



Newsletter



Alliance for the Mentally Ill - NAMI St. Louis
St. Louis' Voice on Mental Illness

Mental Illness Awareness Week Educational Highlights

“When Kids Get Sick with Bipolar Disorder”, a day long workshop for parents, teachers, and caregivers, is NAMI St. Louis’ contribution on Saturday, October 12 to the week’s activities.

Traditionally we have offered an annual When Kids Get Sick family skills workshop similar to the annual Living with Severe Mental Illness family skills workshop. This year the planning committee decided to focus the program on bipolar disorder (manic depressive illness) in children and adolescents.

The program will occur at the Holiday Inn Southwest Viking Conference Center, 10709 Watson Road, Sunset Hills. Registration, coffee and rolls begin at 8:30 a.m. with the program starting at 9:30 a.m. One of the nation’s outstanding researchers in childhood onset bipolar disorder, Barbara Geller, M.D. of Washington University School of Medicine, will address “New Advances in Bipolar Disorder Research in Children.” Another area child psychiatrist, Darrin S. Friesen, M.D., will discuss the “Difference Between Childhood Onset Bipolar Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.”

At lunch, families will get together to

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share their issues by topic coordinated by David Pollio, Ph.D., Washington University School of Social Work. To round out the afternoon, two workshop sessions, each with three concurrent breakouts, will be offered covering “Available Services and Resources, Making the IEP Work for Your Child”, a teen panel discussing “Living with Bipolar Disorder”, “Ask the Doctor, Treatments and Medications, and Therapies Beyond Medications.”

Registration fee is \$15 for families. Provider registration fee is \$35. Scholarships for families are available. Please register in advance by calling NAMI St. Louis office at 314/966-4670.

During Mental Illness Awareness Week, October 6 -12, there is an opportunity to see and discuss the recently finished documentary produced by Art Holliday of KSDK, Channel 5, ***Before They Fall Off the Cliff: A Documentary About Schizophrenia.***

The event will occur on Tuesday, October 8 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Eric P. Neuman Education Center, 320 No. Euclid, 63110. Response is required by September 30 to Barbara Anderson at 314/644-8243 or Ris. Schreiber at 314/953-6267.

Included in the evening will be the Mental Illness Awareness Coalition of Metropolitan St. Louis' Annual Reception and Award Ceremony.

The film chronicles Matthew McBride's story when in 1994 during an extreme exacerbation of his illness his hallucinations caused him to stab his

parents to death in order to prevent World War III. Prompted by this story, Missouri's involuntary commitment laws were changed. A heartwarming aspect of the film is the change that has occurred in Matthew as a result of the consistent treatment he receives at Fulton State Hospital. Mark McBride, a surviving sibling, and Art Holliday have created a must see documentary.

In addition the film will be shown at Webster University as part of the university's continuing film series in the Moore Auditorium, 470 E. Lockwood Avenue, Webster Groves, on the weekend of Friday, October 25 at 7 p.m., Saturday, October 26 at 5 p.m. (includes Town Hall Meeting), and Sunday, October 27 at 4 p.m.

Medication and Treatment

Recent Articles on Medications and Mental Illness

Report: Mental Health System Lacking

The U.S. mental health system is in crisis, unable to provide even the most basic services and supports to people with psychiatric disabilities, according to a federal report released September 16. The fundamental problem: emphasizing medicating people over fostering ways to help them lead productive lives.

The report by the National Council on Disability, a 15 member independent federal panel, provides an overview of the current state of public systems providing mental health services to children, adults and seniors. Expanding Medicaid eligibility and reimbursable services are the most significant steps that can be taken to improve the system, the panel said.

Mental health systems must develop the expertise to deliver not just medication and counseling, but housing, transportation and employment supports as well. "Public mental health systems must be driven by a value system that sees recovery as achievable and desirable for every person who has experienced mental illness," the report said. "Systems also must commit to serving the whole person, and not merely the most obvious symptoms."

The report recommends preventive services and supports such as counseling, peer support, respite care, supportive housing and job training as ways to improve a failing system. "The recommendations embrace mental health services and supports that transcend the purely pharmacological and medical supports," said Michael Allen, senior staff attorney at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health in Washington, D.C.

