Signed, Sealed, Delivered: Mental Health Reform is a Law

By Happy Carlock | Dec. 14, 2016, nami.org

“Signed, sealed, delivered, I’m yours” is not just the chorus in President Barack Obama’s favorite song that makes you want to dance. It’s what took place Dec. 13, when President Obama signed mental health reform into law as part of H.R. 34, the 21st Century Cures Act.

Mental health reform is now ours.

The work of thousands of NAMI advocates has paid off. Congress heard NAMI’s voice through hundreds of thousands of phone calls, emails and tweets, and they answered. Now, more Americans will have access to the mental health care they need.

NAMI CEO Mary Giliberti and Director of Legislative Advocacy Andrew Sperling were at the White House for the 21st Century Cures signing ceremony. Giliberti calls this achievement a major step in the right direction for the mental health community and Congress.

“This was anything but a lame duck session,” Giliberti said. “The House and Senate vote counts showed overwhelming support for the cause that we all hold so dear.”

Even the president recognized the significance of this bill passing Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support: “I think it indicates the power of this issue and how deeply it touches every family across America. The Cures Act improves mental health care,” Obama explained. “It includes bipartisan reforms to address serious mental illness; it takes steps to ensure mental health conditions and substance abuse are fairly treated by insurance companies. It also incorporates suicide prevention.”

How Will the Law Help People with Mental Illness?

The law includes key pieces of the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2016 (H.R. 2646), the Mental Health Reform Act of 2016 (S. 2680), and the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act of 2015 (S. 2002). The Cures Act will improve integration and program coordination across federal agencies that serve people with mental illness and remove unfair barriers to mental health care. It will also address the needs of people with mental illness who become entangled in the criminal justice system.

The 21st Century Cures Act also:

⇒ Combats suicide in our schools and communities so precious lives are saved.
⇒ Increases the mental health workforce, so more trained professionals can help.
⇒ Strengthens the enforcement of the mental health parity law, so health plans are held accountable for the coverage people paid for.
⇒ Invests in early intervention, so people get the right mental health care at the right time.
⇒ Invests resources to keep people with mental illness out of jails and in treatment.

(Signed Cont. on page 2)
NAMI Family to Family Class

Next class to begin March 20, 2016

Parents, spouses, friends, or adult children of people with mental illnesses are invited to participate in the next 12-week course which will begin March 20 and run through June 12.

There is no charge for this NAMI signature program. Participants will learn valuable information to help them understand and support an ill relative while maintaining their own well-being. Please call 309 693-0541 for information or to register for the March class.

NAMI Peer to Peer Class

The next class will be held when there are sufficient numbers to offer it. Please call Dean at 840-0915 or Larry at 745-8359 to register. To take the 10-week class, you must be 18 or older, have a psychiatric diagnosis, and have someone with whom you can talk about any issues/problems the classes unearth. The classes teach information about the various mental illnesses, tell how different medications function, help you create a relapse prevention plan, and start you toward creating an advance medical directive. The class will be facilitated by Dean and Larry. There is no charge for this NAMI signature program.

NAMI Basics Education Program

This course is for parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness. Basics is taught by parents who have lived similar experiences with their own kids and have received training to teach the course. The class covers the biology of mental illness, treatment, school interventions, and the latest research as well as the trauma of brain disorders for the child and the family. If you are interested in this class, please call Beth at 691-5830. There is no charge for this NAMI signature program but registration is required.

Also, check out www.NAMI.org "Basics" video on You Tube for further description of the course.

What’s Next?

“We’re heartened that Congress has shown strong bipartisan support of mental health. In 2017, we hope Congress continues to work to make sure everyone gets access to mental health care,” Giliberti said.

This hard-fought battle has been won. But our work as advocates is just getting started. As the new Congress convenes in 2017, it’s up to us to hold our elected officials accountable to making mental health and substance abuse national priorities.

One in 5 Americans—and their loved ones—are counting on us.
Letter from the President

To All our NAMI Friends:

Alliance is my word today. We call ourselves the National Alliance on Mental Illness as we are brought together by the challenges that mental health conditions have brought into our lives. It is the alliances along the way that build collective strength to achieve success and progress. I’m looking nationally, locally and interpersonally. The passage of the 21st Century Cures Act (see p. 1) in this issue is not only an example of many advocates preparing and promoting the legislation, but in the “overwhelming bipartisan support” that moved it through Congress to the President’s desk.

Alliance comes from a willingness to be open and enables others to add their voices. While she was living, the actress Carrie Fisher “showed strength, humor and resiliency in the face of instability and uncertainty.” In one of her many quotes, Carrie said, “I am mentally ill; I can say that; I am not ashamed of that. I survived that; I’m still surviving that; bring it on.” She also promoted the treatments that psychiatry has to offer. Carrie’s mom, Debbie Reynolds, for many years dedicated herself to Thalians, named for Thalia, the goddess of comedy. Thalians started in 1955 by young actors who allied themselves to fight the image of being irresponsible by devoting their energy and money to children with mental health problems. Having raised over $30 million dollars through the years, they now focus on the needs of returning vets.

