WE WANT TO WELCOME OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DR. KENT REYNOLDS, AND HIS WIFE, SANDRA, TO TEXAS!

NAMI Texas is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Kent Reynolds as Executive Director effective on May 6.

Dr. Reynolds graduated with honors in Sociology with a minor in Psychology from Lakeland College (Sheboygan, Wisconsin). He earned a Master of Theology degree with honors from Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia), and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, Kentucky). His doctoral research focused on Cross-Cultural Education and Leadership Development.

Dr. Reynolds has a long history of working with mental health advocacy. He served with various Area Councils of the Mental Health Association (MHA) and then at the city and state levels in Georgia as President of MHA of Metropolitan Atlanta and a member of the State Board. A proven community leader, he has served on numerous boards and agencies devoted to government services, police, public housing, and community development. He has served on United Way boards, been active in Lions and Kiwanis, developed services for the homeless, and coordinated a comprehensive program of strategic community revitalization. He has developed and conducted numerous international programs for aid, development, education, and economic empowerment. He brings a strong commitment to diversity, having worked in many parts of the world with a vast array of population groups.

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NAMI Texas Welcomes New Executive Director:

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Dr. Reynolds brings over thirty years of experience in non-profit senior executive leadership. His expertise is in leadership development and organizational transformation. He joins NAMI Texas as Executive Director to continue the mission of improving the quality of life of all individuals living with mental illness and their families. Kent comments, “I am excited and honored to be able to participate in the NAMI mission and to continue its great legacy of advocacy, education, and support for all people affected by mental illness. I believe it is a critical time to be a part of this vital initiative. Mental illness affects more people than is generally known and it is important that people no longer have to bear the brunt of the stigma attached to the disease and to suffer in silence. It is imperative that we meet this challenge with understanding, compassion, the resolve to make services readily available, and the commitment to find more effective treatment.”

Andrea Hazlitt, NAMI Texas Board President, stated, “Dr. Reynolds’ wealth of experience and knowledge makes him a key addition to NAMI Texas. We are very fortunate to find someone of Kent’s caliber for this position. I am confident that he will provide the strategic leadership essential to increasing the effectiveness and impact of NAMI Texas services to our members and all Texans.”

Learn more about the 2013 NAMIWalks at www.namiwalks.org.

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EDITOR’S NOTE:
We apologize for the following errors in the March 2013 NAMI Texas Newsletter

Houston Chronicle story, “Mom Know First Hand About Child’s Mental Illness:
Mental Health First Aid came from the The National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, not the National Council on Disability.

Capitol Day Rally Pictures:
The following picture caption should read, “Kayla Byrd, advocate for Prosumers.”
NAMI Texas Public Policy Update: 83rd Legislative Session

By Greg Hansch, NAMI Texas Public Policy Coordinator

The 83rd session of the Texas Legislature is nearing its final days and NAMI Texas is hard at work on our public policy goals. Legislative progress has been made in certain areas and we’re optimistic that we’ll see some of our top priorities written into law. We deeply appreciate the efforts of our affiliate, advocacy leads, members, friends, and partners during this session. As the session moves forward, we look forward to continue to work with you to improve the quality of life for individuals and family members affected by mental illness.

Legislative Priorities

Assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) is a top priority for NAMI Texas and we’re very pleased to report that our AOT bill was passed unanimously by the Senate on April 18th. The bill would result in the wider usage of AOT in courts across the state and would permit judges to order but not compel outpatient treatment. We hope to either see the House pass the Senate version or the House Public Health Committee vote out the companion bill, HB 2212.

Our bill related to mental health information disclosures – HB 868 – was reported favorably by the House Human Services Committee and currently sits on the Local and Consent Calendar. This bill would improve care coordination across systems and make services more family friendly. The compassion bill – SB 1755 – currently sits in the Senate Health & Human Services Committee.

We are very pleased that HB 1023, a bill that would create a task force to study mental health workforce shortages, was passed unanimously by the House on April 25th.

