

FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2010

GROWING THE GRASSROOTS: THE CRUCIAL NEED FOR ADVOCACY

Keynote Address - *A Partnership with NAMI National*

Michael J. Fitzpatrick, MSW, Executive Director, NAMI National will share with participants the importance of developing collaborative relationships to heighten the effectiveness of local, state and national advocacy efforts. With impending changes in the mental health landscape due to statewide budget cuts, the end of the Rendell administration and the evolution of national health care reform, partnerships among mental health advocates across the system are vital. When grassroots advocates through local NAMI affiliates connect with NAMI National, combined efforts ensure a louder, more effective voice championing a transformed mental health system in the future.

Michael J. Fitzpatrick, MSW, Executive Director, NAMI

Christine Michaels, MSHSA, Executive Director, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania



Keynote Speaker: Michael Fitzpatrick is Executive Director of NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Prior to January of 2004, he served both as the Director of NAMI's Policy Research Institute and as NAMI's National Director of Policy.

Mr. Fitzpatrick has served on numerous community, government and non-profit boards and expert panels. He has served as the President of the Board of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program in his home state of Maine, and he presently serves as the Chair of the Campaign for Mental Health Reform. He also serves on the Board of REACH (Resource for Advancing Children's Health) Institute (2006).

Prior to joining NAMI in 1999, Mr. Fitzpatrick held senior management positions in state government, non-profit agencies, and the private sector where he developed successful education, employment, housing, outreach and rehabilitation programs.

Mr. Fitzpatrick has an MSW in Administration and Planning from Boston College. He also served in the Maine State Legislature, and from 1994-1996, he served as the House Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee.

Opening Plenary Session - *A Call to Action*

Experts in public policy, professional organizations and advocacy groups will discuss priorities for mental health advocacy in 2010 during this interactive panel discussion. Key issues that will be addressed include the transition that will come with the expiration of the Rendell Administration and how it may impact the public sector, a budget update featuring details about potential new cuts in mental health services, and the impact of national health care reform on the mental health community in our region. Although there are still many unknowns regarding these challenges, participants will learn how to be proactive in encouraging positive changes in the mental health system during this time of dramatic transition.

Elizabeth Prewitt, MA, Director, Office of Government Relations, National Association of MH Program Directors

Christine Michaels, MSHSA, Executive Director, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania

Lynn Keltz, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association

Anne Leisure, Director of Legislative Affairs, Pennsylvania Community Providers Association

Carol Horowitz, Esq., Managing Attorney, Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania

Ensure Your Voice is Heard: *Utilizing Effective Advocacy Strategies*

Participants will gain knowledge, awareness, insight and practical skills about personal advocacy efforts during this working session. All participants will receive an advocacy toolkit that provides helpful resources for how to be more effective in individual, systems and legislative advocacy efforts. One component of this workshop is the NAMI National Smarts & Hearts Advocacy Program, a step-by-step education process that trains people to build relationships with local elected officials and to succinctly and effectively share with these legislators their personal story and advocate for their cause. By utilizing effective advocacy strategies and NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania's customized advocacy toolkit, all participants leave better prepared to advocate for reforms in the mental health system.

Morgan Plant, principal owner, Morgan Plant and Associates
NAMI Smarts & Hearts Advocacy Tool Kit Review

Meet the Candidates: Gubernatorial Forum and Voter Registration Drive

Gubernatorial candidates from both political parties have been invited to this session to introduce themselves and to participate in a moderated forum. This open dialogue provides an opportunity for advocates to inform and educate our potential future government leaders on the issues that are most important to the mental health community in Southwestern Pennsylvania. These efforts are critical in Pennsylvania, where federal and state funding priorities are funneled into the counties for implementation.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world"

~Mahatma Gandhi