Alliances on the local level enable our organization to offer our educational programs to our members and the public. On a cold winter’s night in early January, Cindy Gilmer of the Human Service Center (HSC) was our speaker at our ICC North location. Cindy related the history and present status of mental health crisis services in our area giving examples of local alliances. There had been two community crisis centers before the present one! Cindy assures us that the local police academy is doing well in mental health training—using the HSC for this training—and the Emergency Response Service, with one individual working at a time, does its best to cover the county. Thank-you, Cindy, for your presentation, information, stories and dedication. Our broad community support of our programs is wonderful.

In the last several months I have come to miss an alliance within our local alliance. A group called COGS, Community Outreach Group, met aside our local board and planned and carried out many of the details of our social events and fund raisers. Our COGS group no longer meets, but as others of us have tried to fill your shoes, we see how big they were.

Our alliances are the glue of our organization. I’m encouraged by your involvement and look to develop more. Volunteers are welcome and needed.

My best wishes in this new year!

Beth Lawrence

Education Meetings

First Thursday of most months
ICC North, Poplar Hall, Room 132
7:00—8:30 p.m.

February 2, 2017
Topic: Legal Issues Related to Mental Health
Speaker: Judge Kate Gorman
(see biography on p. 4)
The presentation will deal with domestic issues as well as felony and misdemeanor situations

March 2, 2017
Topic: Learning to Advocate for Mental Health Issues: How to Effectively Tell Your Story
Speaker: Susan O’Neal
(see biography on p. 4)
The presentation will help people share their mental health struggles so others can benefit.

April 6, 2017
Topic: Viewing the documentary Unfinished Glass
(see summary on p. 7)
Location: To be announced

A Special Letter with a Sincere Gift
From a Teenager who “gets” Mental Health Struggles
Printed with permission

Hello. My name is Kelbie and I am 16 years old. Since I was 10 years old, my grandma always told me that when I turned 16 years old, I could have her car. Well, my grandmother passed away in May of 2015. My grandpa was just going to give me the car because she always said I could have it. But my parents wouldn’t let me have it because I have three brothers who all had to pay for their cars, so it wouldn’t be fair if I just had it handed to me. My grandpa doesn’t want my money, so he told me to come up with a solution and give the money to someone or something that helps people. So, I am donating this $900 to help someone like my grandma. She suffered tremendously from depression and anxiety. My family and I donated money in May to make sure no one else would suffer like she did. My grandma was my role model, my rock, and most importantly my best friend. Her passing made me realize how grateful people who don’t suffer from these things are and how much I appreciate not having to deal with that. So, to make sure my grandmother’s memory lives on, and to maybe help one or two people get help, I am donating this money. My grandma was an awesome woman and would absolutely love that this money is helping people like her. Thank you for everything this organization does to help people; they really do appreciate it.

Sincerely,
Kelbie
February Education Meeting
February 2, 2017
Legal Issues Related to Mental Health
Speaker—Judge Kate Gorman
Kate Gorman was appointed as an Associate Judge in November 2007. She was elected Circuit Judge in 2012. Since taking the bench in November 2007, Judge Gorman has presided over felony and misdemeanor jury and bench trials in criminal court, mental health court, traffic court, domestic violence court and many other civil disputes. Judge Gorman currently presides in juvenile abuse and neglect court.

Kate Gorman is a Washington, IL native. She graduated from the University of Illinois and received her law degree from Southern Illinois University in 1993. She practiced law for 14 years prior to being appointed Associate Judge. She has also been a hearing officer for the Peoria Housing Authority, conducted mental health hearings in Peoria County and is a certified mediator.

Judge Gorman holds memberships in both the Illinois Bar Association and Peoria County Bar Association. She is married to Jim Hubler, and together they raise their two daughters, Ellie (15) and Ava (10) in Washington, Illinois.

March Education Meeting
March 2, 2017
Learning to Advocate for Mental Health Issues: How to Effectively Tell Your Story
Speaker—Attorney Susan O’Neal
Susan O’Neal, an attorney in private practice, accepts cases in the following areas: Juvenile Law, DCFS cases, and Social Security/SSI disability. She is also a writer and she volunteers for NAMI Tri-County where she is certified to teach the Family-to-Family class, facilitate the Family Support Group, and to be a lead presenter in the Ending the Silence program; Susan is also on the Board of Directors.

Ms. O’Neal has been chosen again this year to be a part of the Section Council on Mental Health Law for the Illinois State Bar Association.

She has always represented poor and working class people in the areas of Juvenile Law, DCFS cases, Social Security/SSI disability law, and other cases relating to disabilities. Additionally, she is interested in mental health law and working on introducing and advocating to pass new legislation to protect the rights of persons with mental illness and their families.

Susan is a valued member of our local NAMI affiliate and its Board and we appreciate all the ways she assists us. She received training for this NAMI advocacy program in December.

