



**nami**

**Ventura County**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Newsletter

November/December 2008

## **GENERAL MEETING**

Open to the Public ▪ All are Invited

Tuesday 11th November 2008, 7:00 pm

### **THE COURTS AND MENTAL ILLNESS**

Guest Speaker:

**The Honorable Kent Kellegrew**

Superior Court Judge  
County of Ventura

St. Columba's Episcopal Church  
1251 Las Posas Road, Camarillo

Judge Kellegrew will talk about a variety of subjects, such as: sections of LPS Law, including 5150 or initial involuntary 72-hour holds, 5250 holds and the process that follows, conservatorships, family members as conservators, how criminal cases are assigned - and more.

Bring your questions and join us at this educational meeting!

*A Family Support Group is held at the church prior to the General Meeting, from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm*

## **International Study of Schizophrenia**

At the September General Meeting, Dr. Tim Kuehnel led a large group of NAMI members and friends through the World Health Organization's study which was conducted over a period of 25 years in 14 countries.

Dr. Kuehnel explained how this remarkable project provides a comprehensive account of course and outcome for more than 1,000 individuals with various types and durations of schizophrenia. He talked about cost-effective interventions, and why people in the poorer developing nations seem to recover from mental illnesses at a far higher rate.

Everyone agreed that this was a very stimulating talk, with a whole new set of data to consider on achieving recovery. ❖

## **OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING**

### **"CHOICES IN RECOVERY"**

#### **Large Turnout Hears Dr. Gazda**



Over 90 NAMI members and friends attended the "Choices in Recovery" dinner and speaker meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup>. This presentation, sponsored by Janssen Pharmaceuticals, has become a popular annual event, and this year's speaker was Dr. Thomas Gazda, Chief of Staff at Banner Behavioral Health in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Dr. Gazda explained the components of recovery, including treatment plans, life goals, skills training, medication, side effects, medication compliance and more. He interrupted his presentation numerous times and graciously accepted questions from the audience, many dealing with medications, injectable and long-acting anti-psychotics, and the role of psychotherapy in recovery.

Guests at the dinner meeting enjoyed a light meal from Lombardo's Deli in Camarillo. ❖



## **NAMI Applauds Bipartisan Bill On Mental Illness Insurance Parity**

*Statement of Michael J. Fitzpatrick  
Executive Director, NAMI National*

NAMI is proud to support the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (HR 1424) and the Paul Wellstone-Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (HR 6983) that is included in this important bill.

NAMI is the nation's largest organization representing individuals and families who live with serious mental illness. For 20 years, NAMI has fought for health insurance parity laws to ensure that employer health plans offer equitable coverage for medical illnesses such as major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and severe anxiety disorders.

This historic legislation is a victory for millions of Americans living with mental illnesses who face unfair discrimination in co-payments, doctor's visits and hospital stays. The bill will require group health insurance plans to cover mental illness and substance abuse disorders on the same terms and conditions as other illnesses.

Americans now will be able to get treatment when they need it.

NAMI is profoundly grateful to the bipartisan leadership on this important issue and thanks Representatives Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and Jim Ramstad (R-MN), as well as Senators Pete Domenici (R-NM), Ted Kennedy (D-MA), and Mike Enzi (R-WY), for their commitment in sponsoring the legislation. ❖

## **Social Security Disability Insurance**

In our July/August newsletter, we learned that SSI, or Supplemental Security Income, is a federal program for disabled or aged people who have no (or low) income. It provides cash to meet basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. SSI recipients qualify for MediCal insurance. No prior work experience is needed.

if you have worked and paid Social Security taxes, you may also be able to apply for SSDI benefits.

**Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** pays benefits to you and certain members of your family if you meet the following requirements:

- You have worked long enough in jobs covered by Social Security before becoming disabled. To determine this, you must pass a "recent work" test based on your age at the time you became disabled and a "duration of work" test to show that you worked long enough under Social Security.
- You have paid Social Security taxes.
- You have a medical condition that meets Social Security's definition of disability, and severely impairs your ability to do the work you did previously. If your disability is not on a predetermined list, it must be shown to be greater or equal in severity.
- You are not earning more than \$940 per month.
- You can adjust to other work, which Social Security may help you with.

