates our 2007 Heroes in the Fight Nominees: Ann Akland (NAMI Wake County), Gerry Akland (NAMI Wake County), Susan Agner (NAMI Rowan County), John Gaskill (NAMI Coastal Division), Doug Halliday (NAMI Coastal Division) and Carol Matthieu (NAMI Forsyth County).

Consumer Council Corner

NAMI NC Consumer Council welcomes two new members, **Floyd McCullouch** and **Sarah Keller-Boyd**. Floyd is a long standing member with NAMI Wayne County and most recently served on the NAMI NC Board of Directors. Sarah is president of NAMI Rowan County. She is also an *In Our Own Voice* Presenter, Regional Manager for *In Our Own Voice*, and a Peer-to-Peer Mentor. She is looking forward to working with the Consumer Council to achieve the goals established for 2007-2008.

Welcome Floyd and Sarah to your new roles on the Consumer Council!

Plans are underway at NAMI NC for a 2007 Fall Institute on Decriminalization to be held in Raleigh. Details about the Fall Institute will be posted on NAMI NC's website at www.naminc.org as plans develop. For additional information, contact Deby Dihoff at (919) 788-0801, or by email at ddihoff@naminc.org. Watch for details on the website!

NAMI NC's Annual Conference will be back in Raleigh in 2008.

Mark your calendar for the 2008 Annual Conference, Thursday and Friday, October 30-November 1, 2008 at the Hilton North Raleigh, Raleigh, NC. After exploring the options available in the eastern part of the state to hold the conference, NAMI NC determined that the increased cost would create a hardship for many of our members and families to attend the conference. So we are going back to the newly renovated Hilton North Raleigh. The hotel staff is delighted to be hosting NAMI NC's Annual Conference again. **Save the date!**

**NAMI North
Carolina's
HELPLINE
800-451-9682**



NC ONLY

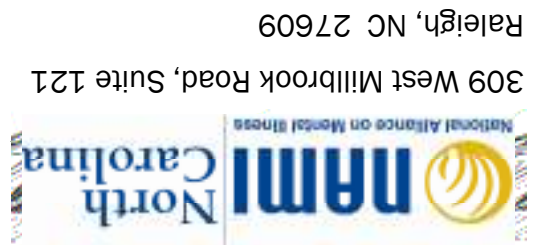
When you need:

- *Support**
- *Information**
- *Referral**
- *Someone to listen**
- *Someone to advocate for you**

Please note that the Calendar of Events is now posted on the NAMI NC website at <http://www.naminc.org>

NAMI North Carolina is a grassroots organization providing advocacy, education and support. The mission of NAMI North Carolina is to optimize the quality of life for individuals and their families affected by severe and persistent mental illness. We work to protect the dignity and promote the recovery of those living with brain disorders.

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