Heart of Peoria Catholic Community
Communities of Compassion Mental Health Workshops 2017
You are invited to attend “Communities of Compassion,” a three-part workshop series designed to help faith communities become places where persons with mental health problems may feel welcomed and valued. The workshops will teach you to recognize and help those with mental illness in our faith community. Continuing Education Contact hours are applied for nurses, social workers and teachers.

The workshops will be part of an approved research study to learn how people can become more comfortable when they work with people with mental illness. The focus of the study is to find out how workshop participants’ comfort levels and attitudes change towards those with mental illness. We want to see if the workshops have helped in the ways you view mental illness.

Your voice, opinion and concerns are vital to us. You can help us learn how to be a community where all are welcomed and valued!

Location: Sophia’s Kitchen 103 Richard Pryor Place Peoria 61603

Topic: Welcomed and Valued
Was on Saturday, January 14 | 8 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Topic: Mental Illness and Families of Faith
Saturday, February 18 | 8 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Topic: Call to Action: Responding as Faith Communities of Compassion
Saturday, March 18 | 8 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

To register, choose one of the following:
Call Sophia’s Kitchen at (309) 655-1578
Email Peggy Jacques, RN, at margaret.m.jacques@osfhealthcare.org
Visit catholicpeoria.com

The sessions may be attended individually for contact hour submission. Content from sessions will build upon each other; it is recommended to attend all three sessions for optimal understanding and application of content. Attendance will be recorded at each session and completion of each session will be considered by submission of a completed session evaluation tool.

These workshops are made possible through the collaboration of the OSF Health Care Faith Community Nurse Program, the Heart of Peoria Catholic Community, the Director of Sophia’s Kitchen and the Human Service Center Education Coordinator.

There are no conflicts of interest involved in this presentation for planners, presenters, faculty, authors and content reviewers.

OSF Healthcare Provider Unit is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Ohio Nurses Association an accredited approver of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation. (OBN-001-91) (OH-353, 11/1/2019). Illinois has designated OBN as the official approver of CNE Providers and activities for Illinois.

Funded by the Fulton Sheen Endowment of the Rooted in Faith Campaign

Editor’s Note: NAMI Members, encourage clergy, friends and family to attend these sessions to develop a better understanding of your personal situations.
Mental Health Court opens in Tazewell County: Helping keep Clients out of Custody
By Mike Smothers of JatHouse Media Illinois
PEKIN - Each year Tazewell County's jail makes room for about 500 people with mental health issues ranging from slight to severe. Many are repeat visitors.
They cost significantly more to house and feed than the $40,000 the County Board has earmarked for the new Mental Health Court (MHC) that opened last week, after 16 months of preparation.
The jail, meanwhile, is not in the business of counseling those whose crimes were the products, at least in part, of their mental problems, said Sheriff Robert Huston.
That help will now be available through the MHC process that joins Drug Court as a potential alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders.
"The plan is to address problems through counseling and medication, with the goal to keep (MHC clients) out of custody," said county Chief Public Defender Luke Taylor.
"The (MHC) team is extremely excited about being up and running, and extremely motivated to help these people," he said.
The team, comprised of Taylor, an assistant state's attorney, Judge Michael Risinger, two county probation agents and counselors from the Tazwood Center for Human Services, got the go-ahead to launch MHC last month when it was officially certified by the Illinois Supreme Court.
That was a 16-month process. The high court last year adopted statewide standards to oversee new so-called specialty courts as well as the more than 100 already operating in the state.
Tazewell’s MHC will begin its work with the case of a man charged with retail theft at the Walmart Supercenter in East Peoria. Like all defendants referred to the program by the county prosecutor, the team's counselors must first determine if he suffers from what Taylor described as "a significant mental illness" before he's accepted into the MHC program, which can last "two years or longer," depending on each case.

Research Suggests a Hopeful Future
By Mary Gilberti | Dec. 2016, nami.org
NAMI views scientific research as a critical source of hope for people affected by mental illness and their families. That’s why every year, we recognize a leading researcher with our Scientific Research Award for their contributions to the mental health community. This year, the award not only represents the hope of discovery, but also collaboration and teamwork.
The recipient is a team of groundbreaking scientists who have uncovered a piece of the puzzle that explains how people develop schizophrenia. Working as an interdisciplinary team, they have unlocked a few secrets of the body’s most complex organ: the brain. The team includes:

- **Dr. Michael Carroll**, Director, PhD Graduate Program in Immunology and Co-director of the Masters in Medical Sciences in Immunology Program of Harvard Medical School

