



General Meeting

Our next general meeting will be held on Tuesday March 22. Tom Beem, Coordinator for the Behavioral Health Treatment Court, will talk to us about the court. The meeting will be at St Stephen's Episcopal Church at the corner of Pismo and Nipomo Streets. Enter from the parking lot off Pismo St. As usual refreshments will be served. There will be a facilitated, family support group before the meeting as well as a Hearts and Minds meeting. Both start at 5:30. (See page 4)

De-Criminalizing Mental Illness: Is Prison Downsizing a Solution?

by Ron Honberg, NAMI Director for Policy and Legal Affairs
(From NAMI National Blog)

On November 30, a subject long important to NAMI made it all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court: the treatment of people living with mental illness who are in the prison system. Specifically, the oral arguments before the Supreme Court addressed whether courts have the power to order states to reduce their prison population as a way to solve their failure to meet constitutional standards of health and mental health care treatment in these facilities. The case originated in California, a state that has implemented 30 years of "get tough on crime" policies that have resulted in extreme overcrowding in its prisons. It starkly illustrates the difficulties--indeed the futility--of providing adequate psychiatric treatment to prison inmates living with schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses.

The case, originated 20 years ago, when a lawsuit was filed on behalf of California's inmates living with serious mental illness alleged that the state was violating their constitutional rights by not providing treatment for mental illnesses and other medical conditions. The court that heard this case ruled that the confining conditions did not meet the level of care guaranteed by the constitution--the 8th Amendment's prohibition against "cruel and unusual punishment."

Over the course of the next 15 years, the court issued a series of decisions ordering the state to take steps to remedy these constitutional violations. However, California was never able to solve these problems to the court's satisfaction.

In January 2010, a three-judge panel was convened to review the case under the federal Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA). By this time, some of California's prisons were operating at nearly 200 percent of capacity, housing twice as many inmates as they were built to handle. Experts concluded that the chaotic conditions in these prisons were not only not conducive to solving the problems with delivering treatment, they very likely exacerbated the symptoms and distress of inmates living with serious mental illnesses.

The PLRA permits courts to issue prisoner release orders only under very narrow circumstances, specifically if previous, less severe solutions have failed within a reasonable period of time. In this case, the judges concluded that there was ample evidence that less intrusive remedies had failed to work and only the imposition of a population cap on all of California's prisons would work. Thus, the panel ordered California to operate its prisons at no more than 137.5 percent of capacity.

Year at a Glance

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

July: Annual Picnic, no General Meeting

May: Special Event Walkathon May 21

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.

The Choice Between More Prisons and Prison Downsizing

If the Supreme Court upholds the lower court's decision, California will be faced with choosing between releasing large numbers of inmates, including inmates living with serious

We'd like to invite both new and old-time NAMI members to consider coming to the **NAMI Family Support Group which meets from 5:30-6:45, before the regular NAMI meeting on the 4th Tuesdays of the month.** We all have valuable insights to share which can help others as well as ourselves. The love and support we give to one another is a special feature of our NAMI fellowship. All are welcome! --Joe and Madeleine, Facilitators

mental illnesses, or building more prisons and prison mental health treatment facilities. In view of the severe budget crisis the Golden

State is currently enduring, it is hard to imagine that California will choose the route of building more prisons.

California's laws on probation and parole are among the toughest in the nation. Many of this state's inmates--including individuals living with serious mental illnesses--are incarcerated because of technical violations of their probation, not because they have committed or re-committed serious crimes. These are the individuals who are most likely to be among the first discharged from California's prisons.

Community Care: Net Cost or Savings?

NAMI has long advocated against the unnecessary criminalization of youth and adults living with serious mental illnesses. We believe that little can be gained from incarcerating non-violent offenders with serious mental illnesses who need treatment, not punishment. However, the potential release of large numbers of individuals with serious mental illnesses into their home communities presents a great potential challenge for the state and its 58 counties. California has a budget deficit of approximately \$20 billion and cuts in spending are impacting adversely on the availability of mental health services in the counties. Most of these counties are having difficulty serving those individuals with serious mental illness-

