

Looking Ahead to 2007

by Majose Carrasco, Director NAMI Multicultural Action Center

2006 has been a good year for the NAMI Multicultural Action Center. While in the next pages we provide highlights about our 2006 efforts, this page provides you a brief look ahead of some of the major projects we are planning for 2007.

Inclusion Grants: The Multicultural Action Center is happy to announce that for the first time ever, NAMI is making available Inclusion Grants for NAMI state and affiliate offices in good standing. In January 2007, NAMI National will award \$400,000 to support both new and existing initiatives that increase and strengthen diversity within NAMI, with particular emphasis on encouraging state organizations and affiliates to embark on these efforts for the first time. Our goal is to build best practices in reaching out to a diverse group of individuals, including multicultural populations and consumers. The Inclusion Grants underscore NAMI's commitment to diversity and highlight the progress we have made in this area. While the grants will support existing successful efforts, they will also help additional NAMI offices develop and implement new multicultural initiatives.

Action Plan to Eliminate Disparities in Mental Health: This collaborative effort will guide NAMI's disparities advocacy work. The Action Plan focuses on consumer and family driven services, workforce issues, lack of access and quality of care for racial/ethnic minorities, and public education.

NAMI's 2007 Annual Convention: Next year's Convention will take place June 20-24 in San Diego, California. Once again, the Multicultural Action Center will proudly bring together leaders from around the country to further multicultural mental health. Among our major activities:

- ◆ **Listening Forum with Leaders from the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) community:** Recognizing that this community is among traditionally underserved groups that face additional barriers when dealing with mental health issues, the Multicultural Action Center will bring together an expert group to dialogue with NAMI leadership in regards to pressing issues in GLBT mental health. The effort will provide valuable information that NAMI can use to enhance its ability to effectively advocate for the mental health needs of all Americans.
- ◆ **Quality of Care for Racial/Ethnic Communities Convention Track:** This track will provide follow up information based on the Action Plan to Eliminate Disparities. It will highlight major issues in multicultural mental health.
- ◆ **Follow up Multicultural Task Force Meeting:** This meeting will bring back together organizations that met at the 2006 Summit and other organizations advocating for racial/ethnic mental health. The meeting will focus on multicultural children's mental health.

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Here at the Multicultural Action Center, we want to thank you for your support this year and we invite you to be part of our efforts as we continue working to further multicultural mental health access and quality

For more information on The activities of the Multicultural Action Center, please visit us at www.nami.org/multicultural

Multicultural Action Center Year in Review 2006

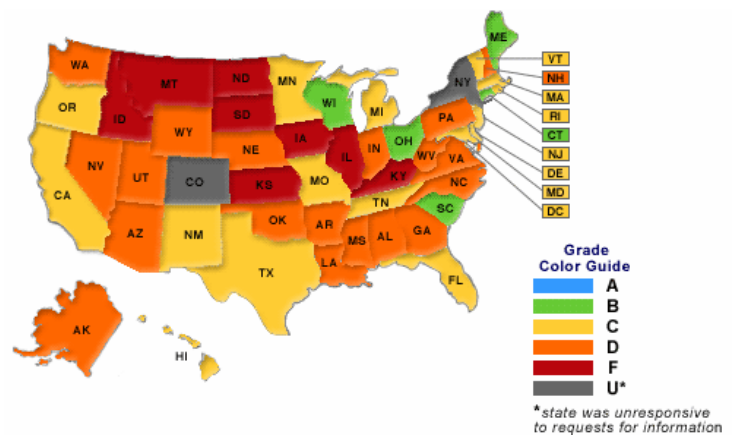
This issue of the Multicultural Action Center Newsletter marks the ending of another successful year in addressing multicultural mental health. As 2006 draws to a close, we proudly look back on all we have accomplished in this last year, acknowledging that much of our work would not have been possible without the collaboration with our partner organizations, supportive NAMI programs, and many wonderful NAMI members. The following is a highlight of activities over the past year that have helped move us forward.