If you qualify, cash benefits will be paid to you monthly until you are able to work again on a regular basis. "Work incentives" also provide continued benefits and health care coverage to aid transition back into the working world. For additional information call 1-800-772-1213 or go to:  
<http://socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10029.html> ❖

### **NAMIWalks Ventura County 2009**

Saturday May 2, 2009 Ventura Beach Promenade

## **PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR WALK VOLUNTEER INFORMATION MEETING ON TUESDAY NOVEMBER 18th**

This promises to be a fun event, and we hope to engage many more folks this year  
Appetizers will be served, a no-host bar will be available.

The purpose of the Volunteer Information Meeting is:

- to announce the Walk to community members and tell them how they can participate
  - to recruit a core group of volunteers to support the Walk
  - to empower others to identify and recruit sponsors for our Walk

Remember -- the Walk helps change how our community views mental illness and recovery, and highlights our programs to help clients and families. The funds we raise help to continue and grow our programs.

**Tuesday November 18th, 2008, 6:00 to 8:00 pm**  
**The Sportsman Restaurant, 4426 Central Avenue, Camarillo**

Call NAMI Ventura County at (805) 641-2426 to confirm your attendance at the Volunteer Information Meeting

## New Program Administrator Appointed to County's CIT Program

Jennifer Frank has been promoted to the position of Program Administrator for the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). Jennifer has been the CIT Program Assistant for many years, and has much experience with mental illness and law enforcement.

The mission of the Ventura County Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Program is to develop partnerships with mental health consumers and their family members, and other agencies and organizations. CIT officers will respond to individuals who are in crisis as a result of a mental disorder, and will assess and assist those individuals in the most effective and compassionate manner possible.

The goal of the CIT program is to train patrol officers and dispatchers in a 40-hour mental health training, increase the percentage of individuals linked with treatment through interagency meetings, and conduct ongoing CIT stakeholder/advisory meetings. The CIT works with all city Police Departments and the Sheriff's Department in Ventura County.

The hiring process to fill the open Program Assistant position will take a few months, so Jennifer will be on her own for some time. We wish Jennifer much success in her new position. ❖

## NAMI HOLIDAY PARTY Grows Larger Each Year



NAMI Ventura County invites all clients to get together for a Holiday Party to celebrate the season and to have a good time with one another. **Note this year's party will take place at a new location.**

We extend this invitation to families of clients to join us, in order to be with their loved ones as they celebrate. This is the perfect opportunity to meet other families and County staff. Though the Holiday Party is not suitable for younger children, parents and other family members are encouraged to attend.

Dinner will be served and gifts presented to all Clients. Drawings galore for Door Prizes! Music, dancing, DJ, and more surprise entertainment!



*"Enjoying the holiday spirit with friends, dinner, dancing, door prizes!"*

For some clients, this is a rare and special event because they get few such opportunities for coming together on such a large scale during the year.

Your support is needed to make this event successful. Here's how you can help:

1. We need door prizes. If you have a gift or two that you would like to donate, please drop them off at the NAMI

office in Camarillo (no candles or alcohol please) by Friday December 5th.

2. Contribute. There is no cost to attend the Holiday Party, but NAMI welcomes donations from families of clients to offset the cost of gifts, door prizes and other expenses. Our expenses are estimated to be \$2,600, and all donations, small or large, are appreciated. Business sponsorships are welcome. Please write "Holiday Party" and mail donation checks to:

NAMI Ventura County  
P.O. Box 1613  
Camarillo, CA 93011-1613

You can also make a secure online donation right now on our web site at [www.namiventura.org](http://www.namiventura.org).

All monetary donations to NAMI are tax deductible.

For more information, call NAMI Ventura County at (805) 641-2426.

**You Are Invited!**  
**NAMI HOLIDAY PARTY**  
**Tuesday December 9, 2008, 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm**  
**Location: Elks Lodge, 801 South A Street, Oxnard**

*The NAMI Holiday Party is generously supported by the Ventura County Behavioral Health Department. ❖*



*"Rockin' around the dance floor - it's a holiday happening!"*

## The Mental Health Services Act - Two Points of View

Rose King is a former board member of NAMI California. She is a political and policy consultant with a long history in California politics and government. Her family includes individuals with serious mental illnesses. She wrote a letter to the Sacramento Bee, which in turn elicited a response from Steve Mayberg, the California Department of Mental Health. Both letters are reproduced below.

### Mental health act doomed by initiative origin

By Rose King

Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act passed by voters in 2004, may make its mark not as a turning point in California mental health but as a classic illustration of the pitfalls of "ballot box budgeting."

The failure to deliver results for the state's mental health system argues against problem-solving through initiative – no matter the expertise of those crafting the law, or how worthy the cause and well-intentioned the proponents.

