Celebrate Resilience & Recovery
Saturday, Sept. 22, 2018
Guadalupe River Park, San Jose
Check in: 8:30am; Starts: 9:30am; Finishes: 1:00pm
www.namiwalks.org/siliconvalley

Please join us for our 2018 NAMIWalk! When you walk with NAMI SMC, you join the movement to educate the public that without mental health you can't have good health. You also help us raise funds to support our mission to help individuals and families right here in San Mateo County, and most of all, you join the movement to remove the stigma of mental illness.

NAMIWalks is completely FREE and open to everyone in the community. Participants should REGISTER as a Team Captain, Team Member, Individual Walker, or become a Virtual Walker. Fundraising is encouraged, but not required. Walkers are encouraged to ask their family, friends, colleagues and business associates to make a donation using their fundraising page - which is automatically generated when registering online. All walkers who raise $100 or more as an individual receive one free t-shirt on the day of the walk!

Current Walk teams include: All for One and One for All; Clubhouse Cranes; Kathy's Hope; NAMI Navigators; Never Walk Alone; Nurses for a Better Tomorrow; Peace of Mind and Visa and Strong Soles. Many others are in formation. In 2017, 18 teams formed to support NAMI SMC. We are hoping to have 36+ teams this year! Come and join us! It's a fun event.

A team captain kick-off is happening Sat. Aug. 4th. Register your team now to attend.

Registration: Go to www.namiwalks.org/siliconvalley and register your team online or register as a participant on an already-existing team.

Your participation in NAMIWALKS allows the NAMI SMC office to operate and to offer our array of programs, classes, support groups, warm line resources, referrals and presentations in the community – free of charge - to all who need support and/or wish to learn.

NAMIWalks is our largest and most important outreach event. Please join to improve the lives of people in our community one step at a time!

Personal Stories of Change & Understanding
By Cammy Forchione

This is my story of my daughter Christina’s journey full of struggles, grief, fear, pain; which led to her perseverance, hope and strength.

Christina was a happy baby with big beautiful eyes. Her father and I loved her so much. In September of 1987 Christina’s father passed away. She was only 5 years old at the time. It was in October of the same year, where Christina was diagnosed with ADHD. I had no idea what ADHD was, or how I was supposed to handle that. I was at a loss. For the next several years I was in meetings with the school's Psychologist, teachers, and special education teams to make sure Christina was given the proper individualized help she needed. She was put on Ritalin and we finally found ourselves coping with this challenge.

Over the course of several years, life changed for Christina and me. I got remarried, we moved, and Christina started high school. During this period of time is when I noticed that Christina started showing signs of depression. (Continued on page 7)
Serving Safely

NAMI National is pleased to announce the launch of Serving Safely www.vera.org/projects/serving-safely, a national initiative to help police and sheriffs’ departments effectively respond to mental health crises.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, “Serving Safely: The National Initiative to Enhance Policing for Persons with Mental Illnesses and Developmental Disabilities” will be a one-stop shop for communities-specifically law enforcement agencies-to request training and technical assistance. Through the initiative's work, law enforcement agencies will be better prepared to interact with people experiencing mental illness or developmental disabilities and their families.

Each year, millions of people with mental illness are booked into jails across the U.S. Due to limited resources, a lack of quality community treatment options and no alternatives, law enforcement officers are increasingly called upon to respond during mental health crises. For the last 30 years, local and state NAMIs have been on the front lines promoting programs such as crisis intervention teams (CIT) www.nami.org/cit and mental health courts that divert people with mental illness away from the criminal justice system and into treatment.

Teaming up on this project are the U.S. Department of Justice, The Vera Institute of Justice, The Arc, CIT International, National College of Emergency Physicians, Prosecutors Center for Excellence, National Disability Rights Network and several national researchers. In addition to providing training and technical assistance, these partners will develop new resources to support communities and develop a plan to guide research on mental illness and the justice system. NAMI will ensure that individuals and family members’ voices are front and center.

To learn more about this initiative, please visit www.vera.org/projects/serving-safely or email us at cit@nami.org.

You can also learn more about NAMI’s work to improve police interactions with people experiencing a mental health crisis by going to www.nami.org/cit. There, you’ll find resources and ways to keep up to date about NAMI's latest work to improve the criminal justice systems response to people with mental illness.

Car Donations Accepted!

Thank you for considering NAMI-SMC as your donation destination!

A free, convenient service for converting that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefitting NAMI San Mateo County. You can donate online (www.v-dac.com/org/?id=94-2650681) or call 877-999-8322 to make your donation. Thank You!