*By Siobhan McDonough
The Associated Press*

Maker of Celexa Launches New SSRI, Promising Same Effect at Smaller Dose

Lexapro (escitalopram oxalate), a new selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) hit U.S. pharmacies Sept. 5.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved the drug, manufactured by Forest Laboratories Inc., for treating major depressive disorder at a recommended dose of 10 milligrams (mg) daily. Forest Lab's current blockbuster SSRI, Celexa requires a 40 mg. dose to get the same effect, the company said.

Lexapro was formed by removing the isomer from Celexa that does not help alleviate depression. In clinical

trials, the most common side effects of Lexapro were nausea (15 percent), insomnia (9 percent), ejaculation disorder (9 percent), somnolence (6 percent), increased sweating (5 percent) and fatigue (5 percent).

The Role of Adult Siblings in the Support and Care of Relatives with Mental Illness

For many people with serious mental illness, relationships with siblings are the only close ties that persist throughout the life course. Siblings are especially important networks for those who are unmarried or childless. We know little, however, about the conditions under which siblings in their middle years will play supportive roles for brothers and sisters who need long term care. The friendships of those with serious mental illness are typically fragile and are mostly with other people with mental illness who are not stable or reliable sources of support. Thus for disabled populations, adult siblings may be the only possible sources for long-term informal support.

Unfortunately, only a few studies have been made about sibling relationships when there is mental illness in the family. Therefore, we are pleased to report a study by Alan Horwitz of Rutgers University in which he summarizes available literature and reports his own findings on factors that influence siblings to participate in supportive activities for a brother or sister with mental illness.

The available literature suggests that nearly all siblings express willingness to provide some social support to their relative if needed. Although many siblings report that they faced considerable disruption at some point in their lives due to mental illness in the family, almost all say they are willing to become involved in supportive activities. This indicates that tensions between siblings may diminish over time. At the same time, the symptoms of psychotic illness may become more benign in middle and later life thus easing relationships with siblings in the later years.

The central finding of Horwitz's study is the importance of reciprocity in creating bonds between siblings when one sibling has mental illness. Siblings are more willing to provide help to brothers and sisters who reciprocate through affection, gifts, chores and so forth.

(Continued on page 4)

NAMI St. Louis News

Multicultural Outreach Project News

The position for Director, Multicultural Outreach Project (MCOP) has been filled by Rhoda Stuart. She comes to us with twenty-plus years experience of helping/serving others, working in various service agencies and volunteering with community service oriented agencies such as, Women in Community Service, Networking to Enhance Women and Agape Ministries. "I have always wanted to help people to live the best life they can live. After hands-on involvement or direct-care with those suffering with mental illness and multiple extenuating issues, the desire has expanded from help to educate, empower and enlighten people to live the best life they can live," she stated. Ms. Stuart is presently pursuing a Master of Arts in Counseling to further enable her to serve the under-served portion of our community.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Kimberly Carter for her many years of hard work and dedication as Director of MCOP located in north St. Louis City. This fall, Kim has chosen to work on her doctoral program and will only be able to work part time as our Multicultural Outreach Assistant. We wish Kim well on her academic pursuits. *(You Go Girl!)* We look forward to her continued commitment to excellence and the NAMI St. Louis mission.

October, 2002, marks our first anniversary at the Prince Hall Family Support Center, located @ 4411 N. Newstead, Room 129. To celebrate our first anniversary, we will be participating in the Prince Hall Family Support Center's 9th Annual Community and Family Day on Saturday, October 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The theme will be Community Harvest. Festivities will begin with a parade at 9:00 a.m. located at Fairground Park (Fir and Kossuth). Everyone is invited to participate in this annual celebration which is designed to inform the St. Louis Metropolitan Area about the center and the services provided there.

Kay Rittenhouse Honored

NAMI St. Louis' own Kay Rittenhouse will be honored with the Mildred I Dunn Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding community service at a luncheon and open house on Thursday, October 10 at Places for People. Metropolitan St. Louis Psychiatric Center and Places for People annually honor community volunteers during Mental Illness Awareness Week. This year, however, paid staff are being honored for their outstanding work in the mental health community. Metropolitan St. Louis Psychiatric Center is honoring Kay for her successful work in establishing NAMI St. Louis' Family Support and Education Outreach Program at the facility. NAMI St. Louis is pleased to have one of its contracted staff so honored by others.

