



General Meeting

July is the NAMISLOCO Picnic Month. The Picnic starts at 5:30 PM on Tuesday July 26th and runs till dusk. We will meet in the Arroyo area of Cuesta Park in San Luis Obispo. Attendees should bring a salad for six people — NAMI SLOCO provides chicken, drinks, desserts, tableware, plates and most of all friendship. There will not be a facilitated, family support group this month because of the picnic.

From NAMI California Website

Front Line Ramps Up In The San Gabriel Valley

New Pasadena program offers hope to vets and their families

From The Pasadena Star News by Janette Williams, June 25, 2011

As the U.S. begins troop draw-downs in Iraq and Afghanistan this summer, and longed-for homecomings happen for more area military families, one local mental health group is taking a clear-eyed look at the challenges they can face.

"Front Line," a new program from the Pasadena-based San Gabriel Valley NAMI - National Alliance for Mental Illness - is now offering free care, resources and advocacy to families whose veterans show signs of mental illness.

"It's geared to those who are not suffering (mental illness) but want to understand and develop skills and tools to help people they care about," said Mary Ann Schemdin, president of the all-volunteer SGV-NAMI.

"As we know, mental illness affects everyone in the environment," she said. "Families, girlfriends, boyfriends, someone's best friend from childhood they're still close to."

Schemdin cited First Lady Michelle Obama's advocacy for returning veterans, and said the need will only grow.

"If we can help the vets coming back and understand them, and channel support and get them on the right pathway, they will have much, much heightened quality of life than they would if they're abandoned," she said. "That's what we're trying to do."

Schemdin said she got a first-hand account of what returning vets face during a three-hour lay-over in Chicago last fall.

She got into conversation with a young man, a veteran of several tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, on medication for PTSD, who opened up to her on the challenges returning

Year at a Glance

January thru June: General Mtg, 4th Tuesday of the month

May: Walkathon May 21, Forum May 26th, **No Gen. Meeting**

July: Annual Picnic, no General Meeting

August: Summer Vacation: no meeting, newsletter or support group

September: General Meeting 4th Tuesday of the month

October: BMW Walk Oct. 1st. Mental Illness Awareness Event: 4th Tuesday

November: General Meeting 4th Tuesday of the month

December: Holiday Party: no Gen. Mtg.

vets face in trying to create a "normal life."

It made her realize how deep the need was for such an effort, Schemdin said.

"This support group is for anyone," she said. "We have daughters of women who served who experience PTSD and don't know how to cope with their mothers' erratic behavior, paranoia, jumping when they hear loud noises - things ordinary people do not necessarily experience."

Former Sgt. First Class Denita Hartfield said she has experienced all of that, and found help at NAMI's Front Line program in Kern County.

The 36-year-old veteran said she joined the military in 1992, and returned in 2007 to her home in Bakersfield a different person.

Friends and family, concerned about her nightmares, "hyper vigilance" and other symptoms of PTSD, looked for help on-line and found Front Line, she said.

"Family members are readily able to identify symptoms you don't recognize in yourself ... things you weren't able to talk about," said Hartfield, who is "doing fine" and now counsels others in the program.

"We see mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, even some cases sons and daughters, who say 'My veteran hasn't slept in three days,'" she said. "We're the last people who will see it in ourselves."

(Continued from page 1)

The all-volunteer NAMI group in Pasadena is part of a "spectacular organization" of 30 years with about 300,000 members, said Alex Kopelowicz, associate professor of psychiatry at UCLA and a recent guest speaker for the local branch.

"It's by far the largest, most powerful advocacy group for the mentally ill in this country," Kopelowicz said.

Their group programs offer "caring and hearing," he said, and a chance to share the day-to-day experience of living with a mentally ill family member.

The Front Line program is a "natural outgrowth" for the group, he said.

SGV NAMI, which operates its program's \$35,000 annual budget, is offering Front Line on the first and third Tuesday of the month.

For more information, go to sgvnami.org, call 626-664-0779 or the NAMI office at 626-577-6697 for the current program location.

