



Consumer Council Bylaws

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Prefix 1

NAMI Pennsylvania Purpose

- Promote the interest of persons who live with mental illness, particularly those who cannot speak for themselves, and provide services and programs on the behalf of the persons.
- Advocate policies at the State and National levels that will enhance the well being of persons who live with mental illness.
- Develop an enlightened and more sympathetic public understanding of the problems of persons who live with mental illness and of the public responsibility for them.
- Encourage and aid in the organization within the State and Local affiliate groups of NAMI PA, composed of families and friends of persons living with a serious mental illness, and/or persons living with serious mental illness.
- Coordinate activities and serve as an information collection and dissemination center for affiliates.
- Solicit and contribute funds for the accomplishment of the above purposes, and
- Engage in any lawful activity within the purpose for which a corporation may be formed.

NAMI PA accepts and embraces the purposes of the National NAMI.

NAMI National Mission Statement & Preamble

NAMI recognizes that the key concepts of recovery, resiliency and support are essential to improving wellness and the quality of life of all persons affected by mental illness. Mental illnesses should not be an obstacle to a full and meaningful life for persons who live with them.

NAMI will advocate at all levels to ensure that all persons affected by mental illness receive the services that they need and deserve in a timely fashion.

NAMI will accomplish its mission through the following:

- Coordination of activities of state and local advocacy groups.
- Serving as an information collection and dissemination center.
- Monitoring existing health care facilities, staff, and programming for adequacy and accountability, influencing the pre-professional and continuing education of mental health service providers.
- Promotion of new and remedial legislation.
- Fostering public education.
- Insisting upon, and advocating for, high quality Recovery and Resiliency-oriented services and care. Services must be designed to meet the needs of the person – and family – living with mental illness. These services must be freely available to all persons when and where they need them, regardless of the individual's setting or status – homeless, residential, extended care, outpatient, inpatient, independent living, schools or criminal justice settings.
- Promotion of community support programs, including appropriate living arrangements linked with supportive social, vocational rehabilitation and employment programs.
- Improvement of private and governmental funding for mental health facilities and services, care and treatment, and residential and research programs.
- Collaboration with other national and international mental health organizations.
- Delineation and enforcement of rights of persons with serious mental illness and their families.
- Soliciting and receiving funds in support of all of the above.
- Advocate forcefully for additional research into mental illness, with a goal of developing treatments and cures for all these disorders.

Bylaws of the NAMI PA Consumer Council

Article I: Name

The name of this organization is the NAMI PA Consumer Council.

Article II: General purpose

The NAMI PA Consumer Council is formed to advance the activities and involvement of those NAMI PA members who have personally experienced a serious mental illness, hereafter referred to as consumer members, at the Local and State levels by actively participating in advocacy issues and program development.

This will be achieved by:

- Working actively to support the mission of NAMI PA.
- Working to preserve the respect, dignity and human rights of mental health consumers.
- Providing information dissemination and skills training for consumers attending the Annual NAMI PA Conference.
- Advising the NAMI PA Board of the perspectives of their consumer members.
- Communicating the mission of NAMI PA through active participation in the consumer movement and other organizations.
- Empowering and educating mental health consumers to address their issues around care, treatment, services, mutual support and consumer rights.
- Maintaining a productive and accountable Consumer Council.

Article III: NAMI Code of Ethics: All NAMI PA Consumer Council members including officers agree to be familiar with and abide by the NAMI Code of Ethics while serving in official capacities.

Article IV: Business Year: The business year of the NAMI PA Consumer Council shall begin on the first day of November of each year.

Article V: Membership

Section 1: Qualifications and Duties of Members

Consumer Council Members shall:

- Be a member of NAMI in good standing.
- Demonstrate strong interest in NAMI's mission: to give support and nurturing to individuals afflicted with mental illness, to fight against the stigma of mental illness, to support research into the causes and treatments of mental illness, and to advocate for quality services and support systems.
- Subscribe to the overall philosophy of the organization: that mental illnesses are treatable biological brain disorders; that medication is the cornerstone of treatment in combination with psychotherapy, self-help, and other essential supportive services.
- Have equal respect for consumers (both well and ill) and family members, recognizing that all have been through painful experiences and that all are working together on behalf of people with mental illnesses.
- Have the ability to reach out to consumers with understanding and compassion.
- Strive toward positive working relationships with family members and be able to step outside their own framework and see the global picture.
- Have reached a level of stability in their own recovery, yet always remembering that they may be just as vulnerable as any other consumers.
- Be able to devote time to the task of representing and supporting fellow consumers within and outside the state NAMI organization.