NARSAD Artworks

If you haven't received your annual NARSAD Artworks Holiday Greeting, Note Card and Gift Catalog with an order form from us, please call in to have one sent to you. We inadvertently excluded 1,150 addresses when we prepared the mailing that went out near the end of August. This year's catalog has a number of new cards and gifts which are simply delightful. Call 314/966-4670. After the United Way Campaign ends, October 31, we will send another mailing to those who were excluded.

Celebrating Beautiful Minds

Watch for your Celebrating Beautiful Minds Gala-Silent Auction invitation which will arrive in your mailbox shortly after November 1.

Volunteers Needed! HELPLine Associate

The HELPLine call is often a person's first contact with NAMI St. Louis. Many of us remember that first call. We need talented volunteers to fill out our HELPLine schedule.

Description: The volunteer responds to those calling or visiting the office, with support, information, and education.

Why? When someone contacts the NAMI St. Louis office they should be greeted by a human voice (or person) and they should receive help for their particular needs.

Where? NAMI St. Louis - Kirkwood Office

To arrange an interview call Christina Dougherty, Director of Volunteer Services @ 314/966-4670

Wish List for Prince Hall Office/Library

If you or someone you know would like to donate the following items, please call Rhoda Stuart @ 314/389-8100.

Easels, Mental Health Related Books, Fax Machine, File cabinets (1 tall, 1 short), Bookshelves (2 tall, 2 short), Magazine rack, Computer for internet access and Tape dispensers.

..... Thank you.

The Role of Adult Siblings

(continued from page 2)

These findings suggest that people with serious mental illness need to learn ways that they can do things for others as well as use their help. Parents need to help their family member play a part in strengthening bonds with siblings by contributing what he or she can to the relationship.

*By Agnes Hatfield, Director
NAMI Aging Caregiver Project
NAMI Prince Georges County member*

Budget Woes

Expect another budget shortfall for the state of Missouri. Recently the Governor's Budget office announced that revenues are under expectation so far this budget year 2003 which began July 1. It is anticipated that nearly \$500 million in spending by state departments will have to occur by late fall. This could be detrimental again for the Department of Mental Health, which manages the acute and long term hospital and community services for adults and children with mental illnesses and the Department of Social Services which manages the Medicaid programs that serve persons who are disabled and elderly.

Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD)

Effective July 1, 2002 there is a new Medicaid program for Workers with Disabilities who have a monthly gross income below \$1846.

How does it work?

- You must be determined to have a disability (either by Social Security or Division of Family Services)
- You must have some kind of earned income – with no minimum hours of work. (You could work as little as 1 hour each month)
- You must be between the ages of 16-64 and be a Missouri resident.
- Available resources (bank accounts, stocks, cash, etc.) must be below \$999.99. Up to \$100,000 of resources can be excluded if they are in a spouse's name.
- Gross income must not exceed \$1846/month for the individual. And up to \$8333.33/month of a spouse's income will be excluded.
- Persons with gross income between \$1108 and \$1846 per month must pay a monthly premium to obtain coverage. Premium amounts at the lowest are \$48 ranging to the maximum of \$123 per month.

How do I apply?

- Contact your area Division of Family Services office and request an application for Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities.
- Verify your income and resources.
- Verify your disability determination.
- Select your date of coverage (you can backdate eligibility 3 months from the time you apply, with earliest effective date of July 1, 2002).

Peer-To-Peer Consumer Education

NAMI St. Louis Peer-to-Peer Mentors (teachers) have just completed their third course of the successful Peer-To-Peer Consumer Education program. Consumers wishing to be considered for a future class, hopefully to start soon in order to conclude before the end of the year, should call the NAMI St. Louis office at 314/966-4670 and ask to be put on the waiting list. Participants will be interviewed by the mentors prior to class formation. More than 30 consumers have graduated from the three classes.

NAMI National Changes Colors

It's true! Instead of green & purple, they've changed to blue and gold. If you would like to see what the colors look like on their web-site go to www.nami.org. NAMI St. Louis will change it's colors when our supplies are depleted. Feel free to come by the office and pick up brochures to distribute to your Doctor, hospital or pharmacy.