NAMI SLOCO 2010 Financial Statement		
	Debit	Credit
Checking	1,214.11	
Checking:2001 Fundraisers	0.00	
Checking:2002 Fundraiser	0.00	
Checking:Basics	745.08	
Checking:Beautiful Minds Walk	560.71	
Checking:Client Fund	173.00	
Checking:Family to Family	0.00	
Checking:Grant Funds	0.00	
Checking:Parents & Teachers As Allies	350.00	
Checking:Program Funds - Contingency	4,518.83	
Checking:Special Funds	20.00	
Opening Bal Equity		5,927.68
Retained Earnings		9,230.29
Donations & Contributions		2,240.00
Donations & Contributions:Beautiful Minds Walk		6,121.73
Donations & Contributions:Family to Family		500.00
Donations & Contributions:Peer to Peer		1,725.00
Donations & Contributions:Ralph's		5.43
Membership Dues		4,385.00
Narsad Cards		102.00
Bank Service Charges		5.00
Basics	556.29	
Beautiful Minds Walk	4,076.29	
Brochures	980.55	
Cards	112.60	
Conferences	4,521.34	
Dues and Subscriptions	2,286.95	
Education	25.00	
Family to Family	11.03	
Insurance	1,471.00	
Licenses and Permits	185.00	
Meetings	68.58	
Miscellaneous	30.00	
Newsletter Printing & Folding	1,230.09	
Office Supplies	1,019.33	
P.O. Box Rent	96.00	
Parties:MIAW	433.03	
Peer to Peer	1,725.00	
Postage and Delivery	140.00	
Postage and Delivery:Bulk Mail	575.00	
Program Expense	1,649.81	
Rent	1,467.51	
TOTAL	30,242.13	30,242.13

Many Thanks to Carol Hatley, Executive Director, Housing Authority SLO County for her fine presentation of the current housing situation in San Luis Obispo County. We all enjoyed the presentation and very much appreciate the work you do to help our loved ones. Thanks very much for a most informative evening.

California Scientists Narrowing Genetic Causes Of Schizophrenia Risk is increased with a particular gene mutation (From NAMI California Website)

From The Los Angeles Times by Shari Roan, February 23, 2011

Schizophrenia is a severe, complicated illness. There are no obvious explanations for what causes the condition, which causes hallucinations and delusions. Genes are known to play a big role. The condition is often clustered in families.

Scientists announced a significant step in understanding the genetics of the disease this week. A large nationwide consortium of scientists led by Jonathan Sebat of UC San Diego has identified a gene mutation that is strongly linked to the disorder. Understanding the signaling pathway of this mutation creates a target for future therapies.

Previous research has shown a number of rare gene mutations that increase the risk of schizophrenia. In the new study, researchers looked for specific gene variants, called copy number variants, in 8,290 people with schizophrenia and 7,431 healthy people. Among the discoveries was a duplication in the tip of chromosome 7q. This duplication was found in people with schizophrenia at a rate 14 times that of healthy people.

The duplication affects a particular gene called the vasoactive intestinal peptide receptor 2 gene, which is known to play a role in behavior and learning. In people with schizophrenia, the expression of this gene is much higher, the researchers found. The VIPR2 gene mutation, therefore, will be an important target in developing medications that might alter the symptoms of the illness.

"This discovery might be the best target yet to come out of genetic studies of mental illness," Sebat said in a new release. The research was published online in the journal Nature. Source: The Los Angeles Times □

(Continued from page 1) Prisons

es they are currently responsible for. Demands on some of these counties could increase as inmates are discharged and come home.

California's Department of Corrections stands to save millions of dollars due to lower inmate populations, lower health and mental health treatment needs and the increased efficiency resulting from less overcrowding. Some of this money should go into beefing up the capacity of counties to provide mental health treatment and services to discharged inmates. Additionally, California should consider specialized medical parole programs with personnel trained to manage the needs of parolees with severe mental illness.

And, there is ample evidence that the provision of quality mental health and substance abuse treatment sharply reduces criminal recidivism and thus the burdens on correctional systems. California need only look at its experience with the Assembly Bill (AB) 34/2034 program, which demonstrated a decrease in homeless-

(Continued on page 3)Prisons

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.

(Continued from page 2) Prisons

ness and incarcerations while reflecting an increase in the ability of consumers to live independently, for evidence.

