

# MIO PARTNER COALITION

MULTICULTURAL & INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH CENTER

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NAMI celebrates its 25th Anniversary: A Quarter Century of Changing Minds. Our Anniversary Convention will be both a look back and a look forward. We will celebrate how far our movement has come since a disparate group of parents and self-help groups came together 25 years ago to demand an end to public and private health and social policies that were failing miserably to help people with serious mental illness. As part of the celebration, we are organizing exciting events that reflect NAMI's commitment to diversity.

This year, the Convention, which will take place in Washington D.C. at the Washington Hilton and Towers Hotel September 8th to the 12th, will offer an African American Mental Health Symposium, a deaf community track, and our first ever NAMI MIO Partner Coalition Meeting. We would like to extend a warm invitation to all our Partners to join us during these events. We will contact you in the near future with more information and updates.

The African Americans: Facing Mental Illness & Experiencing Recovery Symposium, will address key mental health issues that affect this community. The event will highlight major research findings and will discuss mental illness from a family approach. The Symposium will bring together consumers, family members, researchers,

and providers to address the need for mental health services in the African American community...

NAMI, the NAMI Consumer Council. and the Deaf Services State Coordinators are organizing the National Breakout Conference. This event will take place September 4-8, 2004 in conjunction with the NAMI Convention. As Randy Myers, Ph.D., NAMI/Breakout Conference Liaison mentions, "This effort will focus on consumer and family involvement and best practices. We believe this is a very positive and exciting opportunity to include people of different cultures and languages in their work and provide both deaf and hearing participants a chance to learn directly from one another."

The NAMI MIO Partner Coalition Meeting will bring us together to discuss how to meet the mental health needs of our communities and to determine how we could work together to advance mental health services, information, and support for people of color. Furthermore, this meeting will provide a wonderful opportunity to create strong bonds among the current 42 partners.

Once again, we would like to invite all our Partners to join us during our 25th year celebration! We hope to see you there!

### Black History Month

NAMI joins the African American community incelebrating their history, heritage, and great contributions to the American society. During this NAMImonth MIO is highlighting and honoring African American **NAMI** leaders and the achievements and rich history of this community. To be part of NAMI's celebration please visit us at www.nami.org





## MIO PARTNER COALITION

### The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) By Craig Bowman, Executive Director

While lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth have gained significant ground over the past decade, grave threats to their health and safety remain. They often suffer, not because they are LGBTQ, but due to societal homophobia and discrimination; and because as adults we are not fulfilling our responsibilities—ensuring that every youth, of every race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, grows up in a safe and healthy environment that nurtures and supports them.

The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) is a social justice organization that empowers its members to fight injustice against LGBTQ youth; and advocates for their physical and emotional well-being. It is the only national organization focused solely on improving the lives of LGBTQ youth through advocacy, education, and program support.

NYAC is proud to partner with NAMI to focus attention on the unique stressors and risks that may take a toll on the mental health of LGBTQ young people. Some of these stressors include: the coming out process; a lack of LGBTQ specific support structures and networks (family, peers, social, etc.) which can make the identity development and exploration process more cumbersome and difficult for a young person; and the overwhelming anxiety that many youth feel as they navigate the complex feelings and emotions they experience as they struggle to understand their attractions for someone of the same sex.

Unfortunately, many LGBTQ young people also face rejection from their

loved ones after coming out or "being discovered." Many youth leave home as a result or are forced into "alternative" living arrangements (i.e. with a friend, lover, etc.). Youth also commonly experience or are threatened with verbal or physical abuse related to their sexuality.

Self-acceptance, self-efficacy, and self-esteem are critical issues for all adole scents, but the maturation process and the development of secondary sex (defining masculinity and femininity) characteristics can be particularly traumatic for LGBTQ young people, especially adole scents who are struggling with gender issues. These young people are often subject to extraordinary harassment.

With all of these factors in play, it is not surprising that LGBTQ young people are at an increased risk for depression and other serious mental health issues. Higher self-report rates of suicide ideation occur among LGBTQ youth and they are two-three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual adole scents.

