



NAMI Contra Costa

National Alliance On Mental Illness

Contra Costa's Voice on Mental Illness **SEPTEMBER, 2008** *

The NAMI Contra Costa Newsletter is available on the website: www.namicontracosta.org
E mail: xnamicc@aol.com

PROP #63 DOOMED BY INITIATIVE ORIGIN MHSA POLICY QUESTIONED

Editor's Note: *Rose King, former employee of Helen Thomson, wrote an article which appeared in the Sacramento Bee, August 11, 2008. It is reprinted below in its entirety, unedited. A comment on the letter by Donna Wigand, Director, Mental Health Division is also on this page. Dr. Steven Mayberg, the Director of the state Department of Mental Health, wrote a response to the King article and that appears on page 6.*

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.

(Continued on page 6)

A STATEMENT

By Donna Wigand
Director, Mental Health Director

Rose King's recent editorial (Sacramento Bee, 8/11/08) on the State's implementation of the Mental Health Services Act presents several key issues that

(Continued on page 7)

Family to Family FREE CLASSES ON MENTAL ILLNESS

Registration is closing for the NAMI Family to Family classes which will begin again in September.

(Continued on page 4)

General Meeting SEPTEMBER

Thursday,
September 18
7:00 pm

Speakers

Carla Jacobs

Topic

The Law and Mental Illness
Protecting and Treating Those
Destabilized by Mental Illness

An imperative presentation for anyone who has the responsibility for a loved one who is mentally ill.

See Page 3

John Muir Medical Center
Concord Campus
(Note: Formerly Mt. Diablo
Medical Center)
www.namicontracosta.org
E mail : xnamicc@aol.com

2540 East Street, Concord
925-682 8200

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NAMI-CC Care and Support Groups

Central Contra Costa County

1st Tuesday of each month, Now In It's 10th year. 7:30-9:00 pm Hillcrest Congregational Church, 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Contact Peggy Luna, Dave Kahler 925- 676-5771 or E mail: xnamicc@aol.com

3rd Monday of each month, 7:15-9:15 pm, John Muir Hospital, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek Campus, downstairs in the Stern Conference Room. The group is facilitated by Dr. Mary Olwin and Gloria Hill.

Call: Gloria Hill 925- 957-5146.

NAMI Tri-Valley

2nd Monday of each Month: 7:15—9:00 pm Livermore Public Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore.

Contact support facilitator Marsha McInnis, marsha@nami-trivalley.org or 925- 980 5331

4th Monday of each month, 7:00—8:30 pm St. Claire's Episcopal Church, 3350 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton

Contact Russell or Donna White. russdonnawhite@comcast.net 925- 455 6901

Family Support Group

For families with a mentally ill loved one, Meets Monthly

Pastor Heather Hammer

San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church

902 Danville Blvd., Alamo

925-837 5243

BIPOLAR CHILL (CLIENT RUN)

Manic Depression Support Group

Wednesday 7:00—8:30 pm

710 Broadway #3G Walnut Creek

Contact Lisa or Scott 925-743 1160

TRI-VALLEY BIPOLAR (Consumer Run)

Bipolar and Depression Support Group

Wednesdays, 7:15 pm to 8:45 pm

St. Claire's Episcopal Church, Pleasanton

Contact: Bob Hogan: 925-462 5481

NEW HOPE

BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP

For parents of children and adolescents diagnosed with a mood disorder.

Lafayette:

2nd Monday of each month

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church Room #4

Contact: Annette 510-733 0577 or

Joani 925-962 9952

www.newhopesupportgroup.com

SELF-INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

(Consumer Run)

For self-injury sufferers to talk about ways to change these behaviors and resolve feelings brought on by trauma.

Call: Veronica 925-945 7871

H.E.L.P.

Hope, Encouragement, Love and Prayer

Support group for those coping with a mental illness and/or their families and friends.

Time: Last Monday of each month 7:00—9:00 pm

Where: Christ the King Church, Parish Hall

199 Brandon Road, Pleasant Hill

Contact Joe or Pam Appel 925-947 0269

Richmond Support Group

Richmond Health Center 100 38th St. Room 2400

2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Matthew Luu, LCSW 510- 374 7500

FAMILY ADVOCATE HOURS

Gloria Hill, Contra Costa County

Mental Health Advocate

Monday - Friday 9:30 am - 6:00 pm

925-957 5146

NAMI-Contra Costa
National Alliance on Mental Illness

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Newsletter Deadline: 20th of Each Month

**PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN**

By Al Farmer

The NAMI Contra Costa 30th Anniversary Celebration on Sunday August 10, 2008 was an outstanding success! The event was held in our garden around the swimming pool in the beautiful Orinda hills.

NAMI members who have served this organization for up to 30 years were in attendance. It was a unique opportunity for many old and new friends to gather together to discuss how NAMI Contra Costa has grown over the years, how the NAMI newsletter has developed and how hundreds of families have benefited from the Family to Family Program.

We discussed how the 100V (In Our Own Voice) program has been presented to numerous hospital staff, nurses in training, teachers and police officers. Also, we noted how the Peer to Peer Program and the KIDS Programs have grown and benefited so many people.

The celebration was attended by over sixty people who thoroughly enjoyed connecting with so many caring NAMI members while they enjoyed delicious food catered by Sunrise Catering.

We were particularly honored that Donna Wigand, John Allen and Gloria Hill, representing Contra Costa Mental Health, were able to join us in this very special celebration.