---

**Important Contact Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local NAMI Information</th>
<th>309.693-0541</th>
<th><a href="http://www.nam%C4%A9ri-countyillinois.org">www.namĩri-countyillinois.org</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAMI IL – State Headquarters</td>
<td>1.800.346.4572</td>
<td><a href="http://namiillinois.org">http://namiillinois.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National NAMI Helpline</td>
<td>1.800.950.6264</td>
<td><a href="http://nami.org">http://nami.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hult Center for Healthy Living</td>
<td>309.692.6650</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hulthealthy.org">www.hulthealthy.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heartland Community Health Clinic</td>
<td>309.680.7600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UnityPoint Health—Methodist Community Behavioral Health</td>
<td>309.672.4103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Home</td>
<td>309.685.1047</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Suicide Hotline 24-Hour Hotline</td>
<td>1.800.273.TALK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Foundation for Suicide Prevention</td>
<td>1.212.363.3500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivors of Suicide</td>
<td>309.697.3342</td>
<td>309.208.3027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police – all counties</td>
<td>911</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Response Service: Peoria County</td>
<td>309.671.8084</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodford &amp; Tazewell County</td>
<td>309.347.1148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Service Center</td>
<td>309.671.8000</td>
<td>309.347.5579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Suicide Hotline</td>
<td>1.800.273.8255</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Crisis Intervention Resources**

Youth: CARES (Crisis and Referral Entry Services);
1-800-345-9049
CARES is Statewide and will assess eligibility for SASS
(Screening and Assessment Referral Services)
24-hour crisis lines:
- Nat’l Suicide Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Peoria County ERS: 309-671-8084
- Tazewell & Woodford Counties: 309-347-1148
- Dial 2-1-1 for a non-emergency number that connects people with essential community information and services: food, shelter, counseling, mental health, employment, elderly, children & families

**How to Reach the Community Crisis Center**
130 N. Richard Pryor Place, Peoria, Illinois

If the individual is at risk:
Contact the police department for an initial response. The police will contact ERS when the situation is secure.

If individual safety is not a concern:
Contact ERS at 309 671-8084 - TTY Line: 309 671-3566. You will be asked for some brief information to assist our response.

**Medical Detox**: 309 689-3080

- **Dr. Steven McCarroll**, Associate Professor of Genetics at Harvard Medical School and Director of Genetics for the Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard
- **Dr. Beth Stevens**, Assistant Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School and Boston’s Children’s Hospital

Book Reviews

**Committed: The Battle Over Involuntary Psychiatric Care**
By Dinah Miller (Author), Annette Hanson (Author), Pete Earley (Foreword), 2016
Source: amazon.com

Battle lines have been drawn over involuntary treatment. On one side, there are those who oppose involuntary psychiatric treatments under any condition. Activists who take up this cause often don’t acknowledge that psychiatric symptoms can render people dangerous to themselves or others. They also don’t allow for the idea that the civil rights of an individual may be at odds with the heartbeat of a caring family. On the other side are groups pushing for increased use of involuntary treatment. These proponents are quick to point out that people with psychiatric illnesses often don’t recognize that they are ill, which (from their perspective) makes the discussion of civil rights moot. They may gloss over the sometimes dangerous side effects of psychiatric medications, and they often don’t admit that patients, even after their symptoms have abated, are sometimes unhappy that treatment was inflicted upon them.

In *Committed*, psychiatrists Dinah Miller and Annette Hanson offer a thought-provoking and engaging account of the controversy surrounding involuntary psychiatric care in the United States. They bring the issue to life with first-hand accounts from patients, clinicians, advocates, and opponents. Looking at practices such as seclusion and restraint, involuntary medication, and involuntary electroconvulsive therapy—all within the context of civil rights—Miller and Hanson illuminate the personal consequences of these controversial practices through voices of people who have been helped by the treatment they had as well as those who have been traumatized by it.

**Crazy: A Father’s Search Through America’s Mental Health Madness**
By Pete Earley, 2007; Source: amazon.com

Former *Washington Post* reporter Pete Earley had written extensively about the criminal justice system. But it was only when his own son—in the throes of a manic episode—broke into a neighbor’s house that he learned what happens to mentally ill people who break a law.

This is the Earley family’s compelling story, a troubling look at bureaucratic apathy and the countless thousands who suffer confinement instead of care, brutal conditions instead of treatment, in the “revolving doors” between hospital and jail. With mass deinstitutionalization, large numbers of state mental patients are homeless or in jail—an experience little better than the horrors of a century ago. Earley takes us directly into that experience and into that of a father and award-winning journalist trying to fight for a better way.

**The Insanity Plea**
By Larry D. Thompson, 2014
Source: nami.org

An innocent man living with schizophrenia is wrongfully accused of murder and has to rely on the help of a few key supporters to prove his innocence. This fictional thriller explores a journey through the criminal justice system that defies stereotypes. It will keep you on the edge of your seat from start to finish and definitely take you on an emotional rollercoaster.
NAMI TRI-COUNTY ILLINOIS
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
February & March 2017
~Illinois Central College North, 5407 N. University, Peoria~
Education Meetings, Poplar Hall, Room 132
Support Groups, Poplar Hall: Family—Room 132; Connections—Room 131

February

**Thursday, February 2, 7:00–8:30 p.m.** Monthly Education Meeting, ICC North, Poplar Hall, Room 132. Speaker: Judge Kate Gorman, 10th Illinois Judicial Circuit. **Topic:** Legal Issues Related to Mental Health

**Tuesday, February 7, 7:00 p.m.** Survivor’s of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027

**Thursday, February 9, 6:30–8:30 p.m.** Mood-Challenge meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria

**Thursday, February 16, 7:00–8:30 p.m.** Monthly Support Groups, ICC North, Poplar Hall

Family and friends of people with brain disorders, Room 132. For further information call Sue, 309-360-1143.

