



National Alliance on Mental Illness

The Voice

The Newsletter of NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania

Volume 15, Issue 2 September 2009

NAMI Southwestern PA Launches NAMIpedia

Innovative online tool provides resources and support to those with serious mental illness and their loved ones

NAMI Southwestern PA (SWPA) is proud to announce the launch of NAMIpedia, its customized, user-friendly online tool that provides information, education and support to mental health consumers, family members and the community. NAMIpedia is located on the NAMI SWPA web site at www.namiswa.org.

NAMIpedia's breakthrough technology simulates a real-time conversation



Do you have questions about mental health issues?

NAMIpedia

Get video answers from medical experts, consumers and family members.

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through the Internet, offering a sense of privacy to users, while delivering personalized answers that help people learn to more effectively deal with serious mental illness and its impact on everyday life. This special initiative of NAMI SWPA was developed using patented technology developed by Carnegie Mellon University and licensed to MedRespond LLC, an online health communications provider. Funding for the project was provided by the Staunton Farm Foundation.

“NAMIpedia was first conceptualized in 2006, and over the past three years NAMI SWPA has been committed to seeing this vision become a reality,” explains NAMI SWPA Associate Director Debbie Ference. “We sought to develop a web-based tool that would provide high-quality information and

education, but we wanted it to be unique in delivering the content with compassion and empathy. Those who explore NAMIpedia will immediately see how we have accomplished that goal. It was a total team effort.”

NAMIpedia is incomparable to the millions of Internet sites that simply define mental illness. NAMIpedia provides an interactive, personalized resource of comfort and encouragement, in addition to the vital clinical information people need to deal with the life challenges that accompany serious mental illness.

NAMIpedia harnesses the vast resources of the Internet – through

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From the Desk of the Executive Director...

In our rather simplistic, energy conserving way, we tend to view our NAMI life around our two major events — our annual conference and our annual NAMI Walk. It is very symmetrical, two reasonable spaced events on the calendar. We have a spring event and fall event. So, as summer approached, our team kicked into Walk mode. At least we tried. And as always the way of life, some good and some bad stuff disrupted our congruent, organized work life.

Bad stuff first. The state budget and the political shenanigans of our governor and legislators is reprehensible and if it goes on much longer can devastate the community mental health provider service system. (This is my personal opinion and not the opinion of NAMI Southwestern PA.) Mind you we cherish and long for the simple life, a new budget in place for July 1 as the fiscal year begins. The only positive of NAMI in the whole state budget saga is that our very own government relations expert Sharon Miller returned to work after an extended medical leave. We welcomed her return as she “hit the ground running” (NAMI humor) with the state budget.

I saved the good stuff for last because I want to leave you with upbeat and positive feelings. The unveiling of NAMIPedia (see cover story) in our NAMI National Convention workshop became our moment in time when we put NAMI Southwestern PA on the map of NAMI affiliates across the United States. The reaction and response of the audience simply overwhelmed us in the best of ways. NAMIPedia was a very big hit, and the degree of interest from other affiliates quite unanticipated. When really good stuff happens that was not planned for, the ability to scramble becomes invaluable. Please know the NAMI Southwestern PA staff team can scramble and hustle, too.

Speaking of scrambling and hustling, please come out to the NAMI Walk on Sunday, October 4, 2009. The unity of one voice speaking out against stigma and in support of recovery and hope warms your heart and renews your spirit.

I leave you with this message. Visit NAMIPedia. Check out our blog. Sign up for the NAMI Walk. Its all on our website, www.namispwa.org.

Best Wishes to All,

Christine Michaels, MSHSA
Executive Director, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania MISSION STATEMENT

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania is a regional grassroots organization dedicated to helping families and individuals affected by mental illness achieve lives of quality and respect, through education and advocacy that supports recovery.

News Around the Region

Updates on Legislation and Policy Impacting the Mental Health Community

Sharon A. Miller, Director of Education and Community Relations, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania

Expanded Legislative link on NAMI Southwestern PA website

As effective legislative advocacy becomes increasingly essential to maintaining funding and access for behavioral health treatment and needed community supports, we have redesigned the legislative affairs link on our website www.namiswa.org.

