

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

NAMI NH is still the voice on mental illness in our state in our 22nd year. As I see it our continuing challenge is to make that voice louder, to learn to speak effectively to more listeners and to speak up before events and policies are in place.

I have never had such reluctance to write an annual report to the membership. This year is a dichotomy: on one hand our organization has been thriving and growing; on the other hand I fear for our state's mental health care system.

First the good news:

* Our leadership is growing. The Family to Family classes are all showing significant grass roots leadership growth. Our Board is functioning superbly with the quarterly meeting schedule combined with very active committee work in between. Our scheme to expand our officership to include a 1st and 2nd vice president will be in place this year so that there will be a new president in training. In addition, having two vice presidents will magnify the president and the staff's ability to attend to the many things necessary to keep us growing.

* Our impact is growing. We have been collaborating very effectively with more and more consumers of services. The more we work with consumers and families to hear and act on their needs the more we are pushed to find effective partners for collaboration. These past two years we have teamed with all manner of folks to solve some of the myriad problems associated with mental illness and the law. The last two conferences would not have been possible without a diverse support group.

* Our goal to diversify our income sources is closer to reality. If you look at our source charts you will see this. Not only are we diversifying funding sources but our

budget has expanded to meet the unremitting pressure to do more and to do it better.

* Our staff and volunteers are a well-trained dedicated, utterly knowledgeable resource. We regularly supply people and information for other organizations, for families from all over, for NAMI regionally and nationally.

* As we recognize new needs we take concrete steps to meet them. The focus on legal issues for youngsters and adults is part of this (conferences, source books, library, and web site). The Guidebook for Elders will be released this fall. It is a product of 2 years of hard work. Our intent is to make this very professional but readable guide available in many places. Like the adult's "Guidebook for Families" and "Family Guidebook for Children and Adolescents" it will probably reach significant production levels and several updates.

* Our plan to shape mental illness resources to the needs of Spanish speaking families has proven successful in Manchester. Thanks to the Minority Health Coalition we are reaching many homes "over the kitchen table". Now we are funded to use this approach in Nashua.

Now the bad news:

* Just at a time when the demand for mental health services is exploding; just at the time when the State/NH Dartmouth Psychiatric Center are ready "to take to market" evidenced based practices for treating mental illnesses; just at the time when the mental health centers are readying themselves to implement Recovery practices; just at a time when consumer support agencies are growing; **funding support is being reduced**. The Legislature defeated adequate funding for the system as part of the Claremont "solution". Few younger people are entering the necessary

professions. Much of the State agency staff will soon retire.

Does this spell trouble? You bet it does! The success we experience in NH as a provider of good services depends heavily on the quality of the public sector.

Our work is cut out for us but we have never needed to be more significant.

Sincerely,

Doris V. "Rick" Sherman
President
October, 2001

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"United by Hope, Working for Change."

As many of you know that was the theme of the 2001 NAMI National Convention this year. **Hope** and **Change** are two words in the vocabulary of NAMI NH consumers and families. The impact of mental illness on the lives of individuals and families is one of the most significant experiences in a family's life, and therefore, it demands of us the strength to hope that there will be a better tomorrow and that changes, for the better, in individuals, families, service systems and communities, are possible.

Throughout this fiscal year it has been the work of many NAMI NH volunteers and staff to provide hope and work toward changing attitudes of individuals, policies and procedures of service systems, and barriers to adequate and affordable mental health care. Countless hours have been devoted to educating family members through the Family-to-Family Program and our Family Partner Program. The people who participated in these programs were provided with the latest information about

mental illness and severe emotional disturbance and about effective treatments. From these experiences families came away empowered to help, to advocate for services and supports for themselves, their families and others. The results of these educational activities touched 410 families and amounted to approximately 3,582 hours of service. In addition to these efforts we educated over 900 students and faculty from elementary school through college about mental illness and stigma, and its effects on individuals with mental illness. We answered questions from almost 900 callers to our Information and Referral Line.

Our local affiliates, for families of children and adults with mental illness throughout the state, offer regular support groups that help families hear from one another and learn from one another about how to cope with mental illness, and with service and insurance systems that present barriers to care. From these personal stories families learn that they are not alone. They come away from meetings with a greater sense of hope and encouragement.

Advocacy, as part of our mission, is critical to our efforts of instilling hope and making change. NAMI NH volunteers and staff formed coalitions with other advocacy groups this year on a number of critical legislative bills. These bills, most of which passed this session, recognized the work of family mutual support organizations, improved work opportunities for persons with mental illness, investigated more effective ways to treat persons who commit crimes and have a mental illness, recognized the need for a district juvenile justice system, expanded parity legislation and developed special education regulations that do not discriminate against children with emotional or behavioral disorders.

These educational, support and advocacy efforts have been personally beneficial to me, not only as the Executive Director of NAMI NH, but also as a parent of a daughter with mental illness. When I learn about what is going on throughout the state, from Colebrook to Salem, I am reminded that I am part of an exciting network of families and friends helping one another to improve the lives of persons with mental illness and the communities in which they live. This empowers me to continue my efforts to be supportive of my daughter's recovery as well as fight for better lives for all those with mental illness.

For fiscal year 2002 we have a larger budget to support more programs than in the previous two years. Building on the NAMI NH history and gains of this past year, I am confident we will do even more with consumers and families. Come along on the journey of hope and working for change, for together we will make a difference.

I encourage you to call me, any Board member, or affiliate leader to learn more about our work and how you may be more active in supporting our mission.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Cohen
Executive Director
October, 2001

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

A fundamental part of our mission is to educate families, providers and the general public about mental illness or severe emotional disturbance. Our goals for our educational programs are to fight STIGMA, improve ACCESS to treatment and provide HOPE.