A bill (HB 1032) that would create a standard request form for the prior authorization of prescription drug benefits was reported favorably by the House Insurance Committee. NAMI Texas supports this bill and testified for it. The companion bill (SB 644) was heard in the Senate State Affairs Committee on April 25th.

A bill that would create a standard form of notification for the detention of a person with a mental illness was passed by the House on April 14th and subsequently referred to the Senate Health & Human Services Committee.

HB 1191 would require the Texas Information and Referral website to develop a special section of their website about housing for persons with mental illness. It was passed by the House on April 25th.

SB 126 (relating to the creation of a mental health and substance abuse public reporting system) was passed by the Senate on March 13th and referred to the House Public Health Committee.

SB 250 would improve telemedicine services in our state. It was passed by the Senate on March 21st and referred to the House Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee.

A bill relating to the training of educators on mental health (SB 955) was passed by the Senate on April 18th.

SB 1842 would improve registered nurse involvement in evaluations following restraint and seclusion. It would result in better outcomes for individuals with mental illness and was placed on the intent calendar for April 29th.

Administrative segregation (solitary confinement) has a detrimental impact on those with mental illness and is related to the emergence of mental health problems. SB 1003 would require the state to hire an independent entity to study the issue and make recommendations for reducing the usage of it. NAMI Texas testified in support of it and it was reported favorably by the Senate Criminal Justice Committee and placed on the intent calendar.

Proposed 2014 – 2015 Mental Health Budgets

*Special thanks to Katherine Ligon of the Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) for this mental health budget analysis.

Both the Senate and House versions of the budget propose to allocate approximately $2.6 billion in General Revenue for mental health and substance abuse

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services, which is just over a 14 percent increase over the 2012-2013 funding. The proposed budget includes almost $2.4 billion for the Department of State Health.

Services (DSHS) base budget, which covers the current population receiving services, as well as $228 million in proposed new funding to expand mental health services and programs.

The House and Senate included 23 budget DSHS Riders that direct funds to specific programs. Twenty of the riders in each version are identical, which focus on initiatives related to data collection and reporting, jail-based programs, services directed through federal waivers, 10-year state hospital plan, and specialized mental health program for Veterans. Additionally, both versions of the HHSC budget include Riders for Graduate Medical Education and Medicaid substance abuse treatment services.

Three Senate Riders, not included in the House version, direct funds for home and community-based services (Rider 87; including a 1915 (i) plan created by the Affordable Care Act), prevention and early identification services for children (Rider 84), and a report related to the staffing issues within the state hospitals (e.g.) turnover rates. On the other hand, three House Riders direct funds for a public/private collaborative initiative (Rider 88), to increase NorthSTAR services (Rider 84), and to add 6 inpatient beds at Harris County Psychiatric Center (Rider 81).

In addition to the base budget, the agency requested supplementary funds for specific initiatives. Both budgets allocate $57.2 million to eliminate the current wait lists for community mental health services by serving an additional 6,500 adults and children per year. The agency proposes to increase substance abuse services to an additional 948 individuals per year, and to increase the provider reimbursement rates. A new substance abuse initiative will allocate 6,000 slots for services to parents involved with DFPS, which will promote family reunification. Additionally, both the Senate and House budgets direct $23.2 million to housing services and assistance for individuals who are homeless (or at-risk for homelessness), as well as residential treatment services for parents involved with DFPS.

The prioritization of policy initiatives and funding to address mental health and substance abuse this session is unprecedented. At the beginning of session, legislators made it clear that they did not want to simply allocate more money to the existing mental health system, but instead wanted to target investments to deliver improved results. The goal of the additional money is to target the full spectrum of needs, from prevention, to outpatient services, to crisis services, and inpatient services.

In 2010, the national average for state spending on mental health services was $121 per capita; however, Texas spent almost $39 – ranked 49th. What is particularly disconcerting is not that we are not among the very top spenders, but that Texas is so far below the average per capita expenditure. The $2.6 billion in the proposed budgets will likely improve our per capita spending ranking. In addition to the unprecedented funds, legislators have filed more than 300 mental health-related bills – updating the mental health code, increasing access to services, creating school-based mental health initiatives, etc. – which strengthen the budget items by providing structure and direction. However, in order to continue the momentum of increased funding next session, thoughtful and detailed planning of services will be required. This means the state will need to establish meaningful goals and objectives that will produce noteworthy outcomes.