As a member of the drafting committee for the measure, with professional and personal experience in mental health reform, I believed the proposal was clear in its intent. Voters thought so too and signed on to a special tax to expand successful programs. The public intended to make good on decades of unfulfilled promises to fund community mental health, taking action where legislators and governors had not.

Almost four years after passage, however, there is little evidence that the system has improved, and an infinitesimal number of clients are getting better treatment. What ails this new law?

For starters, the problem is that too much money is sitting in Sacramento instead of being allocated to counties. Second, there is still no coherent, systematic implementation plan. Third, the state Department of Mental Health decided to direct the major portion of funds to new programs for new clients, instead of raising the standard of treatment in the existing system, which was never adequately funded or staffed.

Proposition 63 funding is stalled by a complicated, expensive, and unnecessary bureaucracy invented by the DMH – starting with 67 pages of requirements for the first application form in 2005. Five different components of the new law are operating independently, each on a different timetable, and all requiring different progress reports.

These problems are politely understated in a June performance audit by the Department of Finance, pointing out to the DMH that approximately \$3.2 billion in new revenue had been collected by March 31, but that the state had distributed only \$726 million to counties. Auditors also noted the wholesale inefficiencies involved in operating without a documented plan, while the DMH reported a \$45 million budget for two years of Proposition 63 administration.

(contd. on page 6)

### Mental health law, agency are working

By Steve Mayberg

Rose King's assertion ("Mental health act doomed by initiative origin,") that the California Department of Mental Health created unnecessary bureaucracy and determined program and service priorities for local communities, is inaccurate. As one of the original writers of the initiative, Ms. King knows that MHSA mandates are not dictated by DMH, but rather by the initiative she helped write.

The Department moved deliberately, responsibly and transparently, seeking input in open meetings at the state and local levels. It was from that process that DMH developed comprehensive guidelines to ensure that county plans met what initiative designers and advocates wanted, which was a fundamental change in how mental health services are developed and delivered. In other words, a new way of doing business offering better services that are proven to work.

To date, over \$3 billion has been made available to counties, including funding for community services and support programs approved by DMH in collaboration with clients and family members, and reviewed by the Oversight and Accountability Commission, or OAC. These programs are making a difference every day in the lives of tens of thousands of people, and include housing and support services for more than 18,000 homeless people with mental illness. Additionally, the department has spent only part of the money allocated in MHSA for administration, returning \$64 million to counties for services.

Ms. King must recognize that even with MHSA, there is still not enough funding available to provide all the services for everyone in need. Forty years of neglect in the larger system left substantive gaps that cannot be easily fixed, and declining core funding cannot be restored through MHSA because programs may not be backfilled – an initiative mandate.

DMH will continue to work collaboratively with local communities, the County Mental Health Directors Association, the OAC, the Mental Health Planning Council and other stakeholders to streamline and simplify the planning process. We all share the vision of a system that integrates MHSA into the larger mental health system and provides good services to those in need while ensuring accountability to the people of California. ❖

## NAMI NEEDS YOUR DONATIONS

NAMI Ventura County relies on its membership and your generous contribution to continue providing support and services to people with mental illness and their families.

Our signature Family to Family Education course teaches families to cope successfully with this major challenge in their lives. The Provider Education Program presents a penetrating, subjective view of family and consumer experiences with serious mental illness to mental health providers who work with severe and persistent brain disorders. NAMI Ventura County's Court Education Program is designed specifically for all representatives of the legal system who may interact with individuals suffering from mental illness.

Donations are greatly appreciated and will be used to expand these programs as well as new ones, and to increase our advocacy efforts within our community.

You can now make a secure donation online at our web site. Go to [www.namiventura.org](http://www.namiventura.org) and select Donate on the left menu. You may also mail in a donation check to our P.O. Box address. NAMI Ventura County is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible. ❖

## NAMI FUNDRAISING

These are several easy ways to assist NAMI Ventura County by continuing to shop at your regular merchants. Help us raise much needed funds in order to continue our programs and services.

**eSCRIP.** Register your Von's, Pavilion's, Macy's, American Express and Visa card with eScrip and NAMI Ventura County will benefit.

Go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com), enter the NAMI group number: **5564290** and follow the simple steps to register your grocery cards, credit/debit cards, and store purchase cards. Here's how it works:

1. You register any one or all of your existing grocery, debit and credit cards for use in the program.
2. Participating merchants will make contributions to your chosen group, based on purchases made by you, just by using the cards you have registered.
3. Your purchases are tracked and available to you online, allowing you to see just how much you are earning on our behalf. ❖

## BE AN ADVOCATE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors meets every Tuesday to consider and to vote on matters relating to County programs and government. Members of the public may be present in the hearing room during these sessions.