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Secretary: Steve Wilhelm
Treasurer: Jeffrey Pass
Executive Director and Editor: Marge Parrish

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for persons with severe mental illness and for their families.

Join Us on
Friday, November 8, 2002

PJ's Martini & Wine Bar

Happy Hour 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

127 W. Jefferson

314/966-2001

free appetizers

then...

NAMI St. Louis Night at Christopher's

6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.

127 E. Argonne

Kirkwood, Missouri

314/909-0202

*For the home, For the body
Do your holiday gift shopping early and benefit
NAMI St. Louis, too!*

**(50% off on all Old World Christmas Holiday
Ornaments - this night only)**

**(10% of all purchases during this time
will be donated to NAMI St. Louis)**

**Free drawings, Refreshments, Free gift wrap
during this time only**

Why do we have a NAMI St. Louis Consumer Council

Mental Illnesses are
Brain Disorders.

Treatment Works!

Alliance for the Mentally Ill - NAMI St. Louis
supports those families who have a loved one
with severe mental illness.

Call 314/966-4670 for more information or
services.

VISIONQUEST! ??

- To interpret the Consumer viewpoint to NAMI.
- To interpret the NAMI viewpoint to the Consumer community.
- To strengthen NAMI by adding more power to NAMI's legislative voice and other programs.
- To create the benefits of effective cooperation between persons with mental illness and other family members.
- To provide opportunities for NAMI members to work with rather than simply for persons with mental illness.
- The name **VISIONQUEST!** was chosen because it means a journey for wellness and wholeness.

Peer-to-Peer Care Groups

It is important to have support. Feelings of isolation can be devastating. Sharing your experiences can lead to increased self esteem, self awareness and self confidence groups provide that great experience for learning new strategies for dealing with mental illness on a day to day basis. Watch for an upcoming C.A.R.E. group date.

Peer-to-Peer Speakers Bureau

The Bureau is not yet off the ground - but hopefully we will be ready for winter performances. Our first meeting is Wednesday, October 2. Some of the participants are experienced and some are not. So I can't say when we'll be ready for an audience

Peer-to-Peer Education

The Continuing Education Meetings are currently being planned by the NAMI St. Louis Consumer Council - **VISIONQUEST!** We hope to bring you interesting programs. We would appreciate your input on topics you would like to learn about or speakers you would recommend. Call the NAMI St. Louis office and give us your ideas.

Peer-to-Peer Holiday Party

A Holiday party is in the planning stage for Peer-to-Peer members. Candy, cookies, games and prizes will be part of the agenda. Watch your mail for more information

*All peer-to-peer information on this page was
submitted by Fran Scott.*

Governor Holden Announces Medicaid Changes to Help Protect Missourians from Federally Mandated Cutbacks

JEFFERSON CITY, 9/20/02 --Missouri Governor
Bob Holden today announced a comprehensive, statewide

approach to ease the transition of clients affected by the mandated change in the Medicaid spenddown program. This plan includes an increase in Medicaid income guidelines to 80 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), effective October 1, a change that will benefit approximately 25,000 people who would be hurt by the required cutbacks.

The spenddown program allows elderly, disabled and blind individuals, who would otherwise have too much income to qualify for Medicaid, to receive coverage once they have incurred enough medical expenses to reduce their income to the established Medicaid income guidelines.

“The federally mandated Medicaid changes would have caused a hardship for too many Missourians. This plan will help mitigate that hardship and protect as many as 25,000 citizens in need,” Holden said. “With the change, as many as 4,600 of the 25,000 will no longer have any spenddown payments to qualify for Medicaid coverage.” The federally mandated cutback is scheduled to go into effect Oct. 1.

“Through the cooperative efforts of the Department of Social Services, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Health and Senior Services, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education the state will be in a position to better meet the needs of those affected by this change,” Holden said.

In addition to raising the income eligibility for Medicaid to 80 percent of the FPL, the plan calls for covering the needs of several important groups:

- The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is committed to continuing to provide mental health services for the individuals it serves and will continue their current practice of providing services to spenddown clients who might otherwise require a higher level of care with general revenue and other funds until the individual becomes Medicaid eligible.

