Millions of people in America, 1 in 5 or nearly 60 million, face the day-to-day reality of living with a mental illness. We get it. We’ve been there. We offer help and hope; we improve lives and take a stand.

NAMI means more than simply hope—we educate families and those living with mental illness and advocate night and day to ensure better lives for everyone.

We are NAMI, an association of hundreds of local affiliates, state organizations and volunteers who work in communities across the country. We are the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization providing advocacy, education, support and public awareness so that individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.

**ABOUT NAMI**

"I found NAMI through my company, who is strongly focused on the mental health of their employees, and I am so thankful to have come across it! Mental illness is a serious epidemic in our country, and our policy leaders need to address it as such."

**Impact in 2015**

- Provided in-person, no-cost peer support groups to more than 160,000 individuals and families
- Responded with direct support and referrals to more than 40,000 through the NAMI HelpLine
- Provided a forum for more than 60,000 on Tumblr through OK2Talk.org and notalone.nami.org to share stories and support one another
- Graduated more than 24,000 through no-cost, peer-led mental health education programs for peers and families
- Inspired 66 million conversations on Facebook and Twitter, encouraging mental health understanding and offering hope and help
- Hosted more than 80 NAMIWalks, promoting awareness and wellness
- Reached more than 8 million people through the NAMI website
On May 5, 2015, I had the privilege of standing next to New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray as she hit the switch to illuminate the Empire State Building in green—the color of hope—in observance of Mental Health Month. The lighting marked NAMI's launch of the stigmafree campaign, sponsored by philosophy, the well-being beauty brand—the first major corporation outside the health care industry to join NAMI to commit to raising awareness about mental health and eliminating the stigma that surrounds mental illness.

The stigmafree campaign seeks to have individuals, businesses, colleges and communities pledge to learn about mental illness; see the person, not the illness; and take action on mental health issues. It supports NAMI’s strategic goal of building a broad movement to improve the lives of people in the United States affected by mental illness. NAMI has led other initiatives in 2015 as part of that effort. Many focused on engaging youth because three-quarters of lifetime cases of mental illness appear by age 24.

NAMI partnered with Alpha Kappa Alpha, the nation’s oldest African American sorority, to expand mental health education, awareness and support at colleges and universities and in local communities. We unveiled a Say It Out Loud toolkit for civic organizations and faith communities to use in starting conversations with teens. The toolkit includes a powerful video in which three teens share their personal stories.

NAMI also launched “Hope Starts with You,” a campaign of public service announcements (PSAs) for television. One PSA, “A Brighter Day,” focuses on depression; another, “Peace and Quiet,” on schizophrenia. The PSAs reflect our belief that, every time a person helps someone or shares a personal story about a mental health condition, a ripple effect occurs—the NAMI Effect—and makes a difference in the lives of others.

Making a difference includes advocacy. In 2015, NAMI published two major policy reports that received broad media coverage and are influencing public debate. A Long Road Ahead: Achieving True Parity in Mental Health and Substance Use Care called for enforcement of the 2008 landmark federal parity law. State Mental Health Legislation: Trends, Themes and Effective Practices surveyed state approaches to mental health care in 2015—good and bad—and called on Congress to pass comprehensive mental health legislation to support state innovations.

For the first time, Congress slowly began to consider comprehensive mental health legislation. NAMI endorsed a bipartisan bill, H.R. 2646, which a health subcommittee in the House of Representatives approved in December—setting the stage for action in 2016. We also endorsed S. 1945, its companion bill in the Senate, and S. 2002, which would reduce criminalization of mental illness. Thousands of NAMI members have contacted their legislators seeking action on these bills. During Mental Illness Awareness Week in October, singer/songwriter Demi Lovato joined NAMI and other mental health advocates on Capitol Hill in calling on Congress for action. In 2015, we also partnered with the Council of State Governments Justice Center, National Association of Counties and others from law enforcement and mental health communities in launching the Stepping Up Initiative, an effort to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails.

NAMI continued to build support for early identification and intervention for first episode psychosis (FEP). We sponsored a Congressional briefing that highlighted the game-changing results of a National Institute of Mental Health study that found that early combinations of medication, therapy, family education and social supports lead to better outcomes. Through NAMI’s efforts, Congress took a major step forward by increasing from 5% to 10% the proportion of mental health block grants to states dedicated to FEP programs.