Connections—individuals participating in recovery, Room 131. For further information call John 309 472-5907.

**Tuesday, February 21, 7:00 p.m.** Survivor’s of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027

**Thursday, February 23, 6:30–8:30 p.m.** Mood-Challenge meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria

March

**Thursday, March 2, 7:00–8:30 p.m.** Monthly Education Meeting, ICC North, Poplar Hall, Rm. 132. Speaker: Susan O’Neal

**Topic:** Learning to Advocate for Mental Health Issues: How to Effectively Tell Your Story

**Tuesday, March 7, 7:00 p.m.** Survivor’s of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027

**Thursday, March 9, 6:30–8:30 p.m.** Mood-Challenge meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria

**Thursday, March 16, 7:00–8:30 p.m.** Monthly Support Groups, ICC North, Poplar Hall

Family and friends of people with brain disorders, Room 132. For further information call Sue, 309-360-1143.

Connections—individuals participating in recovery, Room 131. For further information call John 309 472-5907.

**Tuesday, March 21, 7:00 p.m.** Survivor’s of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027

**Thursday, March 23, 6:30–8:30 p.m.** Mood-Challenge meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria

**Looking Ahead**: We are looking at future programs on **Personality Disorders**.

**Thursday, April 6, Monthly Education Meeting:** Viewing *Unbroken Glass*, a 2016 documentary film by Dinesh Das Sabu and Kartemquin Films. **Dinesh will join us for the evening** and answer questions.

Twenty years after the death of his parents, film maker Dinesh Sabu begins a journey to finally piece together their story.

Uncovering a silenced family history of mental illness, Dinesh confronts the legacy of having a schizophrenic mother who died by suicide, the reality of growing up an orphaned immigrant, and the trauma of these events. Can he reconcile these truths all while living in the specter of mental illness? (watch for more about this presentation in the March/April Family Forum and on our website.)

**Survivors of Suicide - Peoria**


**Contact:** Rev. Eimo Hinrichs or Mrs. Pat Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy, 309-208-3027

**Meeting Place:** Chapel at Proctor Hospital, 5409 North Knoxville Ave., Peoria, IL 61614

**Meeting Day(s)/Meeting Time:** 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. **Facilitated by:** Peer/Professional **Charge:** None

**Brighter Days Ahead**

513 NE Madison (309) 222-2012

“Brighter Days Ahead” offers a positive and uplifting environment for people who have experienced a mental illness. Its purpose is for members to have a safe place where they can socialize, receive support, and be part of fun, recovery-oriented activities while envisioning the brighter days ahead.

**Hours of Operation**

Monday - Saturday from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Sunday from 12 noon–5 p.m.

If you have any additional questions, we would be happy to talk either by phone 309-222-2012 or at recoverycenter@fayettecompanies.org
Legal Issues Related to Mental Health

Mental Health Reform
Source: nami.org, 2016

With half of Americans with mental health conditions going without essential services and supports—and others getting only minimal care—reform of our nation’s mental health system is a priority issue for NAMI. Fortunately, Congress is listening.

There is unprecedented agreement in the U.S. House and Senate on the need for mental health reform. This has resulted in the introduction of several bills, each of which NAMI supports. All the bills have positive provisions that will help move mental health reform forward.

In the House
Representatives Tim Murphy (R-Pa.) and Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas) introduced H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015. The bill:
- Passed the U.S. House of Representatives 422-2 on July 6, 2016.
- Unanimously passed the House Energy and Commerce Committee on June 15, 2016.

In the Senate
Senators Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) introduced S. 2680, the Mental Health Reform Act of 2016 with strong leadership from Senators Bill Cassidy (R-La.) and Chris Murphy (D-Conn.).

The Senate pursued a three-pronged strategy regarding mental health reform:
- Improve mental health care through provisions in S. 2680.
- Potential criminal justice reforms, including mental health diversion and reentry, if S. 2002 (sponsored by Sen. Cornyn) is included as an amendment to S. 2680.
- Potential changes to Medicaid and/or Medicare financing if the Senate Finance Committee sponsors an amendment to S. 2680. Getting an amendment to address financing will be difficult due to budget constraints, but possible proposals include:
  * Updating the Medicaid IMD exclusion to allow short-term stays;
  * Ending the Medicaid ban on same-day/same-facility billing of mental health and medical treatment;
  * Ending the Medicare 190-day lifetime psychiatric inpatient limit; and
  * Expansion of the certified community behavioral health clinic pilot.