The information is categorized into separate components for federal and state legislation including an electronic bill room linking to individual bills of interest to the mental health community. Additional components on this updated legislative affairs link include timely information on federal health care reform initiatives and Medicaid-Medicare.

The *Call to Action* component includes effective legislative outreach tips and the option to subscribe to email alerts keeping members informed with the most up to date relevant information on initiatives, legislation and policy.

Mayview Land Reuse Task Force Reviews Final Recommendations at July Meeting

The Mayview State Hospital Task Force, co-chaired by Sen. John Pippy (R-37) and Rep. Nick Kotik (D-45), was created to address the issue of how to best reuse the facility/land of the former state hospital. The task force started meeting over a year ago, holding hearings to determine the best future use of the property. The task force has brought together representatives of local communities, the county, the state, mental health advocates, as well as the general public, to identify options for reusing the facility and the grounds.

We at NAMI thank the Mayview State Hospital Land Reuse Task Force for hearing the concerns of the Mental Health (MH) advocacy community as evident in the stated recommendations of the Final Report document. It is clear that this process has been open, inclusive and very welcoming of public input. We thank the Land Re-use Task Force for the thoroughness of its efforts. Anyone interested in reviewing the Final Report or accessing the public comments/written testimony can do so at www.mayviewlandreusetaskforce.com

Task Force Final Report Recommendations as Pertains to MH Community:

- Calls for the dedication of proceeds of sale of the property to be placed in a restricted revenue account to be used for regional mental health housing and peer support. The Final Report notes that this recommendation will require the introduction and passage of separate legislation, and co-chairs Rep. Kotik and Sen. Pippy support those actions. Rep. Kotik is a co-sponsor of Rep. Frankel's bill HB 1190. While Sen. Pippy has been a co-sponsor of Sen. Ferlo's bill SB 393, he plans on either offering an amendment to the senate bill or introducing a new bill. The language Sen. Pippy plans to propose better protects MH interests by calling out details on potential resale of property originally sold by the Commonwealth. Should that indeed occur within 10 years, then one third of the net proceeds of new sale would also go into the MH or MR account.
- Calls for the sale of the property at fair market value based on highest and best use.
- Calls for the dedication of a memorial to the individuals who lived and received treatment at Mayview State Hospital.



State Budget Impact on the Mental Health Community

The Aug. 5 signing by Gov. Rendell of the "bridge/stop-gap" (temporary) budget should not be interpreted as "Crisis Over" but rather a call to action for the Senate and House leadership to get back to work immediately and craft a bill that is balanced and fully funded. Should the impasse continue as this edition arrives in mailboxes, NAMI members are urged to:

- Please contact Senate and House leadership and continue to contact your respective members of the PA Senate and House, urging them to move swiftly in their efforts to pass a full and complete budget while protecting mental health funding as lives depend upon these ESSENTIAL and crucial services and supports.




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Mark your calendar for the only event of its kind in this region.
Join us for the 3rd Annual NAMI Walks for the Mind of America!

3rd Annual NAMI Walk
Sunday, Oct. 4, 2009
Registration, SouthSide Works, 9 a.m.
5K Walk, Three Rivers Heritage Trail, 10 a.m.

When you participate in the NAMI Walk—as a walker, team member, volunteer or donor—you become part of one of the most important events we have to further our mission at NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania.




When you walk, you...

-  Reduce stigma
-  Promote treatment
-  Raise awareness that recovery is possible



Every participant and donor helps us take another step toward eliminating the stigma of mental illness and furthering our mission of hope and recovery.

You can get involved by...

-  Registering for the walk at www.namiswpa.org
-  Asking family, friends and co-workers to support you with a donation
-  Volunteering on Walk Day (if you choose not to walk)

Shorter distances are available for those who cannot walk the 5K (3.1 miles).

Don't forget the fun!