¡avanzamos! Juntos por la salud mental

The first issue of NAMI's Spanish language newsletter came out in January. This quarterly newsletter has been a continued success featuring news from NAMI states and affiliates, research and policy updates specific to Latino issues, educational resources, personal stories, and more. Over 3,500 copies of *¡Avanzamos!* are distributed of each issue, and its popularity as an outreach tool in the Latino community is growing. Our next issue will come out in February 2007, and will include English language summaries of each article. To learn more about this publication, read previous issues, and to order copies, visit www.nami.org/avanzamos.

Grading the States: NAMI 2006 State Ratings Report

This report is the first comprehensive survey conducted in more than 15 years and includes the grading of state adult public mental healthcare systems: evaluating each state on the categories of infrastructure, information access, services, and recovery. The report is intended to be utilized as a consumers' guide to public services for adults with serious mental illness. The national average grade is D. Five states receive grades in the B range, eight receive F's, and none received A's. The report includes an overview of cultural competence and best practices in the mental health field.



Friday Conference Calls with Dr. Ken Duckworth

In partnership with the Multicultural Action Center, Dr. Duckworth hosted a Multicultural Mental Health series during his Friday Adult Conference Calls. From January through March, the series focused on mental health research in communities of color, with separate calls devoted to African American, Latino/Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian American mental health.

NAMI African American Leaders Group National Survey

Over 200 NAMI affiliates responded to the national web-based survey on African American and Latino Involvement and Leadership. Survey results were used during NAMI's Strategic Planning process, led by the Strategic Planning Committee, and have guided the work of the group which serves in an advisory role to the Multicultural Action Center. This work has recently been helpful in our concerted effort to identify and support African American Family to Family teachers.

First Congressional Briefing on Mental Health Issues for the Mexican Congress

This briefing was organized by Voz Pro Salud Mental, one of our strong partners in Mexico and featured a presentation by Majose Carrasco, Director of the Multicultural Action Center. This successful event was a milestone in mental health advocacy in Mexico as it was the first Congressional briefing on mental health issues.

Eliminating Disparities: Multicultural Strategic Summit

This event was the culmination of a five-year series of symposia to highlight mental health issues in the African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Latino communities. As part of NAMI's National Convention in Washington, D.C., the Summit brought several organizations and over 300 mental health advocates together to address issues involving mental health within all ethnic minority communities, the achievement of cultural competence, and the elimination of disparities. During the Summit's Town Hall meeting, advocates came up with over 50 action items for a plan to eliminate disparities in mental health.



Attendees at the "Eliminating Disparities in Mental Health Care" session, part of the Multicultural Strategic Summit.

Multicultural Taskforce Meeting

During the Multicultural Strategic Summit, over 20 nation wide organizations gathered together to develop an action plan addressing disparities in mental health for communities of color. The group identified key priority areas in need of immediate attention and developed a plan to push them forward. The four priority issues include: workforce development, public information/education, families and consumer involvement, and quality of care and access. NAMI has continued to work with these organizations to finalize a joint national action plan to be released in spring 2007.

Decreasing Disparities in Depression: An APA-NAMI Collaborative

The American Psychiatric Association and NAMI were awarded a grant by the Initiative for Decreasing Disparities in Depression (I3D). NAMI and the APA have been working together to develop and evaluate a CME curriculum addressing disparities in depression faced by communities of color in primary care settings. The intervention's goal is to equip these physicians with the knowledge and tools to identify and provide appropriate treatment to medically underserved ethnic and racial groups.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute 2006 Public Policy Conference



Hosted by the Honorable Grace Napolitano, this year's CHCI Public Policy Conference included, for the first time, a focus on mental health issues. The Mental Health Summit, entitled *Nuestra Salud Begins with our Mental Health*, featured panels of expert presenters addressing the mental health needs of Hispanic communities, cultural competency in service delivery, evidence-based practices, community education and outreach, and consumer/family driven resources. The Summit was moderated by Dr. Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, NMHA's Chairman of the Board of Directors and panelists included Dr. Pablo Hernandez, President of NLBHA, and Majose Carrasco.

The Multicultural Action Center would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have supported our efforts during this past year. We look forward to continuing collaboration with our wonderful partner organizations.

