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ACTION ON THE SQUARE PRESENTED BY NAMI WISCONSIN

MADISON, Wis. (April 24th, 2018) – On Thursday, May 3, mental health advocates from across the state of Wisconsin will gather at the State Capitol for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Wisconsin’s Action on the Square, a mental health advocacy day.

Action on the Square is an opportunity to address challenges and inform policymakers of gaps in the mental health system, while also celebrating the many successes and strides that NAMI advocates have created. Lawmakers will gain a better understanding of each unique experience and learn that recovery is truly possible with the right tools.

The event will kick off at 9am at the Best Western Premier Park Hotel with a series of mini workshops where participants will learn about current issues in the mental health system and receive tips for successful meetings with their state representatives. Attendees will then congregate to the Wisconsin State Capitol at 12pm to rally and hear from inspiring speakers. Afterwards, advocates will then attend their face-to-face meetings with their legislators to explain priority issues and share their personal experiences.

“Statistics show that over 800,000 individuals in Wisconsin alone are experiencing mental illness,” said Nate Schorr, Executive Director of NAMI Wisconsin.

Approximately one in five adults in the United States – 43.8 million – experience mental illness within a given year. Nearly 60% of these adults did not receive proper mental health services within the previous year.

“Although the mental health system has taken some really great strides throughout the last few years, we still have a lot of advocating to do,” said Crystal Hester, Public Policy & Advocacy Director at NAMI Wisconsin.

Advocacy is a pillar of NAMI Wisconsin’s mission. The organization’s strength depends on its grassroots. Only when people show up and speak out can we create a compassionate society that understands recovery and values a strong mental health system.

ABOUT NAMI WISCONSIN

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. NAMI Wisconsin and dedicated volunteers work to raise awareness and provide essential advocacy, education, and support group programs for people living with mental illness and their loved ones around the state of Wisconsin.

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For more information on NAMI Wisconsin and its mission, visit www.namiwisconsin.org



NAMI Wisconsin's Legislative Priorities

NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization providing advocacy, education, support and public awareness. NAMI Wisconsin is the state affiliate of NAMI and supports over 30 local chapters. Together, our mission is to improve the quality of life of people affected by mental illness and to promote recovery.

At the forefront of our advocacy is the recognition that stigma and discrimination directly affect people with mental illness and their families. NAMI Wisconsin asserts a conscious effort to reduce stigma and discrimination in all areas of policy including healthcare, employment, housing and education.

Provide access to affordable mental health treatment services

- Ensure access to affordable health insurance that covers mental health services at the same rate as other physical illnesses.
- Deliver community-based services that are easily accessible by local transit.
- Accept federal funds for Medicaid in order to cover more people with mental health conditions currently not receiving services.
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates so providers can afford to deliver services to those who need it.

Prevent people from entering and returning to jail and prison

- Expand community mental health services so law enforcement are not the first point of contact to access treatment.
- Support Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), Crisis Intervention Partner (CIP), and de-escalation programs for first responders to ensure effective response to mental health crises.
- Invest in Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) programs, especially for low risk offenders.

Support youth mental health initiatives

- Promote early identification and intervention for children and youth with mental health conditions.
- Expand First Episode Psychosis (FEP) programs to reach more youth statewide.
- Invest in school-based mental health initiatives that allow children and youth to access treatment, increase awareness and expand mental health education within the school community.

Promote avenues to recovery in the community through employment, peer services and support

- Increase the investment in Individualized Placement and Support (IPS), an evidence-based model of supported employment, by providing funding for additional state trainers.
- Maintain the investment in the peer specialist workforce.
- Ensure access to community-based services such as the Community Support Program (CSP) and Comprehensive Community Services (CCS).

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