The walk is a celebration that treatment works and recovery is possible. Beginning at 9 a.m., join us for registration, complimentary coffee and breakfast refreshments, music, team photos and kids activities. Led by Honorary Chair Michelle Wright, news anchor of WTAE-TV, the walk will begin promptly at 10 a.m.

NAMI Walk Chairpersons



We are pleased to introduce our first-ever Business Team Chair **John Lovelace**, President of *UPMC for You*. John is leading a UPMC Team to the walk and has facilitated his company's support as the walk's Presenting Sponsor.

Welcome back to our lovely Honorary Chair Michelle Wright, News Anchor of WTAE-TV.

Special thanks to our Family Team Chair and Top Walk Fundraiser **Jim Ehrman** for his continued leadership and support!



Raffle for NAMI

Our walk teams are selling raffles for \$5 each to raise funds for the NAMI Walk. The prize will be drawn on Walk Day (Sunday, Oct. 4, 2009). Winner need not be present to win.

1st prize: \$500 shopping spree*

2nd prize: \$300 Giant Eagle gift card

3rd prize: \$200 gas card

To buy or sell tickets, call (412) 366-3788 or email dgarda@namiswpa.org.

**Gift card to Simon Malls (Ross Park, South Hills Village, Century III)*

The Team To Beat

Who will be the top NAMI Walk team in 2009? Last year, **Western Psychiatric Institute & Clinic (WPIC)** stole the show by raising \$7,423. The WPIC team won a tour of WTAE-TV studios—guided personally by Michelle Wright—and the chance to lead NAMI Walk 2009. Who will be The Team to Beat in 2009?



Top 10 Teams

Our teams are the heart of the NAMI Walk. In 2008, 70 teams convened at the NAMI Walk to celebrate recovery and let their collective voice be heard. The 10 superstar teams below—known as the Top 10—raised nearly \$40,000. Way to go!

1. Western Psychiatric Institute & Clinic
2. Jim's Jocks
3. Community Care Empower Rangers
4. South Hills Stampedede
5. Leo's Team
6. Mercy Behavioral Health
7. Team Laura's Mom
8. NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania
9. Go CART!
10. NAMI North Hills Support Group

Stomp out Stigma

Is there a restaurant you frequent? A small business you support like a fitness center or tanning salon? A doctor's office you visit regularly? A retail outlet you find yourself in often?

If you answered yes, consider asking the store manager to sell NAMI Walk "Stomp out Stigma" cut-outs. For \$1, patrons buy a cut-out, write their names on it and display it on a designated wall. The bright blue and yellow NAMI colors provide an attractive, colorful accent to any décor and show the organization's community support.

This is a great team fundraiser for the NAMI Walk and can be done practically anywhere!

For more information, call Darcey at (412) 366-3788 ext. 23 or email dgarda@namiswpa.org.



- Please urge members to explore all available means to enhance revenue, including increases in taxes, to maintain these needed and essential services. A continued budgetary impasse could be cause for many community providers to exhaust their lines of credit and lay off employees or limit service provision beginning as early as September.
- Attend a local stakeholders meeting coordinated throughout the state by county offices of behavioral health. The state Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) has called on counties to prioritize services should a protracted budget impasse or decimated Department of Public Welfare appropriations in the final budget cause community providers to limit services.

Federal Healthcare Reform Initiatives

As this edition of *The Voice* goes to print, Congress is beginning its monthlong summer recess, and health care legislation is reaching a critical stage. While neither the House nor the Senate is expected to move toward a final vote on legislation until well into the fall, NAMI members and others in our MH community should schedule local district visits with each of our members of Congress. Many NAMI members joined with other health reform advocates to share concerns and pose questions to our local members of Congress at Town Hall meetings held throughout the month of August. Check out our website—www.namiswa.org— for re-caps of these events. Look for the next issue of *The Voice* to cover federal health care reform initiatives in our feature article.

NAMI's basic message to Congress is:

- Move on health reform legislation that provides quality and affordable health care for all while reducing the rate of growth in health care costs in the future.
- Ensure that mental illness treatment is included as part of any required basic benefit package AND is covered at parity relative to medical surgical benefits consistent with Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008.
- Address medical co-morbidities experienced by individuals with serious mental illness through expanded access to primary care and early intervention services.