Persona a Persona Pilot Training

By Lorener Brayboy, Coordinator, NAMI Peer to Peer

“Apurate, Apurate,” my co-worker Ana said to me in Spanish, as I frantically put Peer-to-Peer Mentor Manuals together. We had approximately 45 minutes to finish before people would be walking into one of the meeting rooms of the Hilton Hotel. My stomach was tied in knots; my hands were clammy from nervousness, my heart was ready to explode. I had been preparing for this moment for several months, and it was finally here. I didn’t know what to expect, but I kissed my cross necklace and prayed that everything go well for the next four days....



The NAMI Education, Training, and Support Center, recently launched the Spanish Language Peer-to-Peer Mentor Training September 7-10, 2006, in St. Louis, Missouri, the first ever in the United States. As a coordinator of the training and a bi-racial individual, it was an honor to be part of such a historic moment for NAMI Consumer Education Programs, while NAMI National increases their efforts to address the mental health issues of ethnical and racial minorities. Various NAMI affiliates participated in this endeavor; NAMI NYC-Metro, NAMI Santa Clara, NAMI San Diego, and NAMI Southern Arizona.

Each affiliate selected a team of three individuals living with a mental illness to be trained as Peer-to-Peer Mentors. Each team consisted of individuals from diverse backgrounds, ages, and professions; Mexican American, Dominican, Venezuelan, second generation Americans, and even individuals who did not have a Hispanic background, but were heavily immersed in the culture throughout their lives. Throughout the four intense days of training, I observed the gradual transformation of each participant and the closeness and energy the group created as they experienced each week of the Peer-to-Peer curriculum; emphasizing the important components on how to lead group discussions and exercises.

Cultural elements and mental health issues were significantly highlighted throughout the training; the importance of the family role within recovery, spirituality, individual empowerment, and the continued stigma surrounding mental illness in Spanish speaking communities. These teams were efficiently prepared to launch this recovery program.

During this week, the NAMI Education, Training and Peer Support Center also made it possible to film a Spanish language outreach video for the Peer-to-Peer program. Many of these individuals made time to stay an extra day and participate in an elaborate interview process. The responses to the various interview questions emphasized the “lived experience” of mental illness and the elements of recovery which are incorporated into the curriculum.

The experience of filming a video was invaluable for me, in that although I am not a consumer, I felt I was helping people with similar backgrounds as myself. I also had the opportunity to partake in the editing and production of the video. I traveled to Pittsburgh, reviewed footage, and learned a tremendous amount about the art of production. On one occasion, I was also given the honor of interviewing two renowned Hispanic doctors in the field of psychiatry.

The NAMI Peer-to-Peer Recovery Education Course is a program that has been anxiously awaited and needed by the Spanish speaking community. This program will not only assist Spanish-speaking consumers to maintain wellness, but assist the Spanish-speaking community as a whole in gaining knowledge, awareness, and eradicate stigma regarding mental illness. As Hispanics and other communities continue to grow throughout the United States, tailoring community-based health care services and programs are of the utmost importance.

For more information on NAMI's Peer to Peer program visit www.nami.org/p2p.

Outreach Begins with Recognition of Disparities and an Equal Partnership

by Kimme Carlos and Jean Ross, Multicultural Outreach Committee Co-Chairs, NAMI Mercer County (NJ)

NAMI Mercer and its Multicultural Outreach Committee are attempting to expand and adapt its traditional services so that they are accessible and relevant not only to its historical base in the white suburbs of our county, but also to the African American communities in and around the nearby city of Trenton. Our committee's mission is to increase the participation of African American (and later Latino) families in our chapter.

A small group of NAMI members including the handful of African American members already participating in our programs began to meet about a year ago. We began with the premise that the social context of our project required us to consider and acknowledge the effects of the continued and pervasive racism in the de facto mental health system of hospitals, prisons and community agencies since it exacerbates the physical, social and experiential separations between racial/ethnic communities and limits the effectiveness of traditional outreach strategies. Therefore, we wanted to begin to develop the ability to talk more openly with each other about race and model trusting relationships, before we ventured into the African American community as an integrated grassroots organization.