From Treatment Advocacy Website

Mental health spending creating haves and have-nots

By Karen de Sá

kdesa@mercurynews.com

Posted: 06/26/2011 12:12:14 AM PDT

Updated: 06/26/2011 08:28:36 AM PDT

Seven years after voters approved a new tax to fund services for people with mental illness, California has slashed so much money from mental health departments that it now leads the nation in such cuts.

Counties have laid off psychiatrists, reduced hospital bed space and shut down mental health clinics.

And the \$7.4 billion generated by the mental health tax?

Much of it has gone to a cottage industry of consultants earning up to \$200 an hour, as well as a host of new programs that in many cases are only loosely linked to prevention, treatment and recovery.

The Bay Area News Group examined spending to date under the Mental Health Services Act of 2004, after reporting in May concerns expressed by the chairman and former chairwoman of a Santa Clara County watchdog group. They charged that local spending under the act has resulted in frivolous programs and enriched private contractors at the expense of people desperately in need of care.

The newspaper group found problems are evident statewide, despite years of warnings from a high-level whistle-blower and other mental health authorities.

"The state of California clearly did not comply with the law and they did not keep and honor the contract with the voters," said Rose King, co-author of the Mental Health Services Act, which

Many Thanks to the Community Counseling Center for a very informative meeting and discussion in June.

The July Family to Family class has been canceled.
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appeared on the November 2004 ballot as Proposition 63. "It's a corruption of purpose, and it's a boondoggle for consultants and entrepreneurs at the expense of core services."

Designed to create new county programs and expand existing ones, the act veered off course after the state Department of Mental Health piled on burdensome and unnecessary guidelines, according to county directors who oversee the spending. **Going beyond the language of Proposition 63, the funds were restricted so they could not be used to enhance state and county-funded services that were later gutted by the economic downturn.** That created an odd predicament: County mental health budgets were devastated on one side of the ledger, while on the other they were flush with money for use only on new clients in new programs.

State mental health officials did not respond to repeated requests to explain the regulations. But in a 2007 letter to King, the state's former mental health director, Stephen Mayberg, explained that the department sought to first serve mentally ill people who were homeless and cycling through jails and emergency rooms -- essentially those who were outside the system.

Two-tier system

When California's crippling recession and accompanying budget cuts hit, the result was two tiers of care -- "a Cadillac system for selected new clients, and a dysfunctional, deteriorating system for those already inappropriately served," said King, a former legislative staffer and adviser to the state attorney general. "Why do counties need to recruit new clients when they need to look no further than their clinic waiting rooms?"

In the past two years, \$587.4 million has been cut from state mental health spending -- a 16.3 percent reduction, the National Alliance on Mental Illness reported in March. The number of people served by that spending in California dropped from 658,314 in 2007 to 442,691 last year. The additional Proposition 63 money generated by a tax on incomes above \$1 million -- an annual average of \$1 billion -- has gone to county-specific plans.

But the flourishing-on-one-side, broke-on-the-other condition of county mental health departments has created some curious scenarios:

- In Santa Clara County, patients released from acute-care hospital beds wait a month for follow-up appointments because of budget cuts. Meanwhile, so much time was spent planning how to use Proposition 63 prevention funds that a three-year deadline arrived with no programs launched. As a result, the county nearly had to return \$8.2 million to the state.
- Contra Costa County shut two residential centers for disturbed juveniles, an adult outpatient clinic and a hospital

(Continued on page 3)

The NAMI SLOCO executive board meets from 11:30 - 1:30 on the second Friday of the month at The Boysdon Room, Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church, SLO.

It may be time to renew your NAMISLOCO Membership. Check the date on the newsletter mailing label. Please fill out the form on page three and send it in with your dues. Your funds support NAMISLOCO activities. Thank you for your past support.

Volunteers Needed
Marcia Bess needs happy upbeat volunteers to help with the Beautiful Minds Walk this year.
Call Marcia at 805-481-4847

NAMI SLOCO Officers

Lisa Kelley, President788-0869
 Darryl Elliott, Vice-president.....594-1056
 Pam Zweifel, Secretary543-1825
 Nancy Griffin, Treasurer.....543-9399

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 Roger Gambs, Newsletter,Peer-to-Peer461-6590
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 Carole Wallace, NAMI Basics Coordinator.....
 Lisa Kelley, NAMI Basics Coordinator.....788-0869

(Continued from page 2) Have and Have Nots

psychiatric unit. But the county managed to launch a "Hip-Hop Car Wash" for juvenile offenders in need of independent living skills.

