



nami news



The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness

**For Immediate Release
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Attention: Health, Lifestyle, Family Editors

NAMIWALKS Deliver Message That Recovery From Mental Illness is Possible

Nationwide Effort Marks Mental Health Month in May

Arlington, VA—Tens of thousands of Americans will take to the streets beginning this weekend, May 1-2, to raise public awareness that recovery from mental illnesses is possible.

NAMIWALKS are part of the Campaign for the Mind of America, sponsored by NAMI (the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) during Mental Health Month. See www.nami.org/namiwalks.

“NAMIWALKS are an amazing phenomenon,” said NAMI acting national executive director Michael Fitzpatrick, who participated in last year’s walk in his home state of Maine. “Friends and neighbors come together who may have had no previous connection with mental health issues. They raise awareness. They build community.”

Now in its second year, the program is building from the grassroots up. It has expanded from 12 state and local communities in 2003 to a total of 35 this year. Most NAMI affiliates have selected May for the walks, with three scheduled for Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) in October.

“Every walk site is unique,” Fitzpatrick observed. Some draw locally. Some state-wide. Some regionally. There are balloons, banners, food, face-painting, music, moon bounces, and most of all hope.”

This year’s NAMIWALKS coincide with the federal government’s launch of an eight-state pilot education campaign, the Elimination of Barriers Initiative (EBI), aimed at helping remove the stigma often associated with mental illness.

“NAMIWALKS are part of a broader movement. One in five Americans will be affected by mental illness at some point during their lifetimes. We invite everyone in every state and local community to join us. Part of our message is that everyone is welcome in our society.”

(more)

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NAMIWALKS dates and states include:

May 1 Florida (Naples), Mississippi, Virginia

May 2 Maryland

May 8 Delaware, Kansas, Maine, Missouri (Springfield), Ohio (Columbus)

May 15 Alaska, Iowa, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio (Cincinnati), South Dakota, Tennessee (3 sites), Texas, Wisconsin (2 sites)

May 16 New Hampshire

May 22 California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri (St. Louis), Pennsylvania (2 sites)

May 23 Michigan, Ohio (Cleveland), Oregon

NAMIWALKS in October will be held in Florida (Orlando), Montana and New Jersey.

More detailed site information is listed at www.nami.org/namiwalks.

SPECIAL NOTE TO EDITORS:

Both national and local interviews are possible. Coverage of local events is invited.

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NAMI: The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness leads the national grassroots effort to transform America's mental health care system, combat stigma, support research, and attain adequate health insurance, housing, rehabilitation, jobs and family support for millions of Americans living with mental illnesses. NAMI's one thousand affiliates are dedicated to public education, advocacy and support and receive generous donations from tens of thousands of individuals as well as grants from government, foundations and corporations. NAMI's greatest asset, however, is its volunteers—who donate an estimated \$135 million worth of their time each year.

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