July General Meeting Review

The July 25th NAMI SMC General Meeting featured Anna Nedelisky, Ph.D. discussing “Tools & Tricks To Build a Better Life – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) & Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT).”

In speaking to a capacity crowd Dr. Nedelisky walked us through the two widely used psychotherapy models in her down-to-earth, sometimes amusing, and very informative presentation.

CBT was developed by Aaron Beck, MD beginning in about 1967. Working with depressed patients he found that they experienced streams of negative thoughts that seemed to pop up spontaneously. What we tell ourselves about what is happening in our interactions with others and the world around us inform how we act and react to situations.

Cognitive Distortions (distorted thinking): In depression or other mental health challenges we often have terrible automatic thoughts like these: extreme thinking, catastrophizing, emotional reasoning, fortune-telling, all or nothing thinking (never/always), labeling (I’m a loser), overgeneralizing (it’s going to be a terrible day), personalization & blame, and a negative filter.

These distortions are rooted in our core beliefs. Out of these we make maladaptive assumptions (“I have to be perfect”) which result in these automatic thoughts.

What To Do: Identify automatic thoughts; evaluate evidence (is this an accurate thought?); determine cognitive distortion; reframe: the thought. This is the basis for cognitive behavioral therapy.

DBT was developed in the 80’s and 90’s by Marcia Linahan, Ph.D., a faculty member at University of Washington. It is the gold standard for the toughest behaviors to treat such as cutting, chronic suicide attempts and personality disorders. She herself has revealed she has a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder.

Principle Of Dialectics: We evolve out of our relationships with ourselves and others. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy is designed to find wisdom in the present moment.

DBT teaches 4 Skill Modules: mindfulness skills (Buddhist concepts of acceptance, meditation); distress tolerance skills (getting through the moment); emotion regulation; and interpersonal effectiveness skills. The last two skills utilize acronyms to help the person recall each step to take when confronting a difficult situation.

Radical Acceptance is acceptance of reality as it is and being open to change.

CBT and DBT are now approved by most insurance companies as effective-evidence-based treatment for all psychiatric conditions.

CBT for psychosis which is popular in Europe already is offered at UCSF and the Stanford Inspire Clinic.

We are grateful for the opportunity to learn about these important therapies from such a knowledgeable expert in the field and we appreciate all of the NAMI members who came out to listen and learn.

Dr. Nedelisky has a private practice in San Mateo and is a faculty member at Stanford.

Her web address is: www.clinicalpsychsolutions.com/
LEAP Training Review

On June 21–22 at the Crowne Plaza in Foster City, Xavier Amador, PhD, author of the integral book, “I’m Not Sick, I Don’t Need Help,” about how to Help Someone with Mental Illness Accept Help, offered a review and training based on his book and LEAP (Listen, Empathize, Agree and Partner).

From Kathy Stern: I’ve made every mistake in the books trying to convince my son he needed treatment. My lack of understanding about how to talk to him about it has driven a wedge between us that I had no idea how to bridge until I attended Dr. Amador’s seminar and subsequently read his book. I now understand that my son’s unawareness of his illness is not just denial or belligerence but a “severe and pervasive” inability to comprehend that he is ill and needs help.

Dr. Amador’s work offers a roadmap of sorts, not just for therapists but for family members and friends to talk constructively with their loved one with understanding and respect. He has given us another set of tools (as he puts it, reminiscent of those in the Batman belt he had so loved as a child). I’ve already begun using those tools to change the way I communicate with my son and see glimmers of hope that he can learn to trust me again. That can only lead to better days ahead. The trust that is built through these positive interactions will, very often, result in a higher level of compliance with effective treatments.

His book is widely available from the NAMI office and elsewhere. To learn more or buy the book go to: www.LEAPInstitute.org

From Ron Dugrenier: One part that had the most impact on me, and probably to many others in the audience was a pre-arranged interaction Dr. Amador had with a member of the audience. In front of everyone he asked questions about her work and personal life, and then, within a short time he appeared to be able to place enough doubt in her mind that she had tears in her eyes. It appeared very emotional for her, as she was probably doubting her own self-identity – her own reality.

My take-away from his talk is to not confront directly the person’s perceptions who has a mental illness but to actually listen to what they’re saying and understand how they’re seeing the world. From that reference point you can try to bring them forward with communicating techniques he lays out clearly in his book.

As he was autographing his book for me I said to him, “It’s like Tai Chi of the mind” to which he said “Exactly.”

