



**STRATEGIC PLAN
2007–2011**

Leadership For Change

SEPTEMBER 2007

NAMI MINNESOTA LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE SEPTEMBER 2007

Now is the time to organize on mental illness. That was the message on December 13, 1999 when Surgeon General David Satcher and Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala released the first-ever Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health. This report drew a great deal of attention to the lack of, but importance of, mental health services.

“Promoting mental health for all Americans will require scientific know-how but, even more importantly, a societal resolve that we will make the needed investment. The investment does not call for massive budgets; rather, it calls for the willingness of each of us to educate ourselves and others about mental health and mental illness, and thus to confront the attitudes, fear, and misunderstanding that remain as barriers before us. It is my intent that this report will usher in a healthy era of mind and body for the Nation.” **David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D. Surgeon General**

In April of 2002 President George W. Bush took the next step and established the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. The final report, issued in July 2003, called for a “transformation of the mental health system.”

In Minnesota, efforts were also undertaken. In 2000, state agencies came together to create the Toward Better Mental Health in Minnesota Initiative. Then in the fall of 2003, the Minnesota Mental Health Action Group (MMHAG) was formed. “While there are pockets of activity, there is no organized effort to establish linkages between all those working on mental health system reform, to bring everyone together to coordinate their activities to achieve their common reform objectives, and to fill gaps where no progress is being made. The Minnesota Mental Health Action Group will fulfill this purpose.” MMHAG is a coalition of public and private payers, advocacy groups, including NAMI-MN, providers and more. Its goal has been to truly transform the mental health system in Minnesota. Many of the recommendations were signed into law in 2007.

Despite all of the examination, development of recommendations and focus on system transformation, the goal of making substantive changes in the mental health system has yet to be realized.

Now it is time for NAMI to take the next step.

For thirty years NAMI Minnesota has pursued its mission, working to educate families, support individuals with mental illnesses, create public awareness and advocate for public policies that support recovery in adults and resiliency in children. It has been an uphill struggle for many of those years.

In 2001, NAMI-MN was a fledgling organization. Through hard work and a clear vision, NAMI-MN has grown since then to be a leader in the mental health community in Minnesota and across the country. Its revenue, programs, staffing and legislative action list have grown tremendously. Solid education programs began galvanizing families. Legislative advocacy created significant changes in the mental health system. A focus on the needs of children's mental health has created new opportunities to serve. The press continually looks to NAMI-MN for information and opinions. Legislators know that NAMI-MN will aid their decision making by bringing in people to testify who have been personally affected by the issue being discussed. People from throughout the state turn to NAMI-MN in times of crisis for education and support as they and their families cope with mental illness.

The NAMI board of directors recognized that it was an opportune time for NAMI-MN to build on this momentum and become a truly statewide organization with strong grassroots, providing leadership for change: change in the mental health system and change in people's lives.

Now is the time to create a vision for the future.

NAMI Minnesota initiated a strategic planning process in June 2006 to address the issues of increasing demands on the organization and the need to build on the inclusive and interactive values of the organization and the challenge of reaching a consensus on a broad-based vision, goals and strategies for its exciting future. A committee of stakeholders was formed and numerous conversations took place with members of the community, volunteers, board and staff in order to shape the strategies for the future. Thanks to all who contributed and special thanks to the Bush Foundation and the St. Paul Foundation for funding this effort.

The vision for NAMI Minnesota is grounded in our beliefs and our values. We believe that adults and children with mental illnesses are resilient and can recover. We believe that families are an important and integral factor to recovery. We believe that building a strong grassroots organization will benefit those impacted by mental illness.

NAMI Minnesota recognizes the biological nature of mental illness and believes that everyone should be treated with dignity, empathy and respect. We recognize and respect cultural differences. While seeking to understand and assist people, we also work for systemic reform.

LOOKING FORWARD ... NAMI'S VISION FOR 2011

With an eye to the future, our stakeholders envision NAMI Minnesota as the driving force that will provide leadership for change for Minnesotans with mental illnesses throughout this first decade of the 21st century. NAMI Minnesota's staff and volunteers will work collaboratively with the general public, community organizations, health professionals, providers and especially children and adults with mental illness and their families. NAMI-MN will change the way Minnesotans think about and respond to mental illnesses as it provides the leadership needed to reduce stigma, assure ready access to needed mental health care, advocate for a recovery-based model and assure that the special needs of targeted populations are addressed.

