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For Immediate Release

CONFERENCE TO CHANGE PERCEPTION OF SUICIDE
NAMI Presents Conference on Tuesday to Raise Awareness and Understanding of Suicide

Pittsburgh, Pa.— NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania announces its first conference dedicated solely to the topic of suicide, specifically explaining suicide as an illness not a behavior. Featuring keynote speaker Ian Cummins, who walked across America in memory of his brother Ryan, this one-day conference will describe suicide from several perspectives including that of a prominent medical researcher, an experienced clinician, a prevention strategist, family members living with the loss of a loved one, and individuals themselves who have made an attempt.

What: The Road Less Traveled Conference: Raising Suicide Awareness Across America

When: Tuesday, Nov. 18 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: Sheraton Station Square

Who: **Christine Michaels**, MSHSA, Executive Director, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania
Kathy Fowler, Advocate for Survivors of Suicide
Susan Wesner, RN, MSN, CS, Clinician, STAR-Center, Western Psychiatric
Lisa Pan, MD, Assistant Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Western Psychiatric
Ian Thomas Cummins, RN, AND, Ian Walks America
Charma D. Dudley, PhD, FPPR, Associate Director of Behavioral Health Services, Value Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania; Board President, NAMI Southwestern PA
Jennifer Sikora, Board Member, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Suicide Attempt Survivors and Family Members Who Have Lost Loved Ones

"Many family members suffer in silence when they lose a loved one to suicide," said NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Executive Director Christine Michaels. "This conference has a supportive, healing component to it and will reinforce that suicide is an illness. We hope to send people away with a new awareness and understanding of suicide."

This conference is funded by Ian Walks America and sponsored by Western Psychiatric Institute & Clinic.

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NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania provides recovery focused support, education and advocacy to individuals and families affected by mental illness. More information is available at www.namiswpa.org or by calling (412) 366-3788.