SAMHSA Provides New Online Resource for Ideas and Discussion about Health System Reform

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has created a new place on its website www.samhsa.gov/healthreform for posting and exchanging ideas about the issues and opportunities surrounding the future of America's health system — especially on how reform may affect mental health, substance abuse prevention and treatment services. The goal of the website is to provide background information to policy makers on this important perspective of the health reform discussion. Stakeholders can work together on this website to examine opportunities where health system reform might enhance prevention, treatment and recovery services to people in need. 🌐

Join NAMI Southwestern PA for the 3rd Annual NAMI Walk

Walk with us to raise awareness and erase the stigma associated with mental illness. Together we will spread the word that treatment works and recovery is possible!

For more information:

Visit www.namiswa.org

Email info@namiswa.org or call (412) 366-3788

Thank you to our generous 2009 sponsors!

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a personal association with other people – to:

- Connect the user to others who are experiencing similar issues.
- Allow participants to ask questions in everyday language.
- Encourage interaction and experiential online learning.
- Deliver focused answers to highly personal questions with caring and compassion.
- Provide support and encouragement with privacy and anonymity.
- Offer clinical information, in addition to practical advice.
- Present answers to myriad questions from the perspectives of a variety of people –
 - Mental health consumers.
 - Family members.
 - Mental health professionals.

“NAMI SWPA recognizes that the most popular way people access information today is through the Internet,” Ference continues. “Conduct an online search for ‘mental illness’ and you’ll find more than 22 million sources. This type of information overload can be overwhelming to people with serious mental illness and their loved ones. We purposefully created NAMIpedia to be different from so

many of those sites. NAMIpedia does more than just define mental illness. It delivers important information in a highly personal format that can truly make a significant difference in people’s lives.”

NAMIpedia received an overwhelmingly positive response when it was publicly unveiled at the NAMI National Convention, held in July 2009 in San Francisco. Participants in the 75-minute workshop were very enthusiastic about NAMIpedia, and many staff members from NAMIs throughout the country inquired as to how they can be a part of this project.

“We were blown away by the intense level of excitement,” explains Darcey Garda, Manager of Marketing and Development for NAMI SWPA. “When we announced that this workshop marked the unveiling of NAMIpedia across the country, the audience burst into applause. They recognized that this initiative speaks directly to our collective mission of improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness.”

Visit NAMIpedia now at www.namiswpa.org and ask your questions. For more information on how to gain optimal benefits from NAMIpedia, consider attending an information meeting and NAMIpedia demo, which NAMI SWPA plans to schedule for late fall 2009. The date will be announced in September. 🌐

Special thanks to the Staunton Farm Foundation for funding NAMIpedia and other NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania anti-stigma projects.



www.stauntonfarm.org

We don't just define mental illness...

NAMIpedia

...we help you deal with how mental illness is affecting your life and the lives of those you love.



www.namiswpa.org

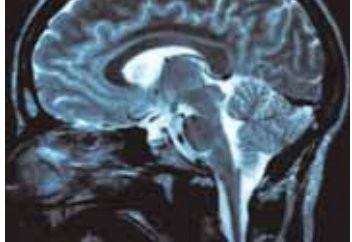
Free Education and Support for Families Who Have Relatives with Serious Mental Illness



The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program is a free 12-week course for families and friends of individuals with brain disorders called serious mental illness. The course is taught by trained family members who have lived with this experience. **All course materials are furnished at no cost to you.**

Many family members describe the impact of this program as *life changing*. Join thousands of families just like yours who have gained information, insight, and understanding and empowerment.