Broad Strategies for the Future

NAMI Minnesota will continue its dedication to providing education, support and advocacy to children and adults with mental illness and their families. However, NAMI cannot respond to the opportunity of changing the hearts, laws and minds of Minnesotans if its affiliates, its grassroots, are not strong and organized. Therefore, NAMI Minnesota will focus on three broad strategies to guide our work during the next five years:

- Ensure that people throughout the state of Minnesota have the opportunity to learn about mental illness and have support on their journey.
- Engage elected officials and policy makers to create a better mental health system where children and adults receive treatment that works, and when and where they need it.
- Reduce the stigma of mental illness and advocate for children and adults with mental illness and their families.

Strategic Goals

NAMI Minnesota will carry out its broad strategies for the future by focusing on seven strategic goals. (Note: Background information relating to each of these goals is available on our web site: www.namimn.org):

Educate and inform individuals with mental illness, families and the general public about mental illness and reduce stigma.

- Increase the number of people we serve by increasing the offerings of our most effective programs.
- Develop new or modify existing programs in order to serve culturally specific populations, the elderly and veterans and their families.
- Extend the capabilities and reach of staff by increasing NAMI-MN volunteer involvement in services and programs.
- Develop a media plan that will engage the press in increasing public awareness about mental illness and reduce stigma.

Strengthen affiliates' services, communication and relationships with each other and NAMI-MN.

- Coordinate regular communication and provide needed support to affiliates.
- Develop and enhance several communication vehicles.
- Include a component in the NAMI-MN marketing plan that will help affiliates to recruit members and raise funds.
- Explore alternative structures for organizing affiliates for maximum efficiency and outreach.

Build on public policy momentum to increase mental health care funding and access to quality mental health services.

- Expand the number of volunteers who can play an important role in implementing the NAMI-MN legislative agenda.
- Develop and implement an effective internship program.
- Fine tune the NAMI-MN legislative response systems.
- Develop and expand the various ways to educate the public, membership and elected officials.

Establish a NAMI-MN presence throughout Minnesota.

- Encourage strong county affiliates to expand to neighbors beyond their county.
- Establish regional staff located in areas of the state that have had a difficult time forming affiliates.
- Provide two educational events/programs in each region every year.

Increase understanding of NAMI-MN, its programs and services throughout Minnesota.

- Build the word of mouth marketing efforts of the board, staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that key referral sources have updated information and communication materials.
- Increase NAMI-MN staff and volunteer presence at speaking events around the state.
- Strengthen NAMI-MN's web site in order to directly increase access to the organization by people who regularly use the Internet to respond to their needs.

Increase and diversify funding for NAMI-MN's mission, programs, and legislative impact.

- Reconstitute and focus the Development Committee and fully engage the Board of Directors in fundraising.
- Develop a plan and obtain funding for a development staff person.
- Identify and make connections with new donors who may not have given in the past or may be unfamiliar with NAMI-MN.
- Increase the effectiveness of online and other fundraising tools.
- Build on the success of the first NAMI-MN Walk in 2007.

Accomplish NAMI-MN's vision through strong staff and volunteers.

- Build and effectively use staff skills and potential by clarifying culture, roles, structure and authority.
- Provide a useful and rewarding volunteer program.
- Develop NAMI-MN's infrastructure in order to most efficiently support the work of board, staff and volunteers.
- Find new or additional office space in order to provide good working conditions for staff and volunteers.
- Create ways for all board members to better understand NAMI-MN's operation in order to enhance their involvement and understanding.

“This plan will guide NAMI Minnesota to become the driving force to create real change for children and adults with mental illness and their families.”

Sue Abderholden, NAMI Minnesota Executive Director

Adopted by the NAMI Minnesota Board of Directors, June 2007

The complete version of this plan is available by contacting the NAMI Minnesota office. Ongoing progress reports will be provided in the NAMI Advocate as plans are put into action.

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MISSION

NAMI-MN's mission is to champion justice, dignity, and respect for all people affected by mental illness (biological brain disorders). Through education, advocacy, and support, we strive to eliminate the pervasive stigma of mental illness, effect positive changes in the mental health system, and increase the public and professional understanding of mental illness.



National Alliance on Mental Illness

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