Families Stakeholder Survey

Family members—Give your opinion and share your experiences when it comes to mental health. Please participate in this survey!

www.surveymonkey.com/r/F25HQGR

BBQ Picnic and Resource Fair

Tuesday, September 18 10am-2pm
San Mateo Central Park—50 E. 5th Ave.

Join in the celebration of people in recovery from mental and/or substance use disorders. During the month of September, Voices of Recovery San Mateo County and San Mateo County’s BHRS will host several events as part of National Recovery Month.

NAMI SMC Remembers

Claude Suarez

Our longtime friend and past NAMI SMC Board Member Claude Suarez, has passed away. Claude was one of our early Family-To-Family Education facilitators. We are grateful to Claude and his wife Helen for their early contributions to NAMI and to the mental health community, increasing awareness, supporting families and improving services. Our sincere condolences to the Suarez family.

Marilyn and Warren Hagberg

NAMI SMC was saddened to learn of the deaths of long-time members Marilyn and Warren Hagberg. Both were active volunteers for NAMI in the past. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. May they rest in peace together. Memorial Service to be held August 13, 2018, 2pm at First Presbyterian Church in Burlingame.

We are grateful for donations...
in honor of
Pat Hughes from Kelly Powers

in memory of
Patricia Gonterman from Violet & Bill Guerra
Marilyn & Warren Hagberg from Al & Norma Guaspari
Michele Krone from Steve and Pat Way
Claude Suarez from Doris Todd Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Don Cresci, Virginia O’Brien, Alan & Gloria Stickle, The Archives Committee of the RWC Public Library

NAMI San Mateo County appreciates those who send donations that honor loved ones. Our sincere gratitude!

Social Security Benefits or Vocational Rehab Questions?
Call Wendy Jordan at 650-802-6482

Check out Wellness Matters, the SMC BHRS newsletter www.smchealth.org/wm
To All Our Volunteers!
~ THANK YOU ~

We couldn’t do it without you!

Family to Family Teachers:
Jane Marshburn, Ashley Langston

Newsletter Mailing: Clancy Stein

Resource Fairs: Mary Dea, Jean Perry, Ron Dugrenier, Lisa Kenney, Jolena Susa

General Meeting: Mee Chen, Carolyn Shepard, Mila Viernes

Office Support: Grace Hand, Maddy Wong

Special Projects: Robert Zimmerman

All of our Support Group Leaders!

Newsletter production: Ron Dugrenier, Ruan Frenette, Gregg Hardin, Kim Nobles, Pat Way

Peer PALS Update

We have some very exciting news to share… we have reached 15 Peer PALS matches, and have graduated 9 matches in the last year! That’s almost 40 individuals who have benefited significantly from our program and whose lives have been positively transformed in the process.

While we continue to look for Peer and PAL applicants, we have an immediate need for PAL applicants who wish to contribute their friendship and support to individuals who could greatly benefit from it.

Please consider signing up to be a PAL and make a difference in someone’s life. Interested individuals can learn more about this FREE program at [www.namisanmateo.org/about-us/jobs/](http://www.namisanmateo.org/about-us/jobs/) and/or email Rocio at peerpals@namisanmateo.org.

Peers: This program helps decrease loneliness and isolation, increase comfort in social situations and self-esteem, and convey lifestyle habits that promote and maintain recovery.

PALS: First complete NAMI’s Peer to Peer class or similar education/mentoring classes through a community service agency or college. To discuss the program, call 650-638-0800. Join us!

Peninsula Veterans Affairs Center

Are you a vet or know one who needs help, is experiencing PTSD and/or other symptoms? Call 650-617-4300 or visit 345 Middlefield Road, Bldg. 1; Floor 1, Menlo Park

Facilitators Needed

We’re looking for persons to facilitate our programs! Training is provided to lead our education programs, presentations and support groups - please contact the NAMI office at 650-638-0800 for details.

We are also looking for individuals with lived experience who are interested in telling their story for In Our Own Voice presentations.

EVERY Monday of the month • 7:00-8:30pm
NAMI office, 1650 Borel Place, #130, San Mateo

Connection provides persons with mental health conditions a gathering of respect, understanding, encouragement and hope. The group is led by trained individuals who are experienced at living well with mental illness. No registration is required. Just drop by; we look forward to meeting you. Contact 650-638-0800 or education@namisanmateo.org with any questions.