NYAC is committed to ending the stigma associated with being an LGBTQ adolescent; and by working with NAMI, is hopeful that new resources and strategies can be developed to protect this vulnerable population and improve their overall mental health.

For more information about NYAC or their LGBTQ youth health initiatives, please visit their website at www.nyacyouth.org or call 202.319.7596 x20.

#### **Coalition Members:**

Alianza Nacional de Salud Mental (Mexico)

Alianza Para la Depresión (España)

American Psychiatric Association

APOIAR (Brazil)

American Society of Hispanic Psychiatry

Asian Community Mental Health Services

Asociación Argentina de Ayuda a la Persona que Padece de Esquizofrenia y su Familia (APEF)

Asociación Maníaco Depresivos (Colombia)

Asociación Salvadoreña de Familiares y Amigos de Pacientes Esquizofrénicos

Catholic Charities of Central Texas

Black Psychiatrists of America

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Boston University

Circles of Care Evaluation Technical Assistance Center

Fundación Contener (Argentina)

Fundación Luz y Vida (Paraguay)

Health Watch Information and Promotion Service

International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services

INGENIUM (Mexico)

Voz Pro Salud Mental (Mexico)

Latino Behavioral Health Institute

Massachusetts Mental Health Services Program for Youth



## MIO PARTNER COALITION

### Parents and Teachers as Allies Pilot Project

In order to close the gap between Latino children and much needed mental health services NAMI is developing a pilot program to educate Latino parents and teachers about mental illness. Our goal is to help Latinos recognize and identify the early signs of these illnesses and give them the tools, information, and support that they need to access treatment.

Mental illness is highly stigmatized in the Latino community. In order to by-pass this barrier, NAMI is developing a culturally sensitive program that will ease people into receiving much needed mental illness information. Loosely based on its popular Parents and Teachers as Allies booklet, NAMI is developing a 3-session

program to be implemented in schools. This Spanish language program will be piloted at Key Elementary School, a bilingual school in Arlington, VA where Latino children make up 52.8% of the student body. Some of the components of the program are:

- Collaboration with a local community leader who has the trust and respect of the school's parents.
- Easy information about major mental illness and symptoms.
- Support and guidance for parents who have a child with mental illness
- Child care available during the presentations.

#### NAMI International Partners



As part of the NAMI MIO Coalition. NAMI has shared with its international Partners educational materials and resources. These organiza-

tions have translated these materials into their own languages and use them as valuable informational resources. NAMI is happy to use these translated materials to benefit the millions of Americans with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

INGENIUM (Mexico) translated several fact sheets and NAMI educational documents into Spanish. More over, IN-GENIUM translated the Family to Family curriculum which is currently used around the country.

Voz Pro Salud Mental (Mexico) translated the NAMI Support Group Facilitator's Manual.

The Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Taiwan translated several articles into Mandarin. Thanks to their hard work, NAMI has created a Chinese language section on the web site. Similarly, APOIAR (Brazil) has shared with us their translated Portuguese materials and NAMI MIO is creating a Portuguese language section on the web site

We thank our international partners for their hard work and for sharing their expertise with us. We look forward to creating and developing more joint materials and projects that could be mutually beneficial.

To access this online resources please visit our web site at www.nami.org.

#### **Coalition Members:**

National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association

National Council of La Raza

National Latino Behavioral Health Association

National Medical Association

National Organization of People of Color Against Suicide

National Youth Advocacy Coalition

Nebraska Office of Minority Health

New Jersey Asian Association for Human Services

New Jersey Mental Health Institute

New Vision Consumer Services

Richmond Fellowship (New Zealand)

Self Reliance Foundation

Student National Medical Association

The Alliance for the Mentally Ill of R.O.C., Taiwan

The Depression and Anxiety Support Group (South Africa)

West Virginia Substance Abuse Coalition

Zenkaren (Japan)

If you would like to share any comments, questions or news. contact us at: NAMI MIO@nami.org

703-524-7600