- San Francisco has laid off psychiatrists in its general hospital and cut acute psychiatric beds from 87 to 21. Yet it spent \$294,000 on peer-led support teams for people who hoard and clutter.

In a whistle-blower complaint submitted to the state auditor in November 2009 -- and five months later to the Legislature -- King called Proposition 63 a noble cause gone awry.

The concerns of King and others about "two-tier" spending were echoed in a 2008 Department of Finance report, and just last year by the California Mental Health Directors Association, which called for a moratorium on the "unnecessary" state regulations that "significantly deviated" from what voters enacted in 2004.

Prop. 63's promise

Defenders of Proposition 63 acknowledge the problems to date. But they point instead to the act's promise of overhauling traditional approaches to mental health care.

"Proposition 63 is helping thousands of people who would otherwise have nothing in a grossly underfunded system," said Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, the architect of the Mental Health Services Act.

Steinberg agreed that "the core system is falling apart," but added,

"That's not Proposition 63's fault. What would the mental health system look like without Proposition 63? There would be nothing, virtually nothing."

Steinberg pointed to roughly 25,000 Californians who have received an array of services tailored to their needs, as reliance on forced hospitalizations and institutional care gives way to more long-lasting, community-based options. In Los Angeles and San Diego, according to regional studies, clients in these "full-service partnerships" have spent less time hospitalized, homeless and in jail.

But many mental health experts -- and Steinberg himself -- agree that the act got off to a bad start.

That's due in large part to the state's interpretation of the law -- and the requirement that counties create six plans, with six sets of guidelines and six lengthy processes for each county to gather comments from concerned parties.

"You're in a situation where you're losing revenue and other resources, and you can't use the other money to bail it out," said Stephen Kaplan, interim director for San Mateo County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services. "It's a challenging balancing act to do both at the same time."

"Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781.

NAMI 2011 Membership (membership in NAMI SLO CO also includes membership in NAMI Cal. & NAMI Nat'l.)

National Alliance on Mental Illness
 San Luis Obispo County

NAMI SLO CO is a charitable, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization affiliated with the NAMI California and NAMI National.

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**SLO Co. Mental Illness Referrals, Contacts, Locations – NAMI & T-MHA Programs:
Programs for the mentally ill and their families, education for the public**

1. EDUCATIONAL, SUPPORT, WELLNESS AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES

NAMI Hearts and Minds – A Roadmap to Wellness for Individuals Living with Mental Illness: Meets on 4th Tuesday every month (except Jul. Aug. Dec), 5:30-6:45 PM at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (Pismo and Nipomo streets, SLO) Call Lisa @ 788-0869 or lisakelley2929@gmail.com.

NAMI Peer-to-Peer Education Class (9 week education class for people living with mental illnesses). Call Betty McGraw, T-MHA @ 540-6578 or bmcgraw@t-mha.org

Dual Recovery Anonymous: 452 Higuera St., SLO, 2:30-3:30 Friday. 8600 Atascadero Ave. Atascadero, 2:30-3:30 Thursday 203 ½ Bridge St. Arroyo Grande, 2:30-3:30 pm, Tuesday

WRAP - Group Wellness and Recovery Action Plan: T-MHA, 784 High Street, SLO, call 540-6578 for dates/times

Women's Support Group: There are no classes/meetings now.

Peer Support: Call Betty McGraw, T-MHA @ 540-6578 or bmcgraw@t-mha.org; 5395 El Camino Real B, Atascadero, Fri. 9:30-11:00 AM, 452 Higuera St. SLO, 12:30-2:00 PM, Wednesday

Mental Health Advocates: Call John Byers, T-MHA @ 440-5026 (c), 540-6580 or jbyers@t-mha.org. Or call Betty McGraw, T-MHA @ 440-9118 (c), 540-6578 or bmcgraw@t-mha.org

PEP Drop-In Center: 8-4 ,M-F, 5395 El Camino Real B, Atascadero, Call Karen Kusworth, T-MHA @ 464-0512, 540-6583 or kcusworth@t-mha.org