NAMI members are encouraged to review each week's agenda, in order to be aware of items involving our mental health system of care, and to be present during those discussions. Go online to the County's web site at [www.countyofventura.org](http://www.countyofventura.org), and select "Board of Supervisors – Agenda and Summary" to view the next meeting's agenda.

If you wish to make an oral statement to the Board on any agenda or non-agenda item, you must fill out a "Speaker Card" before the meeting and hand it to the Clerk. Your comments and input are valuable. When a matter of special interest involving mental health comes onto the agenda, NAMI members will receive an email alert. Thank you for being pro-active and assisting NAMI Ventura County with its mission of advocacy.

Every Tuesday at 8:30 am  
Board of Supervisors Hearing Room,  
County Government Center, Hall of Administration  
800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura ❖

### Is Your Membership Current?

Check the address label on the printed, mailed copy of this newsletter for the expiration date. Won't you renew your membership or sign up to join NAMI Ventura County today?

### CORRECTION NAMIWalks 2008

One team deserves a special mention, as some of their Walk funds were received after our last newsletter was sent out recognizing the top five. The American Legion Post 741 Wild Hares, with team captain Vicky Murphy, raised over \$2,700. Several walkers on this team were able to double their receipts by using Amgen's matching contribution process. Our congratulations to Vicky and the Wild Hares! ❖

### Identification Statement

Publications's title and number:	NAMI VENTURA COUNTY NEWSLETTER
Issue date:	NOVEMBER 3, 2008
Statement of frequency	BIMONTHLY
Authorized organization's name and address:	NAMI VENTURA COUNTY 1339 DEL NORTE ROAD, CAMARILLO, CA 93010
Issue number:	ISSUE NO. 15
Subscription price:	NONE

**Mental health act doomed** by Rose King (contd from page 4)

The other major ailment afflicting Proposition 63 – a subject of controversy not yet audited – is the DMH policy creating a parallel, two-tier mental health system, giving priority to funding new programs rather than improving the existing system. DMH progress reports for 2007-08 acknowledge this problem of its own making, but offer no fix and no satisfactory rationale.

Proposition 63 outreach funds recruit new clients for comprehensive services, while clinic waiting rooms remain full of people deprived of needed treatment and budget cuts further restrict services. This troublesome and suspect practice is largely unchallenged.

I believe the initiative process facilitated all this botched implementation. Because there is no paper trail documenting intent, the DMH is licensed to decide the priorities and purpose of Proposition 63. The only test of compliance is the language of the law and ballot arguments.

There are no public records of drafting committee meetings; provisions of the law were not amended in open, public hearings. Debate took place in private, and among stakeholders and prospective proponents. Political ambitions and policy differences escaped the scrutiny of any independent eyes and ears, and principals did not have to contend with news stories about conflict and contrary arguments.

Policy-making by initiative often minimizes accountability for the integrity of programs. Proposition 63 passed with little controversy or visibility, no well-financed opposition, and a simple appeal to fund community mental health. Thus, public expectations were vague, editorial reviews of the complex measure were cursory, and the DMH was not required to meet known objectives. The end result is that the DMH can determine policies, such as the decision to shortchange current programs.

I was provided a recent example of the result when a Sacramento psychiatrist treating a member of my family at a county clinic informed us that he has 800 clients; a follow-up appointment could take five months. County service coordinators have caseloads of at least 130 consumers with serious mental illnesses.

Unfortunately, the appointed Oversight and Accountability Commission created by the the proposition has yet to define an independent role for itself or critique the pace of implementation and DMH strategies. Proper management of the Mental Health Services Act now requires the bright lights of public review in order to meet voter expectations and the promises made in 2004 ballot arguments.

The wasted time and money are nothing less than heartbreaking to everyone anticipating a change for the better. The magnitude of the revenue and lives in jeopardy warrant serious investigation by major news sources. ❖

**SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CONSUMERS/CLIENTS**

*Please note – These groups are for consumers/clients. Family member support groups are listed separately.*

**Depression/Bipolar Support Groups:**

**Ventura:** DBSA Support Group meets every Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Bible Fellowship Church, 6950 Ralston Street (& Johnson Drive), Building 300, Room 301, Ventura. For more information, call (805) 201-0619. Also see:

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DBSAVentura/>.