Educational activities are run by volunteers to inform and support family members of adult consumers with mental illness, or young persons with severe emotional disturbance. This year over 300 families (adults and children) participated in these programs.

Family to Family – 30 trained teachers (family members) provide a structured 12 week program that gives family members the most up-to-date information about mental illness and the role families can play in advocating for services and improving the quality of services. During FY 2001 over 130 families participated in the course.

Young Family Education Program – is run by a team of NAMI family advocates and staff from the local community mental health centers. Parents new to the issues of severe emotional disturbance are provided with the latest information about the disorders and the treatments available. Hope and self-advocacy skills are outcomes of this program.

Family Partner Program – has grown this year to include 4 full-time and 7 part-time trained family partners. Families that qualify are assigned a partner who is trained as an educational advocate and knowledgeable of the mental health and special education service systems. They are “partnered” with a family to help the family members learn to advocate for the services they and their child require, empower the family to be part of the treatment planning team and instill hope in the family. This year Family Partners serviced almost 1300 families and provided approximately 8000 hours of face to face consultation services.

My Family Partner
By a Berlin, NH parent who worked with a
Family Partner

When I could not speak,
my Family Partner was my voice.
When I could not see,
my Family Partner was my vision.
When I could not hear,
my Family Partner was my ears.
When I could not feel,
my Family Partner was my strength.
When I could not grieve,
my Family Partner was my hope.
When I could not drive,
my Family Partner drove.
When I could not eat,
my Family Partner was my meal.
When I could not sleep,
my Family Partner was awake.

And when the road was too long to bear,
She was there.

My Family Partner!

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES

Public Presentations – to schools and the community to fight STIGMA. Over 1,000 students participated in more than 20 school presentations throughout NH. Health Fairs and business organizations heard from NAMI NH as well.

Provide Information and Referral Services – through statewide 800 phone line. Callers have questions about children, mental health, programs, treatment and state policies. The I&R line serviced almost 900 callers.

Active Participation on State Policy and Planning Committees – in order to bring the voice of families to mental health treatment, planning, evaluation and financing issues we have participated on the

Juvenile Justice Planning Committee, State Block Grant Committee, Children's CARE Collaborative, State Advisory Group to the Department of Education.

Maintain a Lending Library – free to the public to borrow books, videos, tapes on mental health, mental illness and related topics.

Develop a Website (under construction) – www.naminh.org with links to other NH organizations and related topics.

Provide Brochures and Guidebooks – for families to help them better understand mental illness and how to access treatment and support.

Sponsor a Statewide Conference – on Law, Justice and Mental Illness designed to bring together consumers, families, corrections, law enforcement and judicial representatives to learn about the issue of criminalization of persons (adults and children) with mental illness

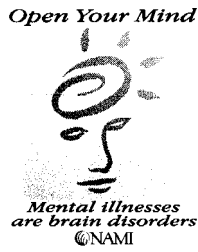
On-going Affiliate Support Groups – throughout the state groups are available free of charge, to any family member seeking help and hope. Different groups are available depending upon the age of the person with the illness

Advocacy – to educate the NH Legislature on the need for more resources for mental health services-especially for children and elders; for passage of legislation to improve access to mental health services and legislation to improve the coordination and collaboration across state departments.

Newsletters – distributed to NAMI members and supporters covering updates on mental health issues in NH, resources, programs and events.

Collaborate – with the NH Minority Health Coalition to educate Latino/Hispanic families about mental illness and to improve access to medical interpreter services, reduce stigma and deal with cultural barriers to mental health services.

Policy, Treatment and Law Enforcement Materials – As an outgrowth of our conference we have been able to work closely with the NH Division of Training and Standards for the Police Academy. Mental health curriculum materials have been incorporated into the overall training activities.



ABOUT US

Twenty-two years ago, many families who knew the burdens of mental illness and the importance of sharing and caring for each other formed local self-help family support organizations around the country. These family members shared feelings of frustration with and a sense of outrage at the prevailing system of treatment and care for those who suffer from mental illness. In 1979, about 80 such groups joined together to create the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. NAMI NH was one of the first state chapters established. In 2000, NAMI had over 210,000 members nationwide who belonged to approximately 1100 affiliate

groups coordinated by state organizations in every state.

NAMI NH has a statewide grassroots network of affiliate chapters, staff and volunteers who provide information, education and support to families, consumers and the public. NAMI NH serves adults with mental illness and children with severe emotional disturbance and their families. The mission of NAMI NH is the eradication of mental illness and improvement in the quality of life for persons affected by mental illness. The goals of the organization are to provide free to anyone who wants it; support, education, advocacy, and research about mental illness. To reduce stigma and improve the quality of services to persons with mental illness, NAMI NH works actively to raise the awareness of the general public about mental illness, its treatments, and its impact on consumers of mental health services and their families.

As of the year 2001, NAMI NH has a membership of over 400 families and a mailing list of over 3000. NAMI NH, a 501(c) (3) operates under its mission and works collaboratively with the constituents of the public and private mental health service systems in New Hampshire. These include the state Division of Behavioral Health, the provider organizations in the private sector; individual family members, family affiliate groups, individual consumers, organized consumer support centers, program administrators and legislative decision makers. Seven full-time and nine part-time staff at NAMI NH, the Board of Directors, along with 15 volunteer affiliate groups, provide referral service, educational programs, training to providers, and play active roles on numerous state and local mental health planning, oversight and education committees.