Both Bills
Parts of both the Mental Health Reform Act of 2016 (S. 2680) and the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015 (HR 2646) were included in the 21st Century Cures Act and will:
- Improve integration and program coordination across federal agencies that serve people living with mental illness;
- Improve integration of mental and physical health care;
- Promote early intervention in the treatment of psychosis and use of evidence-based interventions; and
- Provide resources for suicide prevention.

Want more information on mental health reform? Learn more.

What Is NAMI Doing?
NAMI advocates have helped us send over 80,000 emails, 230,000 petition signatures, and hundreds of tweets to Congress asking them to pass mental health reform now. These efforts, along with Congressional meetings, have helped lead to unprecedented bipartisan discussions.

NAMI Announces Legislative Priorities for 2017
Source: nami.org, Jan. 3, 2017

Invest in Mental Health and Innovation
- Reject Medicaid caps or block grants that drive down innovation and force state program cuts, putting individuals with mental illness and families at risk
- Support Medicaid expansion, with income-based eligibility, to provide coverage and a pathway to self-sufficiency for individuals with mental health conditions
- Ensure insurance market reforms include mental health and substance use disorder coverage in every health plan and at the same level (parity) as other health conditions
- Increase investment at NIH and NIMH in understanding, diagnosing and treating mental illness

Promote Early Intervention
Promote early intervention for serious mental illness through continued federal funding set aside in the Mental Health Block Grant to support research-based First Episode Psychosis programs.

Improve Integration of Care
- Improve integration of health and mental health care through policies and financing that:
  * Support the Collaborative Care Model, integrating behavioral health expertise into primary care
  * Expand Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics that integrate primary care into behavioral health care clinics

Support Caregivers, Military Service Members and Veterans
- Support our nation’s caregivers by extending existing national caregiver support programs to include family caregivers of people with mental illness
- Increase capacity for mental health care and promote continuity of care for military service members and veterans with mental health conditions

End The Criminalization of Mental Illness
- Reduce the high cost of jailing people with mental illness by investing in policies and funding to ensure that every community has:
  * 24/7 behavioral health crisis response teams
  * Subacute and respite care
  * Assertive Community Treatment and Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (ACT/FACT) teams
Frequently Asked Questions: Workplace

My boss is treating me unfairly because of my mental illness. What are my rights?

People living with mental health conditions are protected from discrimination and bias in the workplace by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This makes it unlawful to refuse to hire a qualified applicant, terminate an employee based on their disability or refuse to make a reasonable accommodation that would make it possible for this person to perform essential job functions. The Department of Justice has a toll-free ADA Information Line, 800-514-0301, where you can learn more about your rights.

If you think you’ve experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your mental health condition, promptly file a complaint. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has information on the ADA and how to file complaints against employers.

Succeeding at Work

At work you have to weigh the advantages against the disadvantages of being open about a mental health condition. Consider the potential negative impact on things like stigma from coworkers against your need for special accommodations, which are considered part of your civil rights. Stigma and stereotypes can also lead to discrimination. There are laws in place that protect you from discrimination and unfair practices on the job.

Protection Against Discrimination

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against job applicants and employees with disabilities. This law applies to private employers with more than 15 employees and state and local government employers. To qualify for protections under the ADA, the law states that you must be able to show:

- That you have a disability that substantially impairs one or more major life activities. This means that you must be able to show that you have a condition that, if left untreated, interferes with daily or work activities such as concentrating, communicating or regulating emotions.
- That you are able to perform the essential functions of your job with or without reasonable accommodations. In other words, you must be able to show that you can complete the important tasks or core duties of any job that you apply for.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act) is a federal law, similar to the ADA, that applies to any agency or group that receives federal funding, including public schools, universities and even some private schools. This law protects federal government workers and employees at any of these agencies from disability discrimination.

Many states also have laws that protect employees from discrimination in the workplace.

Requesting an Extended Leave of Absence

Sometimes it's necessary to take off multiple weeks in order to cope with a psychiatric crisis. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a law that allows employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the event of an illness or to help care for a family member who is sick. The FMLA permits you to take a leave of absence while preserving your job placement and benefits. To qualify for FMLA, you must work a minimum of 12 months for the same employer. The FMLA only applies to employers with more than 50 employees. To learn more about the FMLA, contact the Department of Labor.

Accommodations at Work

While you must be able to perform the essential tasks of your job, you are entitled to reasonable accommodations (changes made to company procedures/rules) that will help increase and maintain your job performance. Examples of accommodations include:

- Flexible work schedules or start times
- Reduced distractions or noise in the work area
- Working from home or telecommuting.
- Written directions and task lists
- Regular written or verbal feedback
- Flexible break schedule
- Private, quiet space to rest during a break
- Use of a job coach

How to Request Accommodations

If you do need an accommodation, the first step is to ask. It's up to you to request an accommodation. Once you have submitted a request, an employer is required to sit down and talk with you about possible accommodations. Before you get started:

- Ask your employer's human resources (HR) personnel how to request accommodations. A request process may already be in place.
- Decide what types of accommodations you need. Be specific. Be ready to explain how the accommodation will help you to perform your job.
- Put your request in writing.
- Talk with your treatment provider and ask if they can provide documentation. Your doctor can write a note, usually in the form of a letter, stating that you have mental illness and need accommodations. It may be helpful to share guidance on workplace accommodations with your provider.
- Take detailed notes and keep a written record of any conversations you have with the employer. Keep copies of any emails you send and any forms you complete.
- Negotiate. Be flexible and ready to discuss your options

Have You Experienced Discrimination?

