

## **PLAN (Planned Lifetime Assistance Network)**

PLAN programs were developed to meet the needs of families who are actively planning for the future of an adult child with a disability. The mission of these independent, not-for-profit programs is to help families develop a future-care plan, establish the resources for payment, and identify the person(s) or program(s) responsible for carrying out the plan. Most PLAN programs also provide current services that relieve parents of part of the daily burden of care. Currently, throughout the country, there are 22 PLAN programs in operation serving approximately 4,000 families.\* There are four programs in the development stage. These programs comprise the National PLAN Alliance, a service component of NAMI.

Parents of an adult child with a disability (PLAN programs cover all disabilities, including mental illnesses) want the peace of mind that after they pass away someone will help their child maintain a certain quality of life and ensure his or her best interests. The concept of future-care planning for people with disabilities is founded on the desire to develop a safety net for the adult child and prevent the need for public-sector services.

In the case of a family of an adult child with a mental illness, a specific future-care plan would be developed to delineate the activities and services the family wants to ensure for their loved one. A financial mechanism (most often a supplemental needs trust, or third-party trust) is then created to pay for these activities and services after the family is no longer able to provide. Subsequently, a service provider and/or trustee is identified to guarantee that the plan is implemented. Thus, a contract is developed that secures that the best possible care from the mental health system and government-entitlement benefits is provided to the family member with a mental illness, either in the community or a hospital.

For further information concerning the PLAN programs currently available or how to start a PLAN in your own area, contact Carol Obloy, chair, National PLAN Alliance (phone/fax: 518/587-3372, e-mail: [npa@nycap.rr.com](mailto:npa@nycap.rr.com)) or on their website at [www.nationalplanalliance.org](http://www.nationalplanalliance.org)

The **National PLAN Alliance** has 23 member programs in 18 states. PLAN programs are established to serve the future care planning needs of families who have an adult relative with mental illness or other lifelong disabilities. Please contact the National PLAN Alliance for information regarding:

*Life Planning Workbook*, a workbook designed to help families gather the information required to begin the planning process to assure that *caring never ends*.

*PLAN Guidebook*, a guide to help those interested in establishing a **PLAN (Planned Lifetime Assistance Network)** program through each step in the process.

*National PLAN Alliance Survey and Marketing Tool*, designed to provide data that helps with PLAN program development.

In Minnesota, contact NAMI-Olmsted County at 507-287-1692.