Family-to-Family Course Topics include:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family responses to the trauma of mental illness. 2. Schizophrenia, major depression, and mania: Diagnosis and dealing with critical periods. 3. Depression and Bipolar subtypes; Panic disorder; Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD); Borderline Personality Disorder; Co-occurring brain and addictive disorders. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The biology of the brain: emerging scientific discoveries. 5. Problem solving workshop 6. Medication review 7. Understanding the inner experience of having a mental illness. 8. Communication skills workshop. 9. Self-care, relative group testimony. 10. Rehabilitation, services available. |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Advocacy, fighting stigma. 12. Celebration & certification ceremony. |
|--|--|--|

Pre-Registration Required – space is limited and classes fill quickly!

Class Starting Dates & Locations

105 Braunlich Drive, Ross Township, Tuesday, Sept. 1, 7:00-9:30 pm
 Heinz Progressive Care Center, Aspinwall, Wednesday, Sept. 23, 6:30 - 9:00 pm
 Children’s Institute, Squirrel Hill, Monday, Sept. 28, 6:30-9:00 pm

To register for classes, contact NAMI Southwestern PA at 412-366-3788
 or email info@namispwa.org.



In the Spotlight...

Charma D. Dudley, PhD, FPPR, *Clinical Director, Family Resources, President, NAMI Southwestern PA Board of Directors*

What is your role with Family Resources?

Family Resources' mission is to prevent and treat child abuse by strengthening

families and neighborhoods across Western Pennsylvania. Since 1986, Family Resources has offered innovative programs that have a measurable impact in preventing abuse, and when abuse occurs, we treat the whole family. We also collaborate with health care providers and other social service organizations to provide parents and caregivers with the support they need to raise happy, healthy children.

My role is to provide clinical oversight and direction for the treatment programs at Family Resources, including outpatient psychotherapy, crisis intervention and family-based mental health services, preschool services through the Therapeutic Parent and Children's Center, family-focused solution based services and parent-teen conflict services. I also oversee the Intake Department and the Records Management Department.

Why did you become involved with NAMI?

As a licensed psychologist with more than 20 years of experience, I know how often mental illness accompanies abuse and neglect. I have seen significant depression in children as young as three years old, and recognize that early intervention and treatment encourage more effective coping mechanisms and greater hope for recovery into adolescence and adulthood. Education and advocacy are crucial to encouraging people to seek treatment for themselves or their loved ones, and too often stigma gets in the way. I was introduced to NAMI Southwestern PA in 2001 when I started working at Family Resources, and the more I came to learn about NAMI, the more I realized others needed to learn about the work of this organization and the resources it offers.

When did you become involved with NAMI Southwestern PA?

I was elected to the NAMI Southwestern PA Board of

Directors in April 2004. It has been a welcome challenge for me to learn about the impact serious mental illness has on adults while sharing with others my knowledge of mental illness as it relates to children and their families. NAMI champions many great initiatives, and I am especially pleased to be involved with two of them, in addition to the board's activities.

The third annual NAMI Walks, which is scheduled this year for Sunday, Oct. 4, is an amazing day. It's an activity anyone can participate in. The NAMI Walk attracts a very diverse group of participants, all marching for the same important cause. It's a powerful event to be a part of.

As a health professional, I believe in the power of education and the importance of answering questions. I am proud to be involved with NAMIpedia, which provides mental health education in an online format that is completely non-threatening while being highly effective in delivering valuable information. If you log on to NAMIpedia at www.namiswa.org and ask a question related to mental illness, I may provide the answer!

How do you feel about serving as the new president of the NAMI Southwestern PA Board of Directors?

NAMI Southwestern PA has a strong, dedicated staff and a very experienced, hands-on board. The board is comprised of a diverse group of people with unique personal and professional experiences who complement one another. We all have a passion to improve the lives for people who are affected by mental illness and to build on NAMI's visibility and credibility in our community. I am honored to serve as the new board president because I truly believe in its efforts to bring mental health care professionals, consumers, loved ones and the community together. Mental illness affects people of every age, race, culture and gender, and I'm proud to support NAMI Southwestern PA in advocating for lives of quality and respect for all those who lives have been affected by mental illness.