- The Department of Health and Senior Services-Division of Senior Services will use existing general revenue resources to continue to provide home and community-based services to their current spenddown clients meeting level of care requirements. An exception process has been established for cases in which there is an imminent danger of institutionalization, abuse or neglect.

- The Department of Health and Senior Services-STD/HIV Section will use existing general revenue resources to either directly provide crucial treatment services to, or to cover the spenddown amount for, current spenddown clients for the next several months, while continuing to evaluate long-term options with community partners.

The state will also make procedural changes that will ease the impact on clients and improve efficiency of the program. The state will:

- determine a client’s spenddown amount on a monthly, rather than a quarterly, basis;
- eliminate the quarterly reapplication process; and
- create a monthly “pay-in” option to assure continuous Medicaid coverage.

In addition, the recently created Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) opens a new type of eligibility to those formerly qualifying under spenddown. MAWD, authorized under the federal Ticket-to-Work legislation, allows disabled individuals ages 16 through 64, with higher total income level, to work without jeopardizing their eligibility for Medicaid. This new program already assists 657 individuals who would have been negatively affected by the new spenddown guidelines.

The average annual Medicaid cost of providing services for an elderly, disabled or blind individual in the community is \$4,000, compared to \$32,000 for nursing home care.

Clients who have additional questions about these changes should contact:

Department of Social Services:

Division of Family Services - Client Hotline 800-392-1261

Division of Med. Services - Recipient Services 800-392-2161

Dept. of Mental Health - Office of Consumer Affairs 800-364-9687

Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Ed. - Jeanne Loyd 573-536-7007

Department of Health and Senior Services:

Div. of Environmental Hlth & Communicable Diseases 573-751-4439

Division of Senior Services - Director’s Office 573-526-3626

TIPS

...If your child has depression, try to:

- i Involve your child in healthy activities.

- i Talk with your child often.

- i Give your child a balanced diet.

- i Be alert to stressful events that can trigger depression.
- i Observe your child's actions and reactions.
- i Be patient - and always loving.
- i Work with your child's school.
- i Follow the health-care provider's recommendations.
- i Educate yourself. (See page 1 for program information)

"An estimated one in ten children and adolescents in the United States suffers from a mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment. Fewer than one in five of these children receive treatment."

ABC's of Children's Mental Health

Children & Depression

With the start of the new school year, parents are faced with many difficult situations as they juggle multiple family responsibilities. Children have increased social interactions, more responsibility, and increased levels of stress. More so than ever, parents realize that keeping in touch with their children's health and emotional well-being is important. Unfortunately, many parents and guardians find it difficult to sort out more serious, long-term mental health issues from the normal range of emotions and mood swings of childhood. This is particularly true for "Childhood Depression."

Childhood Depression is a mental illness that alters a child's mood. Ten - fifteen percent of the child and adolescent population have some form of depression (Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, p. 151). The illness is more prevalent during early adolescence than in the early school years, with an estimated 5 % of young adults experiencing it in any given year. Depression in children is often marked by a persistent

sense of sadness or lack of energy. Other symptoms include feeling of hopelessness, lack of interest in favorite activities, irritability, restlessness, sleep problems, hostile/aggressive behavior, unexplained aches and pains, and suicidal thoughts. Parents might also note changes in their child's usual disposition, such as inability to accomplish tasks, fatigue, excessive weight gain or loss, less stringent hygiene, chronic crying, or withdrawal from social interactions. The symptoms are long term and may last for days, weeks, or months.

The cause of childhood depression is unknown, but scientists believe that the illness is due to a combination of environment, brain chemistry, and genetics. It is often triggered by such significant events as the death of a loved one, unexpected household changes, severe medical or learning disorders.

**One thing for sure: Childhood Depression is no one's fault...
Parents, Teachers or others are not to blame!
&
Treatment is Available
and Does Work!!**

Treatment options range from medications to therapies. The key is education. Families should learn as much as they can about the illness and seek support from others in similar situations. Parents and other adults in a child's life play a key role. They can make a big difference in helping a child enjoy a healthier, happier life.

If you suspect that your child has depression, seek help from a pediatrician, school counselor, religious leader, or mental health professional. If your child talks about suicide or is exhibiting suicidal behavior, get help immediately!!

For more information please call NAMI St. Louis HELPLINE at (314) 966-4670.