New Additions to the Library

Portraits of Resilience
by Daniel Jackson, foreword by David Karp

A beautiful book compiled of photographs and stories of people who have coped with and overcome depression, anxiety, trauma, and other challenges.

In 2014 and 2015, MIT experienced a cluster of suicides. Six students and a professor took their lives within a little more than a year. After that, the school newspaper published stories written by an MIT student and a professor about their struggles with depression.

Jackson set out to photograph members of the MIT community who had experienced depression and anxiety, and ask them to tell their stories. He hung posters of the first few subjects around campus. Then so many people came forward, Jackson decided to compile a book. It’s called “Portraits of Resilience.” Thank you to our Donor!

Please visit the library at the NAMI SMC office - we have books and videos available to check out! Watch for our latest additions below. If you have read a book related to Mental Health issues that you believe would benefits others, please email the office with the title and author.

MHSARC Meetings Open to the public
(Mental Health & Substance Abuse Recovery Commission)

FULL COMMISSION MEETINGS
1st Wednesday, monthly: 3pm-5pm
Time/locations vary, check 650 573-2544 or [www.smchealth.org/mhsarc](http://www.smchealth.org/mhsarc)
Health Services Building, Room 100
225 W. 37th Ave. San Mateo

AGE FOCUSED COMMITTEES

Older Adult Committee:
1st Wednesday monthly: 11am-12noon
Call for location: 650 573-2544

Adult Committee Meeting:
3rd Wednesday, monthly: 10:30am-11:30am

Children and Youth Committee Meeting:
3rd Wednesday, monthly: 4pm-5pm
# SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

For information on NAMI Support groups call 650-638-0800

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NAMI Education Programs
To be added to the Wait List, call 650-638-0800 or email us at education@namisanmateo.org

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
Sign up for the evidence-based education class that fits your need. (Support Groups on page 5) Courses are FREE, comprehensive, and popular. Gain skills and understanding in an interactive, supportive environment.

♦ Basics—For parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness.

♦ Family to Family—For relatives of an adult family member with mental illness. Class meets once a week for 12 weeks.

♦ Peer to Peer—Better living skills for people with mental health issues taught by people with mental health issues.

♦ Provider—for Mental Health and AOD professionals, para-professionals and all others serving individuals with serious mental illnesses and their families. CMEs pending approval for qualified attendees. Please contact us to set up an in-house program for your organization.

Mental Health Parity at Risk
NAMI released a report highlighting the impossible barriers millions of Americans living with mental health and substance use disorders faced prior to passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). These findings underscore how current efforts to weaken the individual insurance market. See more on our web version of the newsletter (pg 9) or the full report is available at www.nami.org/parityatrisk.

Shopping Supports NAMI SMC
Sign up NOW! Tell a friend!
Always start at smile.amazon.com and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. When you log onto smile.amazon.com please choose NAMI San Mateo County as your charitable organization; from there your shopping purchases will be linked directly to us!

Jail Chaplain
Spiritual counseling for incarcerated persons - contact Marty at St. Vincent de Paul Society: 650-796-0767.

San Mateo County Mental Health Emergency Numbers
Police: 911
Tell the dispatcher you are calling regarding a person who has a mental illness. Request a CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) trained officer and/or someone who has experience in dealing with the mentally ill. For non-emergency situations, call your local police department.

HELPFUL: Tips to prepare yourself for a 911 call are available on the BHRS website. Download “Mental Health Emergency” at www.smchealth.org/MH911 or...
...visit the blog: www.mcbhrsblog.org/2015/03/30/mental-health-emergency-materials-aka-family-script/.

24 Hour Crisis Line & Support Help: 650-579-0350 / 800-784-2433
Calling the local number will get you someone in San Mateo County. Calling the 800 number will get you the first person available. This person may not be in San Mateo County.

Psych Emergency: San Mateo Medical Center: 650-573-2662
Mills Peninsula Hospital: 650-696-5915
Kaiser South San Francisco: 650-742-2511
Kaiser Permanente SMC: 650-991-6455

FAST: 650-368-3178 | 650-371-7416 (pager)
Family AssertiveSupport Team - When your loved one is in emotional distress.

For additional non-emergency numbers relating to Mental Health issues, access www.namisanmateo.org.
Cordilleras Plan Begins Taking Shape

Specialized mental health treatment, expanded facilities and additional recreation opportunities are among the improvements pegged in a plan to replace outdated facilities at the Cordilleras Mental Health Center in Redwood City. In drawing plans to replace a 117-bed facility providing care for those with severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or depressive episodes, county planning and health officials are taking into consideration the facility's wooded location just east of Interstate 280 at 200 Edmonds Road, both as a component of future treatment provided there and in addressing effects the project might have on its surrounding environment.

