Your News from NAMI Texas - March 2018

In the News - Public Policy

NAMI Texas is easily one of the most active, visible, and engaged organizations working in support of mental health reform in Texas. Day in and day out, NAMI Texas is leading meetings, delivering presentations, and engaging in critical discussions. Here are a few recent examples: in February, NAMI Texas met with the director and the clerk of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services to share our idea of passing legislation that would make mental health services more family-friendly. By getting in the door early, we have a greater chance of securing a high-quality bill and author for the 2019 legislative session. Last month we also, for the first time, chaired a meeting of the HHSC Mental Health Condition and Substance Use Disorder Parity Workgroup, which is tasked with developing a strategic plan to serve as a roadmap to increasing the state’s mental health parity compliance, education, and outreach. NAMI Texas has also done several recent public policy presentations, including one at the NAMI Dallas monthly meeting in March and another one to the staff of a great organization called It’s Time Texas.

In the aftermath of the March 6th primary election, interim hearings and other activity at the Capitol are heating up. The week of March 22, the Senate Committee on Finance will have a hearing on funding for mental health services – this is an important opportunity for advocates to share their perspectives on the value and important of appropriate funding. On March 26th, NAMI Texas will provide invited testimony to the House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence, sharing our insights on the intersection between mental illness and the criminal justice system. Various other hearings this month will covered Medicaid Managed Care, funding for psychiatric hospitals, substance use disorder, and foster care. NAMI Texas encourages our members to review the hearing notices on Texas Legislature Online and share with us any input that we can carry forward for you at the Capitol. For advocacy alerts straight from the source, email publicpolicy.director@namitexas.org and we’ll add you to the list.
In the News - Education and Programs

Way to go NAMI Texas Affiliates. The NAMI Family & Friends pilot was a great success here in Texas, and NAMI could not have successfully piloted the NAMI Family & Friends seminar and the NAMI Portal without the hard work of our Affiliates!

- 18 NAMI Texas Affiliates were involved in the pilot
- 89 F2F, Basics or Homefront teachers became certified to teach F&F
- NAMI Texas Affiliates held a total of 37 F&F seminars
- 607 individuals registered for a F&F seminar using the portal
- 376 individuals attended a F&F seminar
- 135 individuals completed the evaluation after the F&F seminar;
- NAMI Texas held F&F seminars in 3 Affiliates that did not have F&F teachers
- Affiliates continue to schedule F&F seminars, even thought he pilot is over

NAMI Family & Friends is a 4-hour seminar that informs and supports people who have loved ones with a mental health condition. Participants learn about diagnoses, treatment, recovery, communication strategies, crisis preparation and NAMI resources. NAMI Texas Affiliates offer NAMI Family & Friends so people can gain more immediate education and support until a Family-To-Family, Basics or Homefront class is available. It is not a replacement for other NAMI programs.

For more information, contact Patti Haynes, NAMI Texas Program Director, at education.director@namitexas.org

In the News - You DO Have a Heart for Mental Health!

In February, NAMI Texas launched the Have a Heart for Mental Health campaign. Our donors made contributions to show support for our mission, and all contributions for our February campaign were given in honor of someone either directly or indirectly affected by mental illness. We created special cards that we sent out notifying people that donations to NAMI Texas were made in their honor.

All charitable contributions to NAMI Texas go towards improving the quality of life of all individuals living with mental health conditions and their families, friends, and support systems. Thank you to everyone who participated in our February campaign!

Donations in honor and in memory of those you care about are always welcome and appreciated. Please consider making a gift today!
In the News - Peer Policy

"My 2 year fellowship with NAMI Texas will soon come to an end and it has been extraordinary. While I have been fortunate to work all my adult life, I rarely have found a place like NAMI where I can bring my whole self to work. My mentor Greg Hansch who is our Policy Director has done a remarkable job in guiding me through the world of Policy. Greg is my boss and mentor, he is also my friend and champion. I can admit that a new assignment is one that I do not feel ready for. Instead of judgment, Greg will tell me it is okay and then gently nudge me by asking what I need to move forward and how can he help. He takes me to important meetings at the capitol and takes the time to debrief with me and ask if I have any questions. He could teach others how to help a Peer excel.

My work is measured by outcomes and not how I get there. Being in recovery with behavioral health challenges does not mean I do not have days that I struggle. Without my permission, my brain may sometimes be in a fog or my emotions are stuck in sadness. I do my best to push through it because no matter where I am at as long as I am trying my best I am treated with dignity and compassion.

Once during session I called Greg in tears and shared I could not walk into the capitol. He met me at my car and I explained that there was not a reason I could identify for my distress. He told me how much he appreciated my work and talked about all the things we had accomplished. He also stated that it did not matter that I could not show up that day. He encouraged me to work from home. Over the last 2 years I am glad that those episodes did not happen often. Wouldn’t it be great if everyone could be treated with understanding?

NAMI Texas has helped me develop my voice to be a part of moving behavioral health forward. Because of this organization, I now can build on the foundation that they have provided to bring my gifts to the table. I will forever be grateful for that." Deborah Rosales-Elkins

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