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***For Immediate Release***

**SAMHSA ADMINISTRATOR COMES TO PITTSBURGH TO DISCUSS MENTAL ILLNESS AS A  
PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE  
Local Advocacy Organization NAMI to Host Event Featuring National Leader on Mental Health**

*Pittsburgh, Pa.*— Do you consider mental illness a public health issue? Should a person’s healthy mental development be a national priority? These are some of the questions that will be discussed on Friday, June 14, at an event in Pittsburgh featuring Pam Hyde, Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public efforts to advance the behavioral health system of the nation.

“We deal with the social issues of mental health all the time: homelessness, unemployment, dropping out of treatment,” explains Christine Michaels, Executive Director of NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania, the organization that is hosting the event featuring Administrator Hyde on Friday. “But if you start thinking of mental illness as a public health issue, then you begin with prevention. And that’s a new way of thinking.”

- WHAT:** *Mental Health and Substance Use as a Public Health Issue*
- WHO:** Pam Hyde, J.D., Administrator  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- WHEN:** Friday, June 14, 2013 • 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- WHERE:** Sheraton Station Square, Admiral Room
- WHY:** To explain and foster a discussion among providers, advocates and consumers of mental health services why mental health and substance use are public health issues in America.

“We are thrilled to bring Administrator Hyde to Allegheny County, where we have a rich array of services and a strong mental health system that is focused on recovery during a time of great change,” states Ms. Michaels. “She represents our leadership at the national level and is our best hope of a recovery focused mental health system in the future.”

The event is sponsored by Allegheny HealthChoices, Inc. with support from Value Behavioral Health.

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania (an affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness through recovery focused support, education and advocacy. More information is available at [www.namiswpa.org](http://www.namiswpa.org) or by calling (412) 366-3788.

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