Member Duties:

Primary

All Consumer Council Members shall participate as active members of the NAMI PA Consumer Council, attending meetings at the annual NAMI PA or NAMI National Convention and other leadership conferences, participate in committee activities and respond to national and state correspondence.

Secondary Duties

If the member has additional time and effort to devote, the following are suggested as possible activities:

- Support and promote NAMI's consumer programs: In Our Own Voice: Living with Mental Illness; NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group, NAMI C.A.R.E., and other mutual support groups; and the Peer-to-Peer education course. These consumer-led programs are tools for reaching out to consumers with information and support and for building a larger consumer membership in NAMI.
- Support and promote all NAMI educational programs for families and providers.

- Educate themselves on the newest research on mental illnesses and the issues affecting consumers and their families (such as parity, access to quality treatment and the latest medications).
- Promote consumer involvement in all state education and advocacy activities while working with local and state NAMI groups.
- Provide consumer input in planning the state annual conference.
- Encourage consumer activities in local affiliates.
- Contribute articles on consumer activities, programs and perspective to state and affiliate newsletters.
- Identify and mentor upcoming consumer leaders.

Officer Duties:

Primary Duties

Serve as liaison among NAMI Consumer Council, the state NAMI Board of Directors and state consumer members.

Secondary Duties

Serve on the NAMI PA Board of Directors as determined by the state organization (i.e., election or appointment), participating on committees and being responsible for communicating consumer views to the state board.

Build strong working relationships with the NAMI state president, executive director, and local affiliate leaders.

Article VI: Meetings

Section 1: Meetings and Notice of Meetings

The annual business meeting of the NAMI PA Consumer Council will be held at the annual NAMI PA Conference.

Other regular meetings may be called at the discretion of the NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee.

Teleconference meetings shall be held at least quarterly.

Emergency meetings may be called at the discretion of the NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee Chair.

A written notice of meetings shall be mailed/emailed to all members at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of any regular meeting.

Section 2: Quorum

Annual Meeting: A quorum shall consist of twenty three (23) voting members and is necessary to conduct any and all business of the NAMI PA Consumer Council at the Annual Meeting.

Teleconference Meetings: A quorum shall consist of thirteen (13) voting members and is necessary to conduct any and all business of the NAMI PA Consumer Council on teleconference meetings.

In the event of less than a quorum present at a meeting or teleconference meeting, the members may adjourn the meeting to another time. In order to conduct necessary business as determined by the NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee, voting may be done by mail/email ballot.

Section 3: Voting

Any member participating in a meeting or teleconference meeting has the right to vote on business brought before the Council. Voting necessary to pass a motion shall be a simple majority of all present voting members if a quorum is present.

Article VII: Officers of the NAMI PA Consumer Council

The NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee (CCEC) shall conduct the business of the NAMI PA Consumer Council between meetings.

Section I: Officers, Election and Term of Office

The NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee Officers consist of:

- Chair Three (3) year term
- Vice-Chair Two (2) year term, next – three (3) year term
- Secretary Two (2) year term, next – three (3) year term
- Two At-Large Officers, Three (3) year term
- Immediate Past Chair Three (3) years or until new chair

Officers may serve two (2) terms up to six (6) years consecutively, after which they must be out of the Executive Committee for at least one (1) year before being re-elected.

All Officers are elected by majority vote of members present at the NAMI PA Consumer Council Business Meeting, held at the Annual NAMI PA Conference, provided that a quorum is present.

Nominations for officers will be presented by the Nominating Committee and may also be accepted from the floor at the NAMI PA Consumer Council Annual Meeting provided the candidate is a member in good standing and has agreed to serve if elected.