**Ventura:** DBSA Support Group meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Adult Wellness and Recovery Center, 56 E. Main Street (at Ventura Avenue in Ventura). For directions and information, call (805) 671-5038

**Oak Park:** The Conejo Valley Depression Support+ Group meets every Monday at 7:00 p.m. at Church of the Epiphany, Mitchell Hall, Room 6, 5450 Churchwood Drive (Churchwood & Kanan), Oak Park. Info: Vincent F. Caimano, Ph.D., (818) 292-8551 office.

**SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS**

*Please note –These groups are for family members. Consumer/client support groups are listed separately.*

**NAMI in Camarillo** – Meets at 5:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month at St. Columba’s Episcopal Church, 1251 Las Posas Rd., Camarillo. The meeting is prior to the General Meeting. Info: (805) 641-2426.

**NAMI in Thousand Oaks** – Meets at 7:00 p.m. the third Monday of each month at 72 Moody Court in Thousand Oaks (Behavioral Health, Conejo Clinics). Info: (805) 641-2426.

**NAMI in Ventura** – Meets at 6:30 p.m., the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of each month at College United Methodist Church, 4300 Telegraph Road, Ventura. Info: (805) 641-2426.



**Ventura County Behavioral Health  
Adult Outpatient Service Sites**

<b>If You Live In:</b>	<b>Contact The Officer of the Day:</b>
Ojai or Ventura (excluding Zip code 93004)	Ventura Outpatient Clinic 4258 Telegraph Rd Ventura, CA 93003 477-5700
Fillmore, Piru or Ventura 93004	Santa Paula Outpatient Clinic 333 W. Harvard Blvd. Santa Paula, CA 93060 933-4868
Oxnard, Port Hueneme or El Rio	Oxnard Outpatient Clinic 1911 Williams Dr., Suite 110 Oxnard, CA 93036 981-4200
Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and Ventura County areas of Agoura, Westlake, Bell Canyon	Conejo Outpatient Clinic 72 Moody Court Thousand Oaks, CA 91360 777-3500
Simi Valley or Moorpark	Simi Valley Outpatient Clinic 3150 Los Angeles Avenue Simi Valley, CA 93065 577-0830

**NAMI Ventura County  
Contact Information**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1613, Camarillo, CA 93011  
 Office: 1339 Del Norte Road, Camarillo, CA 93010  
 Phone: (805) 641-2426  
 Fax: (805) 275-2188  
 e-mail: namiventura@gmail.com  
 website: www.namiventura.org

Executive Director: Ratan Bhavnani  
 Program Coordinator: Chris Novak

**Board of Directors**

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**NAMI Ventura County  
Membership Application 2009**

Please fill out the form completely, and mail with check payable to:  
 NAMI Ventura County, P.O. Box 1613, Camarillo, CA 93011-1613

**Check One:** \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Level (check one):**

\_\_\_\_\_ Single (\$30)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$40)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Silver (\$50)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Gold (\$100)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Open Door\*\* (\$5)

Membership Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*A portion of your membership dues (\$20) is sent to NAMI National and NAMI California.*

*\*\* An open door membership is available to anyone who cannot afford to pay full membership.*

*Dues and donations to NAMI Ventura County are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.*

NAMI Ventura County needs your help. Please mark the activities in which you can volunteer:

- |   |  |   |                                      |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NAMI Office Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Support Groups  | <input type="checkbox"/> Family-to-Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach         | <input type="checkbox"/> Legislation     | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership       | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity        | <input type="checkbox"/> Speakers Bureau | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other       |



NAMI Ventura County  
P.O. Box 1613  
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**New Classes Starting  
No charge  
Sign up now – call or email**

For more information, go to [www.namiventura.org](http://www.namiventura.org)

**FAMILIA A FAMILIA**

(Spanish speaking)

Class begins: November 13, 2008  
12 Thursdays, 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm  
Pacific Clinics, 141 West 5th Street  
**OXNARD**

**FAMILY TO FAMILY**

Class begins: January 15, 2009  
12 Thursdays, 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm  
Calvary Community Church  
5495 Via Rocas  
**WESTLAKE VILLAGE**

**PROVIDER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Class begins: January 2009  
10 weekdays  
Dates and Location TBD  
**CAMARILLO**

**FAMILY TO FAMILY**

Class begins: January 8, 2009  
12 Thursdays, 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm  
Auditorium, Public Health Dept.  
3147 Loma Vista Road  
**VENTURA**