

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Awarded Seal of Excellence

Approved Under the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations' Standards for Excellence®

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania is proud to announce it has been awarded the Seal of Excellence by the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) for successfully completing the *Standards for Excellence* accreditation program. NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania earned The Seal of Excellence in January 2014 at the culmination of a rigorous months-long review process conducted by PANO and a team of independent peer reviewers. They evaluated all of the organization's operations, work and accomplishments and determined that NAMI demonstrated successful compliance in meeting the high standards set forth in PANO's *Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector*.

"The quality of our work matters, and we want to be excellent," says NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Executive Director Chris Michaels, MSHSA. "Pursuing the Seal of Excellence required us to examine our organization from the inside out, revealing how NAMI was built on a strong foundation and validating that our work is of the highest quality."

Of the approximately one million nonprofits operating today in the United States, only about 200 have earned the Seal. NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania is one of just 15 nonprofits in southwestern PA to have earned this distinction.

"The Seal of Excellence is granted to well-managed, responsibly governed organizations that are deserving of the public's trust," explains Patricia Mogan, *Standards for Excellence* Officer for PANO. Anne Gingerich, PANO's Executive Director, adds, "NAMI can focus even more fully on advancing its mission of improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness, as staff will be less likely to get bogged down in the issues that can arise due to faulty internal systems. The Seal of Excellence is truly one of the ways that organizations can better position themselves to reach their fullest potential."

"It has been very rewarding to work through this process to achieve the Seal of Excellence distinction," says Michaels. "The recognition has inspired our staff to a new level of motivation, and we hope that the accreditation will open new doors to us in the fundraising community. We also believe that the Seal shows that we are a worthy partner, and we look forward to establishing additional collaborative relationships with other organizations in our region who have similar missions."

NAMI staff accepted the Seal of Excellence award at a special event held at PANO in Harrisburg, PA on April 29.

PANO Standards for Excellence

Only organizations which demonstrate their compliance with the *Standards for Excellence* are given permission to use the Seal of Excellence.

- **The Seal of Excellence is a symbol for trust.** Organizations that display the Seal go beyond simply obeying the law and government regulation – they demonstrate their willingness to earn the public's trust.
- **The Seal of Excellence is a symbol of excellence in nonprofit management.** Organizations that display the Seal are guided by a well defined mission, have evaluation systems in place to measure the effectiveness of their programs and adhere to sound financial management policies.
- **The Seal of Excellence is a symbol of excellence in leadership.** Organizations that display the Seal are led by a volunteer Board of Directors that accepts responsibility to oversee the organization's mission, policies, programs, human and financial resources.
- **The Seal of Excellence is a symbol of openness and disclosure in nonprofits.** Organizations that display the Seal have information available to the public, provide truthful responsible stewardship of all donations and provide a voice for their constituents.