For more information, visit our NAMI Texas Public Policy blog, at www.namitexaspolicy.wordpress.com.

The Power of Peer-to-Peer
By Rose McCorkle, NAMI Texas At-Large Director and Peer-to-Peer State Trainer/Mentor

One of the most unique and powerful aspects of NAMI’s education programs is the inclusion of the perspective of “lived experience”. In this sense, all of the classes could be considered “peer programs,” but only one carries the name Peer-to-Peer. This class is the foundation of the signature programs for persons living with mental illnesses.

What’s the value of teaching this class in your Affiliate? I spoke to, Katherina Munoz, a recent graduate of Peer-to-Peer, to get her perspective on how she felt about the class. This summary of our conversation will help you understand the potential impact of this important program.

Katherina had many positive remarks about her mentors. “Because they were my peers, I felt comfortable with them and other members of the class. There was a feeling that I was not alone and that illness can happen at any age.” Katherina mentioned that these things were reassuring. In that environment she felt safe to take risks, knowing that there would be “no criticism or hatred.”

In the span of this ten-week class, Katherina learned specific strategies to help her be more positive, self-aware and to have more self-control. “The relapse prevention grid helps me maintain and cope on a day-to-day basis,” she said. During a recent relapse Katherina used the grid to identify strategies that helped to speed her recovery.

Katherina mentioned that the information on medication and brain functioning has been helpful too. “I took information from my Peer-to-Peer notebook to my doctor’s visit and was able to discuss my medicines and their side effects to take more control of my treatment plan.”

Another thing that Katherina enjoyed was the mindfulness exercise at the end of each session, specifically the candle ceremony in the final class. “Everyone held a candle and shared what they had learned from the class. I realized how united and bonded we had become.” Katherina summarized that as a result of the class she was “more confident, more open, and insightful,” and she has been able to maintain a consistent everyday lifestyle.

When I asked Katherina what she would recommend to others interested in taking the class she hardly replied, “Go for it! It doesn’t matter your age or what mental illness you have; the class is great!”

Katherina also highly recommended that family members take Family-to-Family, explaining that her husband had taken it at the same time as she took her class. “It made a big difference in how we communicate about the illness and how we cope with it.”

This is just one example of the power of NAMI’s education programs. Encourage your Affiliate to take Katherina’s advice on offering more Peer-to-Peer classes: “Go for it!”

Quotes from a recent NAMI Austin training:
Peer-to-Peer has helped me “heal (and) grow, freeing my personal life.”

(With) "this reminder of education and support, I can leap mountains of recovery."

"Discussing mental illness, with its accompanying symptoms, has helped decrease the stigma and shame."

“This class got me to feel better, accepting my illness. (I’m) being a better me.”

“Listening to others makes me stronger …on my path of recovery.”
Mental Health Month: May 1-31, 2013
Pathways to Wellness: Leading Full and Productive Lives

Wellness — it’s essential to living a full and productive life. We may have different ideas about what wellness means, but it involves a set of skills and strategies that prevent the onset or shorten the duration of illness and promote recovery and well-being. It’s about keeping healthy as well as getting healthy.

Pathways to Wellness, this year’s theme of May is Mental Health Month, calls attention to strategies and approaches that help all Americans achieve wellness and good mental and overall health.

Wellness is more than an absence of disease. It involves complete general, mental and social well-being. And mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. The fact is our overall well-being is tied to the balance that exists between our emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health.

Whatever our situation, we are all at risk of stress given the demands of daily life and the challenges it brings—at home, at work and in life. Steps that build and maintain well-being and help us all achieve wellness involve a balanced diet, regular exercise, enough sleep, a sense of self-worth, development of coping skills that promote resiliency, emotional awareness, and connections to family, friends and the community.