If you feel like you have been discriminated against because you live with mental illness, there are a variety of legal options available:

- Filing a Complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The EEOC is the federal government agency that enforces the ADA. If the employer is covered by the ADA, you can file a complaint with EEOC.
- Federal Government Agency: Filing a Complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO). If the employer was a federal government agency, you must file a complaint with the agency's EEO Office.
- Filing a complaint with a State Fair Employment Practice Agency. Many states have laws that are similar to the ADA or the Rehab Act. These laws are enforced by the state's Fair Employment Practice Agency (FEPA). If your state has one of these laws, you should file a complaint at your local FEPA. If you are denied FMLA, contact the Department of Labor to file a complaint.

(FAQ cont. on page 10)
Frequently Asked Questions: Complaints

How do I file a complaint against a mental health care facility or professional?

Complaints about an individual physician/psychiatrist: If the physician/psychiatrist works for a hospital or agency, you may contact the doctor’s supervisor. You can also file a complaint with the state medical board or the American Psychiatric Association (APA) (some psychiatrists are members, some are not). The APA might also refer you to its APA District Branch or state psychiatric society.

Complaints about other mental health professionals: If they work for a hospital or agency, you may file complaints with the therapist’s supervisor, the hospital ombudsman or the administrator. Therapists are regulated by their licensing boards (such as the state board of health and mental hygiene, counseling or other licensing board). They may also be members of their professional associations (such as the National Association of Social Workers or the American Psychological Association).

Abuse or neglect in an institutional setting: Protection and Advocacy Agencies advocate on behalf of individuals with mental illness who are in institutional settings—jails, correctional facilities or state psychiatric hospitals. Allegations of abuse or neglect are one of their top priorities.

Complaints of abuse, neglect or mistreatment in the hospital setting: You may file a complaint directly to the hospital ombudsman or administrator.

Or, you may contact The Joint Commission (formerly known as JCAHO, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) online or call their toll-free Compliant Hotline at 800-994-6610 to share concerns regarding quality of care. The Joint Commission accredits hospitals, home health agencies, nursing homes, outpatient clinics, behavioral health care programs and managed care plans among others. Complaints should be related to patient rights, quality of care, safety, infection control, medication use and/or security. They are unable to assist with billing, insurance or payment disputes.

Complaints about a CMHC (community mental health center): You may file a complaint with the state mental health agency. Medicaid and Medicare recipients with complaints about CMHCs have the following options: Medicare beneficiaries may contact the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regional Medicaid Service and the state Peer Review Organization. Medicaid beneficiaries may contact the state Medicaid official, and perhaps the state medical review board could help.

Your NAMI Affiliate may be able to assist you with identifying options as well.

Handling The Arrest Of A Family Member

Source: nami.org

The arrest of a family member or friend can be very upsetting. Trying to figure out what to do and where to start can feel overwhelming. Here are some steps to take to help your loved one through the situation. If you don’t know which jail your loved one is being held in you can use an online inmate locator.

Handling Medication

If your family member requires medication, he should inform the jail staff. If he has not informed the jail staff, you should ask his psychiatrist to contact them. Although there’s no privacy law restricting a medical professional from sharing information with jail staff, some will refuse. If that happens, you should make contact with your family member’s doctor. It is best to do this in writing and then follow up with a phone call. This will ensure a written record of your request. Your request should be to the point and include:

- Your loved one’s diagnosis
- The type of medication
- Contact information for their doctor
- Your contact information

Is Your Family Member Being Mistreated?

If your family member is being mistreated in jail, you should start by contacting your state’s protection and advocacy agency, which is responsible for protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities. You can also contact your state’s affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Going To Court

The arrest of a family member may mean he or she needs to appear in court. Knowing what to expect can help you provide the most support for your loved one and hopefully lead to the best outcome.

Working With An Attorney

Most people charged with crimes are assigned a public defender. Here is what you should do:

- Make contact with the attorney. This can be hard as attorneys are often in court all day, so call early in the morning or during lunch. If you can’t reach her, call her office and ask for a fax number or email address.

- Attend the initial hearing. Introduce yourself to the public defender. Be brief, polite, and thank him. Let them know that you’re happy to provide whatever information would be helpful to him. If your efforts are rebuffed, you can be more forceful and mail a brief summary (no more than three pages) of your loved one’s medical information to the public defender’s office.

- Ask the attorney to consider any jail diversion or pre-trial release programs. If you do not know about any programs, contact your NAMI Affiliate to find out if there is a jail diversion program, mental health court or other program to help defendants with mental illness in your community.