After a preliminary facilitated honest discussion about race, we then organized an African American focus group, led by a member of our committee and observed by committee and board members. The topics discussed included issues the increasing racial and class divisions and tensions in society; the existence of a two tiered, for-profit health care system, divided by race and class and dominated by white elites; discriminatory drug laws, privatization of public services; criminalization of people with mental illness; and the multifaceted stigma suffered by African Americans with mental illness. The group acknowledged a general distrust of the mental health system and identified practical, cultural and historical barriers between African American communities and both the mental health system and advocacy organizations such as NAMI, making suggestions about how to address those barriers.

This session increased our understanding of the many issues facing the African American community in our area. We believe that it will enable us to improve the accessibility of NAMI services and enlarge our membership; promote the development of more effective organizing strategies; promote unity, by reducing internal prejudice and stigma; and improve strategies for strengthening NAMI's advocacy role.

It is our experience that there are advantages in trying to pierce racial boundaries by organizing people affected by mental illness, because mental illness respects neither racial nor class boundaries. We understand that without unity among persons with mental illness and their families, significant improvements in any sector of the de facto mental health system are unattainable. Unity requires honest discussion about hard issues like race.

13th Annual Rural Minority and Multicultural Health Conference



Mark your calendar for the National Rural Health Association's 13th Annual Rural Minority and Multicultural Health Conference being held May 14-15 in Anchorage, Alaska (the time of year when there will be 18 hours of daylight). This event is one of the only conferences in the U.S. to focus on rural minority and multicultural issues. The 2007 conference will feature topics such as tribal health, chronic health issues, behavioral health, cultural competence, community health workers, and more.

The mission of NRHA is to improve the health and wellbeing of rural Americans and to provide leadership on rural health issues through advocacy, communications, education, research and leadership.

To find out more about NRHA and the upcoming conference, visit www.NRHArural.org.



Save the Date!

The National Minority Health Month Foundation announces the 4th Annual National Summit on Health Disparities. The Summit, entitled *Improving the Quality of Care* will be held in honor of National Minority Health Month, April 23-24, 2007, at the Ritz-Carlton, Washington, D.C.

The Foundation was launched in April, 2001 in supportive response to *Healthy People 2010*. National Minority Health Month is the result of a resolution passed by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives during the 107th Congress of that same year. Since its launch, the Foundation has become a leader in fostering efforts to eliminate health care disparities and seeks to eliminate these disparities through innovation, collaboration and evidence-based solutions. Using zip code level data, the Foundation has created a centralized data warehouse with the ability to pinpoint "Health Disparity Zones."

For more information on the Annual Summit or the Foundation, visit www.nmhmf.org.

Building Our Movement, Building Our Future: NAMI 2007 Convention

Mark your calendar now for the 2007 NAMI National Convention, June 20-24 at the Town and Country Resort in San Diego, California. There will be extensive information on many topics in mental health offered through an array of workshops and exhibits, valuable to NAMI members, non-members and our partners. After a very successful Multicultural Strategic Summit held at the 2006 convention, we would like to keep up the momentum and enthusiasm and hope you will join us.

As a follow-up to last year's taskforce meeting on disparities in mental health for communities of color, we will be hosting a similar taskforce meeting devoting the focus completely on similar disparities for children and adolescents of color. Similar to the goal of the previous meeting, it is our hope that the result of the future meeting will be a national action plan to eliminate disparities for children and adolescents.

Additionally, the Multicultural Action Center will be hosting a workshop concerning quality mental health treatment for communities of color, a Spanish-language workshop (topic to be announced), workshops to address mental health issues in specific traditionally underserved communities, and more. Please watch for further and more specific announcements of our events coming soon.

If there is a topic you would like to have addressed at the 2007 NAMI Convention, we encourage you to submit a proposal for a workshop or poster-presentation. All proposals are due December 15.

For proposal forms and more information, visit www.nami.org/convention.

2007 NAMI National Convention
June 20 - 24 • San Diego, CA