

Micah Payne Pearson, C.P.S.W.
Nominated by NAMI Southern New Mexico

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.

As a NAMI national and field advocate, I will bring my experience to the board and continue to push for the decriminalization of mental health in our communities. I will continue to push for the end of suspension of Medicaid benefits for persons in detention so there will be greater continuity of care upon return to the community to reduce the chance of relapse and recidivism. I will continue to fight for patient-centered treatment options for peers, regardless of their race/ethnicity or sexual orientation/gender identity.

I will continue to push for a wider array of diverse voices, both public-facing and within our own organization, with a focus on integrating awareness of the social determinants for health in our planning and implementation of programs. I will continue the work of standardizing and modernizing the NAMI Public Policy platform, to make it more accessible to our field advocates and a more practical tool in communicating our mission to elected officials and legislators.

Most importantly, I will continue to listen to the field and bring their voice to the boardroom, representing their concerns and needs to the best of my ability.

I have personally helped advance the NAMI mission in my community by increasing public awareness on NAMI's mission and our available program options, expanding staffing and integration of NAMI into public mental health programs. Worked with CIT International to develop best practices for Crisis Intervention Team training models. I also researched and Implemented web-based technologies to serve the mental health needs of our community during the pandemic crisis.

I work well in coordination with other leaders to accomplish goals as evidenced by the passing and implementation of the call for the banning gay conversion public policy – the first-ever NAMI public

policy addressing the LGBTQ communities. We also developed an internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion council – with the goal of generating tools to address these needs across the alliance. The standardization of the public policy platform was also done in coordination with the advisory councils and national staff, fostering tighter relationships across the advocacy teams throughout the alliance.

Nominator Narrative

Alicia Blasingame

President, NAMI Southern New Mexico

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Micah will continue to push the board to keep diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront of its decision making. He is driven by the idea of intersectionality and that mental health does not exist in a vacuum. He will continue to focus efforts on untangling mental health and criminal justice.

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

Being a peer leader, and outspoken voice for mental health in every possible arena. His openness about his own experiences have changed perspectives and lives.

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

His current work on the national board, especially in regard to the standardization of the policy platform, and the new policy positions taken. Locally, the removal of the sunset clause in our AOT program and work to ensure continuity of care during the COVID-19 crisis.