The advocacy, education and support services provided by NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania's staff and dedicated volunteers give hope for recovery and a future filled with promise for the nearly 80,000 people in our region who cope with mental illness. *In the Spotlight* is one way NAMI recognizes the people who so diligently work to promote improvements in our behavioral health system while championing the needs of our constituents. If you wish to nominate someone to be featured in *In the Spotlight*, send an email to dgarda@namiswa.org.

NAMI Support Groups

Visit www.namiswa.org for additional information regarding support group meetings

Allegheny County

NAMI Pittsburgh South, Mt. Lebanon
Contact: Eileen Lovell (412) 401-4015

NAMI Pittsburgh North, Ross Twp., Contact: (Day) Dick/Sarah Focke (412) 367-3062 or (Eve) Pete/Candy Venezia (412) 361-8916

NAMI Pittsburgh East-FAMILIAS, Churchill
Contact: Anne Handler (412) 421-3656

NAMI Spouse Support Group, Churchill
Contact: Mim Schwartz (412) 731-4855

NAMI Sewickley Family Connections Support Group, Sewickley
Contact: Kathy Monahan (412) 749-7418

NAMI McKeesport, McKeesport
Contact: Cindy McHolme (412) 754-0998

NAMI Western PA Borderline/Personality Disorders Family Support Group, North Hills, Contact: Rose Schmitt (412) 487-2036

Minority Families of the Mentally Ill, Oakland
Contact: Wilma Sirmons (412) 327-4890

NAMI W.P.I.C. Family Support Group, Oakland
Contact: Merle Morgenstern (412) 246-5851

Beaver County

NAMI Beaver County, Rochester
Contact: Diane Watson (724) 774-7571

NAMI-CAN Beaver County, Beaver, Contact: (724) 775-9152

NAMI-C.A.R.E. (Consumers Advocating Recovery through Empowerment), Beaver, Contact: (724) 775-9152

NAMI CONNECTIONS, Rochester
6:30-8:00 p.m., Mondays, Mental Health Association, Beaver County
7:00-8:30 p.m., Thursdays, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Contact: (412) 366-3788

NAMI CONNECTIONS, Beaver
Meetings: 1:00-2:30 p.m., Thursdays, Aurora Psych Rehab
Contact: (412) 366-3788

Butler County

NAMI PA Butler County, Butler, Contact: Butler NAMI Office
(724) 431-0069 or Sandy Goetze (724) 452-4279

NAMI CONNECTIONS, Butler
Meetings: Sundays, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Butler Mental Health Association
Contact: (724) 431-0069

Fayette County

NAMI Fayette County, Uniontown
Contact: Carmella Hardy (724) 277-8173

NAMI-C.A.R.E. Fayette County, Uniontown
Contact: Carol Warman (724) 439-1352

Indiana County

NAMI Indiana County, Indiana, Contact: (724) 357-8105

Lawrence County

NAMI Lawrence County, New Castle
Contact: Sandi Hause (724) 657-0226

Washington County

NAMI Washington County, Washington
Contact: Tom Shade (724) 228-9847

Westmoreland County

NAMI Alle-Kiski, New Kensington,
Contact: Mary K. Slater (724) 335-4593

NAMI Mon Valley, Monessen & Irwin,
Contact: Harriett Hetrick (724) 872-2186

NAMI CONNECTIONS, Mt. Pleasant, *No Smoking
Meetings: 4:00-5:30 p.m., Tuesdays, Reunion Presbyterian Church
Contact: (724) 516-4623

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NAMI Southwestern PA : Join Today – Let Your Voice be Heard!

Annual dues include access to our regional lending library, resource and referral information, newsletters, conference information, and membership in NAMI Pennsylvania and national NAMI.

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted Income (minimum of \$3.00) \$_____ | |

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E-mail _____ Number of family members in membership _____

- I would like my copy of the Voice electronically. (provide email) _____
- I am interested in receiving Call to Action alerts via email and participating in legislation and policy advocacy.
(provide email) _____

Please make check payable and mail to: NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania, 105 Braunlich Drive,
McKnight Plaza, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Membership is tax-deductible. Official registration and financial information of NAMI Southwestern PA may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll-free within PA: 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.