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For Immediate Release

**NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Awarded Seal of Excellence
Local Nonprofit To Be Honored by Statewide Organization for Achieving *Standards for Excellence*[®]**

Pittsburgh, Pa.— NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania has been awarded the Seal of Excellence by the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) for successfully completing the *Standards for Excellence* accreditation program. Only those nonprofits that demonstrate the highest standards of conduct are awarded the Seal of Excellence. Of the approximately one million nonprofits operating today in the United States, only about 200 have earned the Seal. NAMI is one of just 15 nonprofits in Southwestern Pennsylvania to have achieved this distinction.

"The quality of our work matters, and we want to be excellent," said NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Executive Director Christine Michaels, MSHSA. "Pursuing the Seal of Excellence required us to examine our organization from the inside out, revealing how NAMI was built on a strong foundation and validating that our work is of the highest quality."

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania earned The Seal of Excellence after a rigorous months-long review process conducted by PANO and a team of independent peer reviewers. They evaluated all of the organization's operations, work and accomplishments and determined that NAMI demonstrated successful compliance in meeting the high standards set forth in PANO's *Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector*.

"The Seal of Excellence is granted to well-managed, responsibly governed organizations that are deserving of the public's trust," explained Patricia Mogan, *Standards for Excellence* Officer for PANO, located in Harrisburg. "NAMI's Board and staff have shown an extensive level of commitment to this process, and their pursuit of the Seal of Excellence confirms that they believe strongly in the integrity of their business." Anne Gingerich, PANO's Executive Director, added, "NAMI can focus even more fully on advancing its mission of improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness, as staff will be less likely to get bogged down in the issues that can arise due to faulty internal systems. The Seal of Excellence is truly one of the ways that organizations can better position themselves to reach their fullest potential."

NAMI staff will accept the award at a reception in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, June 25.

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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.