Section 2: Removal, Resignation and Leave of Absence of Officers

If an officer fails to respond to two (2) written notices by the Consumer Council Executive Committee (CCEC) to contact him/her or does not discharge duties assigned within a reasonable time period, the Consumer Council Executive Committee has the option to request a meeting with the officer to discuss this. The CCEC shall give the officer two (2) weeks written notice by certified mail of the meeting. After the meeting to discuss this issue, the CCEC may decide by majority vote to:

- 1) Continue the officer in that position,
- 2) Grant a temporary leave of absence not to exceed three (3) months during which time a replacement shall be appointed by the CCEC, or
- 3) Vote for removal of the officer. All discussions concerning the status of an officer of the NAMI PA Consumer Council are to occur in executive session and not in an open meeting.

An officer may resign from the NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee by informing the NAMI PA Consumer Council Chair in writing.

Section 3: Voting and Quorum

The voting officers of the NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee are the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and two At-Large Officers. A quorum shall consist of three (3) of the five (5) voting officers of the NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee. In the event of a tie vote the Immediate Past Chair will cast the deciding vote.

Section 4: Duties of the Chair

The Chair has supervision over the affairs of the NAMI PA Consumer Council and presides over the NAMI PA Consumer Council and NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee meetings. The Chair is an ex-officio member of all committees, standing and ad hoc, except the NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee where regular membership is given. The Chair will serve as the official spokesperson for the NAMI PA Consumer Council. The Chair is the voting member of the NAMI National Consumer Council at the annual meeting.

Section 5: Duties of the Vice-Chair, Secretary, and At-Large Officers

The Vice-Chair, Secretary, and At-Large Officers shall assume all duties assigned by the NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee. The Vice-Chair is the Voting Alternate for the NAMI National Consumer Council annual meeting.

Section 6: Duties of the Immediate Past Chair

The Immediate Past Chair assumes this position upon leaving the office of Chair of the NAMI PA Consumer Council and maintains the position until the next Chair leaves that position. The Immediate Past Chair is available to provide advice and information on past and present NAMI PA Consumer Council matters. The Immediate Past Chair will vote in the event of a tie.

Article VIII: Committees

Section 1: NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee

The NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee shall conduct the business of the NAMI PA Consumer Council between general meetings and consist of the officers listed in Article VII.

Section 2: Standing Committees

The NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee may create standing committees as deemed necessary and shall appoint all committee chairpersons who shall be members in good standing of the NAMI PA Consumer council. Standing committees may include but are not limited to: Bylaws, Finance, Nominating, Conference, Training and Education, Membership, Outreach and Communications.

Section 3: Ad Hoc Committees

The NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee may also designate Ad Hoc committees to address important issues as they arise with the expectation that these committees will disband when its work is completed. The NAMI PA Consumer Council Executive Committee will also designate a Chair for any such committee.

Section 4: Nominating Committee

There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of not less than five (5) members, three of whom shall be from the membership at large. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the CCEC for a one (1) year term at its first meeting following the Annual Meeting. The Secretary and/or Membership Chairperson shall serve as members of the Nominating Committee. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be appointed by the Chair from among the committee members. After securing the consent of the nominees to serve, the Committee shall present a single slate of nominees for officers and other members of the Executive Committee to the membership at the Annual Meeting. Executive Committee and Officer nominations are permitted from the floor provided the candidate is a member in good standing and has agreed to serve if elected.

Article IX: Funding

The NAMI PA Consumer Council recognizes its responsibility to work with NAMI PA Board of Directors to raise funds to support programs and activities of interest to the NAMI PA Consumer Council and NAMI PA.

Article X: Amendments

These Bylaws shall be adopted by majority vote and amended by a two-thirds vote cast at any business meeting of the NAMI PA Consumer Council. Notice of proposed changes in the Bylaws shall be sent with notice of the business meeting.

Article XI: Rules of Procedure

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, shall govern this council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the NAMI PA Bylaws and these NAMI PA Consumer Council Bylaws as well as any special rules this Council may adopt.