Originally a hospital for tuberculosis patients when it was built in 1952, the existing facility is known for its long hallways and high maintenance costs, said Terry Rittgers, clinical services manager with the county Health System’s Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Division.

By including five mental health rehabilitation centers with beds for 16 clients and supportive housing for nearly 60 other clients at a building expected to replace the current facility in their plans, officials are hoping the new buildings will be oriented in a way that allows staff to provide more specialized care for clients and increase the number of beds available for clients to 137, said Rittgers.

Though plans for the replacement project have been in the works for several years, county planners have been ensuring the project’s environmental impacts are considered in each step, said Deborah Bazan, director of the county’s Project Development Unit. From working with Cal Fire to ensure the water supply to the site is sufficient to performing an environmental analysis of the project, those working on the project have been careful to consider how the project may affect its surrounding during and after construction, said Bazan, who added the project would also be phased in such a way that current clients would continue to receive care throughout construction.

“We’re actually being very sensitive to the phasing of how that project will be rolled out,” she said. “It’s a very complex phasing plan but exciting.” Rittgers noted staff are now more focused on caring for those who may have experienced an acute psychiatric episode and need a secure setting where they can develop coping skills and stabilize before transitioning into a lower level of care in the community.

Rittgers said the improvements are expected to not only allow for high-quality treatments for clients but also benefit staff and family members involved in their care by providing it in a natural, healthy environment.

“It’s a much more serene, peaceful environment where everybody feels a lot safer and cared about,” he said.

For county project manager Scott Gurley, completing environmental impact reporting and obtaining California Environmental Quality Act permits are the next big milestones for the project. He said planners have completed initial designs for the buildings, and will have an opportunity to see how they fit within the project’s budget — which officials are hoping stays under $120 million — later this summer. Gurley said grading for the project could begin as early as next summer with construction of the buildings estimated to begin by the end of 2019 and end in 2022.

“We’re really trying to mitigate the impacts on the environment and the surrounding neighbors and trying to keep our eye on the overall end goal and end-user experience for rehabilitation,” he said.

By Anna Schuessler Daily Journal staff
anna@smdailyjournal.com
(650) 344-5200 ext. 106
See full article at www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/

I then connected her with the San Mateo County Mental Health Services. This was yet another ongoing process with psychologists, therapists, and psychiatrists to figure out what was happening with her. She was given a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder or BPD for short. I had so many questions and needed to understand this new diagnosis. I finally found those answers in NAMI. This time around I didn’t feel alone because I had resources that were going to help me and my daughter. I attended the friends and family courses to understand effective ways of supporting my daughter.

In 2000 I made a decision to leave the man I married. He turned out to be a verbally, emotionally abusive man that made my daughter’s life a living hell. She became even more depressed and now had suicidal ideation. She was in and out of mental health hospitals and put on countless numbers of medications. Eventually she started abusing drugs and became an addict. The only place I could of think of to get support for myself was in NAMI. I attended their classes, got information, learned how to cope with her challenges, and how to take care of myself in the process. There is one significant memory that I had was when I was at work I heard God telling me to go home and check on Christina. I found her unconscious, so I performed CPR, called 911 and luckily, she lived to see another day. She had roughly 12 overdoses over the course of several years.

Christina attended several rehabs and finally by the grace of God has been clean for 9 months. I have attended two 8-week courses at Stanford learning Dialectical Behavioral Therapy educating myself on how to be a supportive, understanding, loving mother. It was with the help of NAMI and everything they have done for me to get me through all these challenges have I finally feel I am able to breathe. My daughter is doing better than ever. I give back to NAMI by volunteering my time. I want to be able to help other people who have been through similar issues with their loved ones. I didn’t believe in miracles because of all of life’s challenges we have been through, but today I do believe. My love for my daughter is a bond like none other. Because of NAMI I now have a solid foundation where I can help her. I will never give up on my daughter. She has proved to me she has hope today and will never give up either.