As the FEP study showed, scientific and clinical research are an important foundation for our work. In 2015, we honored Marsha Linehan, Ph.D., of the University of Washington, the originator of dialectical behavioral therapy, with our annual science research award.

NAMI’s work depends on the contributions of countless volunteers, supporters and staff. Their efforts produce the NAMI Effect, through which many ripples of hope come together to improve the lives of others. They enabled NAMI to make a difference in 2015. We are grateful to them all.

Mary Giliberti, J.D.
Chief Executive Officer
NAMI advocated for the successful passage of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, which addresses suicide among veterans. NAMI worked with federal agencies to promote data collection on suicides and to release data.

NAMI launched the new nami.org website with updated content in a unified voice and tone. The website provides a better experience to suit users’ needs.

With nearly 60 advocacy organizations, NAMI urged Congress to reject proposed policy changes that would increase co-pays for the brand-name version of medications for Low-Income Subsidy beneficiaries—individuals earning below 135% of the federal poverty level—in Medicare Part D.

NAMI launched Say It Out Loud, a program to help faith communities and civic organizations start conversations about mental health with youth.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (AKA), Inc. and NAMI partnered to expand mental health education, awareness and support activities on the campuses of colleges and universities and in local communities. The partnership enables NAMI and AKA, the nation’s oldest sorority founded by African American college women, to prepare new volunteer leaders for the future and reach broader constituencies as part of a growing movement to address unmet mental health needs.

The new mobile app NAMI AIR (Anonymous. Inspiring. Relatable.) enables people to find and give support through smart phones. Users may anonymously share their stories and receive feedback through a “like,” “hug” or “me too.”

Achieving equity in accessing mental health and substance use disorder care requires vigilant attention by advocates and public agencies responsible for enforcement. A Long Road Ahead: Achieving True Parity in Mental Health and Substance Use Care, a NAMI report, discovered that health insurance plans fall short in coverage of mental health and substance abuse conditions.
Executive Director Mary Giliberti issued a statement on the U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld the insurance mechanisms of the Affordable Care Act: “What could have been a giant step backward is instead a giant step forward in building a health care system for the future, a system that must include mental health care.”

The first NAMI Homefront course was taught in May. Based on the nationally recognized NAMI Family-to-Family program, NAMI Homefront addresses the unique needs of family, caregivers and friends of those who have served or are currently serving in the military. During 2015, there were 241,275 reported participants in NAMI’s education programs.

A two-year partnership was announced between NAMI and philosophy, a well-being beauty brand that inspires women to look, live and feel their best. To mark the partnership, NAMI launched the stigmafree campaign to shift the social and systemic barriers for those living with mental health conditions and encourage acceptance and understanding. The celebration included lighting the Empire State Building in the color green to signify hope. By the end of the year, more than 10,000 people had taken the stigmafree pledge.

California Senate President Darrell Steinberg and Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey were honored at the NAMI National Convention. Steinberg received NAMI’s Distinguished Service Award, while Lacey received the Criminal Justice Award for compassionate service in seeking to decriminalize mental illness and diverting non-violent offenders into treatment.

NAMI launched “Hope Starts with You,” a campaign of PSAs for television. The first PSA, “A Brighter Day,” focuses on depression, while the second, “Peace and Quiet,” focuses on schizophrenia. More than 185 million people nationwide saw the PSAs.
Fourteen experts from around the country gathered outside Washington, D.C., to represent diverse perspectives on issues pertaining to mental health services and supports to facilitate recovery. The meeting generated extensive ideas, notes and information, which NAMI will release as a comprehensive report.

During Mental Illness Awareness Week, singer/songwriter Demi Lovato joined NAMI and other mental health advocates on Capitol Hill in calling on Congress for action. In addition, NAMI honored Marsha M. Linehan, Ph.D., ABPP, with its annual Scientific Research Award. Dr. Linehan is the creator of dialectical behavior therapy (DBT).

NAMI announced the award of five-year grants to promote research in serious mental illness in two of the nation’s leading university departments of psychiatry. The University of Michigan Health System’s Department of Psychiatry and the McLean Hospital Psychotic Disorders Division, affiliated with Harvard Medical School, will receive a grant to support a NAMI Research Fellow, in conjunction with NAMI’s medical director, Ken Duckworth, M.D.