These steps should be complemented by taking stock of one’s well-being through regular mental health checkups. Just as we check our blood pressure and get cancer screenings, it’s a good idea to take periodic reading of our emotional well-being. One recent study said everyone should get their mental health checked as often as they get a physical, and many doctors routinely screen for mental health, which typically include a series of questions about lifestyle, eating and drinking habits and mental wellness. But a checkup doesn’t necessarily require a special trip to the doctor. There are also online screening tools you can use. While conditions like depression are common—roughly 1 in 5 Americans have a mental health condition—they are extremely treatable.

Fully embracing the concept of wellness not only improves health in the mind, body and spirit, but also maximizes one’s potential to lead a full and productive life. Using strategies that promote resiliency and strengthen mental health and prevent mental health and substance use conditions lead to improved general health and a healthier society: greater academic achievement by our children, a more productive economy, and families that stay together.

For more information on what your NAMI Texas Affiliate is doing for Mental Health Month, please go to www.namitexas.org/affiliates.
Please Join Us at the NAMI Texas Networking Reception!

In place of the annual NAMI Texas Conference this year, our Board of Directors will host a special NAMI Texas Networking Reception during the NAMI National Convention in San Antonio. As a valued member, you are invited to this event, which takes place on Friday, June 28th.

At the reception you will have the opportunity to network with colleagues across Texas, meet the new NAMI Texas Executive Director and the Board, and attend the NAMI Texas Annual Awards presentation.

Refreshments will be served and a cash bar will be made available. This is an invitation only event, so please RSVP to kjeschke@namitexas.org if you plan to attend.

Remember to also register for the NAMI Convention before May 31st to take advantage of the Early Bird discount.

For more information, including registration, go to www.nami.org/convention.

Young Adult Track at the 2013 NAMI Convention

This year, NAMI will be offering the first-ever young adult track as part of the 2013 NAMI National Convention. This powerful track for young adults only will equip you with the skills you need to make a difference in your community, in the lives of your peers and in your own life. You will get engaged with the mental health movement by connecting with other young adults and working together to drive social change.

If you are a young adult between the ages of 18 and 30, the young adult track is for you! We hope you take advantage of these unique sessions and activities exclusively for young adults. If you plan to attend, please email Dana Crudo, Child and Adolescent Action Center Program Manager, at danac@nami.org for more information. When you register, at www.nami.org/convention, be sure to choose the “Young Adult (18-29)” registration type when you register for the convention to receive a registration discount!

The Young Adult Track sessions include:

- **Thursday, June 27:** Movie Night for Young Adults
- **Friday, June 28:** Welcome and Orientation for Young Adults; “It’s Complicated:” Building Healthy Relationships; and Young Adult Social Hour
- **Saturday, June 29:** Get Involved with NAMI on Campus; Know Your Rights in School and at Work; and Young Adult Creative Project
- **Sunday, June 30:** Brain 101: How Our Minds Work; Think Positive: The 21-Day Challenge for Young Adults; The Power of Your Personal Story
Do You "Like" NAMI Texas? Please Follow Us on Facebook and Twitter!

Want to stay in the know when it comes to the latest in mental health news? Or, would you like to receive periodic updates on NAMI events?

Then, "Like" our NAMI Texas Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/namitexas](http://www.facebook.com/namitexas), and follow us on Twitter at [https://twitter.com/NAMITexas](https://twitter.com/NAMITexas).

Thanks to all of our fans! We’ve nearly hit our goal for the year and appreciate you sharing our info with your family, friends and colleagues.

Thank you to our NAMI Texas Corporate Partners!
NAMI Texas Mission:
NAMI Texas is dedicated to improving the quality of life of all individuals living with mental illness and their families.

Memberships:
To become a member of NAMI, please contact your local affiliate at www.nami.org/local.

Donations:
To make donations to NAMI Texas, please visit www.namitexas.org, or call us at 1-800-633-3760.

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KELLY JESCHKE, Office Manager & Membership Coordinator
PATI HAYNES, Education Director
ALEXIS WADSWORTH, Communications Director
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