A Golden Opportunity for the Golden State

The fact is, many Californians living with serious mental illnesses who are currently incarcerated wouldn't be in prison at all had they received timely services and supports. Now, the Golden State has a golden opportunity to do right by these individuals and benefit the entire state in the process. If it does so, California will set a very positive standard for the rest of the country to follow. □

NAMI SLOCO Officers

Lisa Kelley, President 788-0869
 Darryl Elliott, Vice-president..... 594-1056
 Pam Zweifel, Secretary 543-1825
 Nancy Griffin, Treasurer..... 543-9399

NAMI SLOC Standing Committee Chairs

Naoma Wright, Publicity..... 543-5232
 Roger Gambs, Newsletter, Peer-to-Peer 461-6590
 Ed & Kathy Garner, Newsletter & Website 550-3117
 Carole Wallace, Librarian
 Pam Zweifel, Membership 543-1825
 Rae Belle Gambs, Forensic 461-6590
 Madelene & Joe Johnson Support Group..... 544-2086

Special Committee Chairs

Lillian Bareither, Newsletter Mailing 595-2821
 Jerry Howe, Farmers Market 543-2261
 John Klimala, Family to Family Coordinator ... 550-3889
 Lisa Kelley, Parents & Teachers as Allies 788-0869
 Carole Wallace, NAMI Basics Coordinator
 Lisa Kelley, NAMI Basics Coordinator 788-0869

NAMI PROGRAMS ACTIVE IN San Luis Obispo County



**Making Possible More Transformative Moments:
 NAMI's AAPI Listening Session**

By Jeong Shin, Program Manager, NAMI San Francisco

I began working for NAMI San Francisco in April 2010. At that time I already knew of NAMI's reputation as a mental health advocacy organization. Until I joined as staff, however, I didn't understand the prevalence of mental illness, nor was I familiar with NAMI's history and the important role that families can play in recovery. Later, I would find out that my husband's grandmother found support from the San Mateo affiliate in the 1970s when her adult son was diagnosed with schizophrenia. She still talks about how NAMI provided her with the support and education that helped her understand his mental illness in a way that she could not and did not find anywhere else. This is a phenomenon that I hear repeatedly in people's stories about their experiences with NAMI—that it was transformative and gave them the feeling that they were no longer alone in dealing with this illness. These people found support through NAMI that changed their lives for the better.

As a staff person in an affiliate located in San Francisco, I

find it puzzling that we don't have a broad diversity among those who engage in our programs and services. The city of San Francisco is diverse in every way you can possibly think of, so the San Francisco affiliate should be triumphantly diverse as well. And yet, this is not the case. The experience that my husband's grandmother had is one that I would wish for anyone who faces severe mental illness, whether as someone who has a diagnosis or as a family member. However, as a first-generation Korean American, I struggled to understand how the stigma of mental illness can be overcome within my own community. day, February 17, 2011.

When I received the invitation to attend the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Listening Session hosted by the NAMI Multicultural Action Center, I felt skeptical about the effectiveness of such a meeting. I hadn't even realized that the Multicultural Action Center existed. I agreed to attend because as an affiliate, we are struggling with finding ways to develop relationships with communities that have long-underserved populations. Our affiliate and many NAMI affiliates across the country are small grassroots organizations. NAMI San Francisco has one part-time staff person supported by a group of very dedicated volunteers. The obstacles to the development of culturally competent programs seemed immense when combined with the need to develop and maintain infrastructure and existing programming. □

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

PLEASE PRINT

NAME(S) _____

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



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- New
- \$30 Individual
- Renewal
- \$35 Family
- \$50 Friend

**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 Cusworth, T-MHA @ 464-0512, 540-6583 or kcusworth@t-mha.org

Peer Advisory & Advocacy Team: Call Darryl Elliott, T-MHA, 540-6579 or delliot@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 and Family Support Group: Tuesday Afternoons; Orientation – 12:00-1:00; Family Support Group – 1:00-3:00. T-MHA, 784 High Street, SLO, Call Henry Herrera @ 540-6573 or Cami Rouse @ 540-6574 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 Young Adult Family Support Group: Contact Cami Rouse at 540-6574 or crouse@t-mha.org

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 Shannon McOuat, T-MHA Mental Health Service Act PEI Outreach Coordinator @ 540-6510

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.namisol.org>

Or Current Resident

Next Meeting
March 22

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