Remember that the public defender works for your family member, not you. You can ask your loved one to sign a release that allows the attorney to share information with you. However, he may refuse and there’s little the attorney can do.
(Arrest cont. from page 10)
You can also hire a private defense attorney who has experience working with clients with mental illness.

Help Finding An Attorney
The NAMI HelpLine maintains a legal resource service that may be able to provide further assistance. Our legal resource volunteers can provide you with information on legal services or refer you to an attorney from our legal directory. Our directory is made up of attorneys who have come forward to NAMI and expressed an interest in working with cases relating to mental health issues. While our legal resource service cannot provide direct legal advice, we can at least point you in the right direction on how to help your loved one.

Preparing For A Court Appearance
If your loved one is released, he may still need to appear in court. If he does not want to appear in court, you can ask the attorney if there’s a way that the hearing can continue without his presence.

If he needs to attend, here are some things you can do to make the experience easier.

• Have a friend drop you off and pick you up at the door of the courthouse.
• If you must drive, arrive early to make sure you can find parking.
• Be aware that security guards may ask you to remove your belt and jacket and search any bags. If your loved one will be upset by these procedures, ask if you can carry these items into the courthouse on his behalf.
• Bring food and medicine, if needed, since you may be in court for several hours.
• Dress nicely. This will make a good impression on the court and show that you are taking the hearing seriously.

Mental Health Court
Source: https://www.samhsa.gov/gains-center/mental-health-treatment-court-locator/adults?field_gains_mhc_state_value=IL

Court: Peoria County Mental Health Court
Contact: Daniel Hunt
State: Illinois
Phone: 309-672-6958
Email: dhunt@peoriacounty.org (link sends e-mail)
Year Established: 2010

Court: Tazewell County Mental Health Court
Contact: Katy Watson & Tricia Larson, Tazwood Center for Wellness or Susan Walker, 309-478-5727
State: Illinois
Phone: 309-347-5522
Email: kwatson@tazwoodmhc.org
Year Established: 2016

Personal Story—Kevin Earley
Source: nami.org

It was my fifth hospitalization that changed the way I viewed the world. The four previous hospitalizations had occurred because friends or family took me to the hospital, or because of criminal justice involvement. I had been arrested three times, for things like breaking and entering and destruction of property, and each time I was sent to the hospital. But being arrested is no way to get to the hospital. I had horrible experiences when I was arrested—once I was attacked by police dogs and put in restraints and once I was tasered.

The fifth time I went to the hospital, it was on my own accord. I was done. I wasn’t happy with the direction my life was headed. I knew that I either had a mental illness or there was a vast conspiracy against me. But there was no conspiracy—I was sick. It took me hitting rock bottom to realize that I had to take responsibility for my actions. I decided to become an active part of my treatment, taking my medication, and working toward recovery.

After my most recent arrest, I was placed into a jail diversion program for people with mental illnesses. After I had been back on my meds for about a year or two, the Fairfax County Community Services Board asked me to come and work for them. I’ve been working here six years. I work with people with mental illness and support them while they get back on their feet. Many people are homeless or off their meds. I’m somebody who can bridge the gap between the individual and the treatment team because I’ve been there. I take them on outings to help them get acclimated to society and help them remember to take their medication.

It’s really satisfying to see the before and after: where someone is at when they enter the program versus a year or so later. They make great strides when they have a handle on their illness. I’m happy to know that my recovery can help others.

I also give speeches to crisis intervention team (CIT) officers and tell them my story. I work with them on safer and better ways to interact with people with mental illnesses. I’ve made really great friends with police officers by giving these presentations.

Kevin Earley attended art school in Brooklyn, NY. He currently lives in Virginia and works as a peer support recovery specialist in Fairfax County Community Services Board.

Additional Resources

✓ http://www.nami.org/FAQ/Legal-Support-FAQ/My-boss-is-treating-me-unfairly-because-of-my-ment/#stash.96smhh06.dpuf
✓ http://www.nami.org/FAQ/Legal-Support-FAQ/How-do-I-file-a-complaint-against-a-mental-health/#stash.0zn5158x.dpuf
✓choicesinrecovery.com—guides for recovery strategies
✓nimh.nih.gov/—National Institute on Mental Health
✓samhsa.gov—substance abuse & mental health services administration
✓psychcentral.com—getting help for a variety of mental illnesses
We provide education, support groups, and advocacy for families, friends, and individuals with mental illness in Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties.

Name(s) ____________________________________________________________________________
Address _________________________________________ Phone _____________________________
City ______________________ST ______ZIP __________E-mail _____________________________

Monetary Donation
$10________ $25________ $50________ $100________ $250________ Other $________
Check enclosed for $__________________________ Donations are tax deductible

Complete and mail to NAMI Tri-County Illinois, Attn: Treasurer, P.O. Box 10167, Peoria IL 61612
Make checks payable to NAMI Tri-County Illinois. Phone: 309 693-0541