Peer Advisory & Advocacy Team: Call Jessica Vieira, T-MHA, 540-6579 or jvieira@t-mha.org

2. EDUCATIONAL & SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES

NAMI SLOCO, MEETINGS/PROGRAMS: 4th Tuesday every month (except Jul. Aug. Dec); Program: 7:00 PM in the multi-purpose room at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (Pismo and Nipomo streets, San Luis Obispo, CA.) Follow signs from parking lot off Pismo Street

NAMI SLOCO, Family Support Groups: (A) 3rd Monday of every month, 6:30-8:00 PM, at the T-MHA MHSA Support Center, 5395 "B" El Camino Real, Atascadero. Call James or Diane @ 461-1286 for more information. (B) 4th Tuesday every month (except Jul. Aug. Dec), 5:30-6:45 PM in the multi-purpose room at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (Pismo and Nipomo streets, SLO) Call Joe or Madeleine @ 544-2086 for more information.

T-MHA Family Services: Assists anyone who has someone in their life that they know or suspect has a mental illness. Janice Holmes, Program Manager, 540-6571.

T-MHA Family Orientation Class: Thursdays 12:00-1:00 pm, followed by one hour support group 1-2pm. 784 High Street, SLO. Please call (805) 540-6571 for more information.

T-MHA Family Support Group: Tuesdays 12:00-3:00 pm, 784 High Street, SLO. Please call (805) 540-6571 for more information.

T-MHA Family Support Group in Spanish (Grupo de Apoyo Familiar): Para Familias y seres queridos que tienen personas con problemas mentales; visite el grupo sin hacer cita – no hay costo y no es necesario llamar para asistir. Para más información llame a Enrique (Henry) Herrera, Asesoría Familiar @ 540-6573.

T-MHA Youth Family Partners, Parent Project and Active Parenting Classes: Multiple groups meet weekly throughout the county. Call Youth Family Partners: Jackie Garza (458-6388), Patty Ramirez (458-2596) or Linda Quesenberry (503-0009) for more information.

NAMI Family-to-Family Education Class (12- week education class for families and friends of people living with mental illnesses): Call John Klimala @ 550-3889 for time and place of next 12 week education class.

NAMI Basics Class (6-week education class for families and caregivers of children and youth living with mental illnesses): Connect Lisa Kelly at 788-0869

3. AWARENESS & RECOVERY PRESENTATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC

NAMI "In Our Own Voice" Program (2 hour public mental illness awareness and recovery presentation): Call Jessica Vieira, Transitions-Mental Health Association @ 540-6576 jvieira@t-mha.org.

"The Shaken Tree" Film/Presentation: Call Janice Holmes, Program Manager at 540-6571 or jholmes@t-mha.org

4. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS

NAMI Parents and Teachers as Allies (2 hour mental illness education presentation for professional educators): Call Lisa @ 788-0869

5. WHERE CAN YOU GET HELP IN SLO COUNTY?

Mental Health Department 1-800-838-1381
24-Hr. MHD Crisis Service..... 781-4700
Behavioral Health Admin. 781-4719
Arroyo Grande Clinic..... 473-7060
Atascadero Clinic..... 461-6060
San Luis Obispo Outpatient Clinic 781-4700
Inpatient Service 781-4711
Youth Services (Vicente Dr.) 781-4179
Forensic MH Services (CON REP) 781-4190

SLO Hotline 24-hour mental health support **1-800-549-4499**

Grievance Coordinator..... 781-4738

T-MHA Family Services Program

Adult Services 540-6571, 540-6572,
Youth Services 458-6388, 458-2596, 503-0009

San Luis Obispo County Behavioral Health Dept. web site:

< <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/health/mentalhealthservices.htm> >

Transitions-Mental Health Association: (P. O. Box 15408), 784 High Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406, (Corner of High and Santa Barbara Streets); Ph. 805-540-6500; FAX: 805-540-6501; Email: info@t-mha.org; web site www.t-mha.org/

NAMI San Luis Obispo County; P. O. Box 3158, San Luis Obispo, CA 93403; Messages: 805-546-4040; web site: <http://www.namislo.org>

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