NAMI organized the OK2Talk Research Summit to help transform the way we communicate with young adults, improve early identification and engagement and save lives. Leading experts in big data, anthropology, linguistics, brain science, social science and communications came together to set this transformation in motion.

NAMI, with five leading mental health organizations—American Psychiatric Association, Bazelon Center on Mental Health Law, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Mental Health America and the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services—called on ABC-TV to drop its broadcast of a “Modern Family” Halloween episode that mocks and stigmatizes people with mental health conditions. Although the episode did air, the issue received media attention in YAHOO! News and prompted many conversations on social media.

NAMI and University of Phoenix College of Social Sciences partnered to inform programs and prepare counseling students to meet the needs of those experiencing mental health issues.

With the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), NAMI hosted a Congressional briefing to announce the release of highly anticipated, innovative research on mental health. Two studies from NIMH’s Recovery After an Initial Schizophrenia Episode (RAISE) program looked at how best to treat people with early psychosis.

NAMI took to the airwaves to get Congress to pass comprehensive mental health legislation. A “radio tour” featured about 20 interviews to news programs and talk shows; the tour reached 17 million listeners through 8,600 networks or stations.
A redesigned website and marketing materials were launched for NAMIWalks. Both spring and fall NAMIWalks sites raised about 5% more than in 2014.

NAMI advocates sent over 55,000 emails, tweets and messages to Congress in support of policy priorities including comprehensive mental health reform, criminalization, first episode psychosis and Medicare.

The NAMI report State Mental Health Legislation: Trends, Themes and Effective Practices highlights good and bad news in states’ approaches to mental health. The good news was that 35 states adopted one or more measures that NAMI applauded with a Gold Star—and five states passed model legislation. The bad news was that, at a time when public awareness of the need for mental health reform continues to increase, funding for mental health services fell in more states than it grew. For the third year in a row the number of states willing to increase spending on mental health decreased.

For the first time, Congress considered comprehensive mental health legislation. NAMI endorsed a bipartisan bill, H.R. 2646, which a health subcommittee in the House of Representatives approved. NAMI also endorsed S. 1945, a companion bill in the Senate, and S. 2002, which would reduce criminalization of mental illness. Chief Executive Officer Mary Giliberti said: “NAMI is thrilled that Congress has taken the first crucial step in moving forward comprehensive, bipartisan mental health legislation. The extensive discussion and action on a bill focused on the needs of our members and others who are affected by mental illness represented an historic moment.”
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Make a Difference. Become a NAMI Member.

Subscribe to the latest mental health updates, participate in an online discussion group, learn how to advocate in your community and add your voice to the mental health movement. For only $38 per year, NAMI members receive the Advocate magazine, special discounts on registration for the annual convention and exclusive access to members-only content. Join NAMI today at www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Join.

Help NAMI Create a Better Tomorrow

NAMI helps to create an expectation for the future that people affected by mental illness will live happily, productively and well. When you make a financial contribution, you help ensure no individual or family is alone in this fight by providing a network of resources and support. Learn more or donate today at www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Donate.
The NAMI Effect in Action

“I have taken [NAMI’s stigmafree] pledge with pride and have become passionate about fighting the unfair stereotypes toward people who have mental illness. My newfound perspective was tested in a psychology course last month. The professor asked the class if anyone had experience in a talk therapy setting. I looked around the classroom and saw that none of my classmates were volunteering. I avoided eye contact with my professor, hoping he wouldn’t call on me. I then realized that I was hiding again. How could I pledge being free of stigma if I was too ashamed to share my own experiences? If I wasn’t brave enough to share that I’ve received mental health treatment, I was just an enabler reinforcing societal stigma. I needed to show that there was no reason to be ashamed, because it is truly what I believe. I raised my hand.”
“I'm here to tell you that—if you’re going through what I’m going through, or something similar—those happy moments do come back. Day by day, little by little, with patience, honesty, and full commitment to self-care, you will regain the strength to power through the day. When you treat each small accomplishment throughout the day as a great victory, you will realize that you are capable of far more than you give yourself credit for. You can overcome the pain. You are a firecracker and you will get your sparks back.”

The NAMI Effect in Action
Expenses: $11.3 million

Revenues: $10.4 million