

Matt Kuntz, J.D.
Nominated by NAMI Montana

CANDIDATE NARRATIVE

Strengths and attributes NAMI board has identified as high-priority needs for the 2020–2021 board; any strengths/attributes identified by the candidate are starred and in bold:

- **Diversity of age, race, ethnicity, language, experience and national geography ****
- **Knowledge of the philanthropic community and track record with donor cultivation ****
- **Experience with a variety of revenue models and financial oversight and management ****
- **Healthcare/medicine especially in team-based practice that provides integrated physical and mental healthcare ****
- **Criminal Justice experience, professional and/or lived, to provide insight into one of the central platforms of the NAMI 2020-2025 Strategic Plan ****

In 250 words or less, please explain how you will use your skills in these areas to move the mission of the NAMI Board forward. If you do not have any experience in these areas, please explain what qualities you feel that you possess that the NAMI Board of Directors should consider when making their recommendations to the membership.

I have served NAMI Montana as Executive Director since the summer of 2008. I am a veteran from the Rocky Mountain West and have a set of experiences based upon that background that is different than other board members. As a state NAMI Executive Director, I have proven to be effective in engaging with a broad variety of different areas. In a regular day in our office, I will help a mother advocate for her son in the criminal justice system; co-lead a youth suicide prevention initiative; and advise Senate Veterans Affairs Committee staff on necessary statutory changes.

Since 2008, NAMI Montana has dramatically diversified our revenue sources. We have continued to build our NAMIWalk, but have also added regular foundation funding and outside events. We created an endowment and had a leadership role in a major funded study on bipolar disorder funded by the Patient-Centered Outcome Research Institute.

I have successfully advocated for the development of a forensic hospital in Montana to divert offenders with serious mental illness from the prison and altered alter the makeup on the Montana Parole Board to require it to include professionals with mental health expertise.

I have taken national roles in veterans mental health through the Creating Options for Veterans' Expedited Recovery (COVER) Commission and the Veterans Administration's National Research Advisory Council.

My efforts as NAMI Montana Executive Director have been recognized by President Obama, USA Today, Newsweek, People Magazine, Major League Baseball, and the Chronicle of Philanthropy.

I have personally helped advance the NAMI mission in my community by Helping turn our state NAMI affiliate into a very powerful player in our state's mental illness treatment system. We have led multiple successful advocacy efforts, including updating Montana's Mental Health Parity Act. We helped create the Center for Mental Health Research and Recovery at Montana State University which has brought critical suicide prevention research to Montana. We also helped advocate for the development of a Psychiatrist Residency program in Montana which will be critical to addressing our state's clinician shortage. We have become a thriving presence on social media and have even developed our own inpatient treatment center review website.

I work well in coordination with other leaders to accomplish goals as evidenced by leading efforts to pass the Deployment Health Assessment Act of 2009 through Congress to ensure that the military screens and effectively cares for service members with mental health conditions. I have helped write the Commander John Scott Hannon Act (named after a NAMI Montana volunteer) which is poised to be one of the largest Congressional actions on veterans mental health. Additionally, I assisted in establishing the Center for Mental Illness Research and Recovery at Montana State University. I served as co-investigator of Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute-funded project to review treatment for bipolar disorder through the analysis of over a million electronic health records.

Nominator Narrative

Tiffany Hanson
President, NAMI Montana

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In summary, Matt has numerous attributes as an executive director and leader of our state organization, a veteran, an attorney and a tireless mental health advocate for those who cannot or do not know how to help themselves that give him a rich variety of experiences that will serve the NAMI Board well.

As the NAMI Montana Executive Director, Matt has positively helped shape and move forward our state's mental health system and increased the knowledge of mental health disorders to reduce stigma.

For many years Matt did this with a part time employee only and in a state that is very large in territory and small in population. His insight to mental health systems in rural states will be invaluable.

Matt understands the importance of donors as the donors to NAMI Montana are the life blood of this organization. Under Matt's guidance, NAMI Montana has become financially stable by cultivating annuity donors and over the 12 years as the Executive Director, raising over \$1.5 million dollars.

Matt worked collaboratively through the Center for Mental Health Research and Recovery to bring a youth suicide education and prevention program to our state. The effort this required to get the training into over 30 (so far) different schools took a huge amount of communication and working with many different agencies and groups across the state. Matt made it happen.

Matt understands our criminal justice system and has worked hard to make it more responsive to those with mental illnesses who get trapped there. His insight and experience, again, will be invaluable as a NAMI Board Member.

This individual has helped advance the NAMI mission in my community by...

Matt has been a steadfast presence for the last 12 years as the NAMI Montana Executive Director in not only my community but also across the state of Montana. Matt has helped countless families navigate the complicated and convoluted mental health system in order to help a loved one in crisis. Matt also advocates for those facing long term mental health issues through our legislative process and using the signature NAMI educational programs. Matt offers hope when families have none and he has saved lives.

This individual works well in coordination with other leaders to accomplish goals as evidenced by...

Matt was integral in getting the Deployment Health Assessment Act of 2009 passed through Congress by working with various politicians, mental health advocacy leaders and military personnel. He worked with a myriad of academics, mental health professionals, advocates and the Montana Board of Regents to establish the Center for Mental Illness Research and Recovery Center at Montana State University. Matt is currently serving on the Veteran's Affairs National Research Advisory Council which is tasked with maintaining research programs to help the mental health care needs of veterans.