It’s important for people living around mental illness to know that they are not alone. Sharing a story about your personal experience with mental health challenges—as an individual with a diagnosis, or as a family member or friend—can help with recovery. To learn more about what writing your story might entail and how we can work with you regarding privacy issues, please contact Helene at 650-638-0800 or hjzimmer@namisanmateo.org.
Membership / Donation Form

Donate, renew or join NAMI SMC also at namisanmateo.org

☐ Individual Member ($40)*
☐ Household Member ($60)*
☐ Open Door Member ($5)*

☐ Renewal or ☐ New Membership

I would like to donate:
☐ $50 ☐ $75 ☐ $100 ☐ $250
Other $___________

Amount Enclosed: $__________

* A portion of your membership is sent to NAMI National and to NAMI California

☐ My Company has a Matching Gift Program:

Name______________________________
Address______________________________
City/State______________ Zip__________
Phone (_____)_________________ E-mail____________________

Pay by: ☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ MC Credit cards charged to billing address.
Credit Card#_______________________ Expires_________ 3 Digit code______
Amount $____________ Signature___________________________

How did you hear about NAMI?
☐ Family ☐ Individual ☐ Friend
☐ MH Professional ☐ Business or Agency

Please check all that apply: I/we am/are

Your membership in NAMI San Mateo County is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thank you for being a part of the NAMI SMC family!

NAMI San Mateo County
1650 Borel Place, Suite 130
San Mateo, CA 94402

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Time Value
Families Stakeholder Survey

My name is Jon DuFresne and I work on behalf of NAMI CA to advocate for mental health parity, to support family members as they support their loved ones, and to bust stigma across the state. We are currently in the process of developing an annual state of the community report for a contract with the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission specifically regarding the experiences of family members as they navigate the Public Mental Health System (PMHS) of California.

We would love to hear from you and any other peers, family members, behavioral health professionals, or mental health advocates you may know. To that extent, if you have time, please complete the survey (which you can find the link to at the bottom of this email) to give you opinion and share your experiences when it comes to mental health. This survey has been meticulously crafted to allow us to analyze a variety of issues, statements, and attitudes that individuals have regarding the PMHS that will lead to key statistical analysis of regional and demographic trends. The survey is short, about 11 minutes, and you can pick up and leave, or come back later and edit your responses, as you see fit.

Also, please feel free to share this email with any individuals you know who may like to share lend their voice and perspective to our State of the Community Report. Thank you!

Survey Link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F25HQGR

Suicide Prevention Training Planned

In June lawmakers in Sacramento approved a bill by Assemblymember Marc Levine that would require marriage and family therapists, educational psychologists and other mental health professionals to receive suicide prevention training. Last year, Governor Brown signed AB 89 by Assemblymember Levine, D-Marin County, which requires all applicants for licensure as a psychologist with the Board of Psychology to complete a minimum of six hours of coursework and/or applied experience in suicide risk assessment and intervention. This bill extends that legislation and ensures that all mental health professionals receive the training they need. The bill must be approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee next before it can be sent to the governor’s desk.

Assemblymember Marc Levine represents the 10th Assembly District, which includes Marin and Sonoma Counties.

—Shannon Flaherty | Communications Director
Assemblymember Marc Levine
916-319-2010 | shannon.flaherty@asm.ca.gov

Mental Health Parity at Risk

NAMI released a report highlighting the impossible barriers millions of Americans living with mental health and substance use disorders faced prior to passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). These findings underscore how current efforts to weaken the individual insurance market could mean returning to a time when Americans with mental health conditions could be denied coverage or offered coverage that excludes services they need.

“As a country, we must put our health first, and that includes both mental and physical well-being. There is no health without mental health and there should be no health insurance without mental health coverage,” said Mary Giliberti, CEO of NAMI. “We need the Administration to retain policies that prioritize people over profits. Cutting lifesaving treatments and health coverage for people with mental illness as a cost-saving measure should never be an option.”

NAMI’s new report, Mental Health Parity at Risk, looks at the barriers and gaps in mental health and substance use coverage in the individual health insurance market prior to the ACA. “We know the individual market for health insurance failed people with mental health and substance use service needs before the ACA required plans to cover these services” said Dania Palanker, Assistant Research Professor at Georgetown University’s Health Policy Institute. “It’s deeply concerning that the Administration is encouraging a return to a market without mental health and substance use protections by expanding subpar coverage such as short-term and association health plans.”

Before the ACA, individual insurance plans routinely failed to meet even the most basic needs of Americans with mental health and substance use conditions. NAMI does not support a return to policies that discriminate against people with preexisting conditions, allow benefit limitations on mental health and substance use treatment coverage or promote disparities in insurance coverage. NAMI calls on the Administration to act in the best interest of people with mental health and substance use disorders and protect them from discriminatory actions by insurance companies.

The full report is available at www.nami.org/parityatrisk.