I would especially like to thank Bonnie Leys, Dave Kahler, Richard and Yvonne DeAndre and Sean Kleen for all their help in making this memorable event possible.

**GENERAL
MEETING**

**CONTROVERSIAL
SEPTEMBER
SPEAKER
ATTRACTS
DOCUMENTARY
FILMMAKER**

By Kay Derrico

Carla Jacobs, the speaker at the September General Meeting, is going to tackle the thorny topic of laws and regulations that have pitted families against their mentally ill loved ones.

Amanda Mazzanti, documentary filmmaker*, will be capturing this meeting on film, using Ms. Jacob's presentation as a springboard into a full documentary that will explore the legal issues and the impacts upon the patients (consumers), their families, and "the system."

Ms. Mazzanti is passionate about helping the public understand the laws that paradoxically support patients' rights while impeding or eliminating needed medical help. With her family's experience with her brother's mental illness, she comes to this new project with determination and energy.

*See Ms Mazzanti's documentary trailer, *Seeds of Inspiration*

digitalady@gmail.com

Thursday, October 16, 2008
**Bipolar Advantage: You Don't Have To
Lead a Diminished Life.**

Thomas Wooton, author, *Bipolar Advantage*, NAMI California Conference

Keynote speaker.

Information: 925-933 4012

E mail questions: kayderrico@comcast.net

In Our Own Voice

**SPEAKING
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
PEOPLE RECOVERING
FROM MENTAL
ILLNESS**

People who have experienced mental illness and are in recovery are invited to attend an introductory meeting to be held on September 20th, to explore training for *In Our Own Voice*, a unique program featuring people who tell their own stories, thus creating awareness in the general public about what is involved in recovering from mental illnesses.

The meeting will be from 1pm to 3pm and will be led by two current presenters of *In Our Own Voice*. The *In Our Own Voice* training itself will be a two-day, Saturday-Sunday session to be held on October 11th & 12th, 2008 in Central Contra Costa County. There is no charge for this training and those who qualify for and complete the training will receive a small stipend for each presentation they make in the future.

The presentations are sponsored by NAMI-Contra Costa. Counselors, friends and family members are also encouraged to nominate people they believe would be good candidates for *In Our Own Voice* training. The program especially needs men, youth and people with diverse backgrounds.

Contact:
Veronica B. Vale 925-945-7871,
for further information.



**CLUBHOUSE
REPORT**

**An Autumn Evening
In The Garden**

If you visit our new clubhouse you will immediately be amazed by the elaborate displays of flowers and plants, donated by Trader Joes, and tended by eager clubhouse members. You will be surrounded by this lush garden if you come to our open house which will celebrate the eighth month of successful operation on:

**Wednesday Evening,
Oct. 15th from 6 to 9pm.**

There will be food, fun, raffles and prizes. You will see our beautifully remodeled kitchen and library. You will observe the operating work units which consist of the snack bar, kitchen, garden, and computers. You will hear the stories of members who have grown by the clubhouse experience. See you there. Mae Bragen

**FREE CLASSES
ON MENTAL
ILLNESS**

(Continued from page1)

Over 1700 have graduated from this class and many regard it as the imperative in their efforts to help their loved one. It is a 12 week program.

Call: 510- 223 6873
925-676 5771
E mail: xnamicc@aol.com

**SUPERVISOR
FEDERAL
GLOVER**

Federal has been representing the Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley, Bethel Island area since 2000. Approximately 21% of the NAMI membership lives in District V. It is important that voters communicate their needs and wishes to these elected representatives.



He was president of the Board in 2004 and presently holds that office.

Federal D. Glover
Supervisor
District V

He was born and raised in Pittsburg and lived there all his life. After attending San Francisco State University he went to work locally at POSCO and Dow Chemical.

He worked at Dow for 22 years where he specialized in training and safety. In 1996 he was elected to the Pittsburg City Council. In 1998 and 1999, he served as mayor.

He is running for reelection in November and has a challenger, Gary Agopian. The October newsletter will feature an article on him.

**BYCYCLES
WANTED**

If you have an unneeded bike that you would like to donate, NAMI will find a consumer that can use it for transportation and exercise this summer

xnamicc@aol.com
925-676 5771

Lecture Series

**EARLY
CHILDHOOD
MENTAL
HEALTH
PROGRAM**

The Early Childhood Mental Health program, a community-based nonprofit organization, has provided mental health services to the young and their families in Contra Costa County since 1974.

They are going to offer the first in a series of five free lectures, bringing leaders in infant development and early mental health treatment to Richmond to present topics of interest to professionals who work with young children. This series was announced by Congressman George Miller and his wife, Cynthia Miller.

Services, in English and Spanish, include intensive day treatment, individual play therapy, home-visiting by infant/parent therapist, wraparound support for families parenting education and support groups and free mental health consultation to day care teachers and providers throughout West Contra Costa County.

To reserve a seat for the first lecture, send an e mail to:

mschwartz@ecmhp.org or

Call: 510-287 5687

For more information about the Early Childhood Mental Health Program, visit the website:

www.ecmhp.org or call

510-412 9200

**VICTORY!
DISTRICT COURT HALTS
CUTS TO MEDI-CAL
PROVIDERS**

**Medi-Cal Beneficiaries Will
Continue To Receive Needed
Medications-Services**

Sacramento, CA—A Federal District Court in Los Angeles ordered the state of California to stop the ten percent cuts in Medi-Cal reimbursement payments to healthcare providers. The Court found that pharmacies and other Medi-Cal providers and patients were being irreparably harmed as a result of the cuts and that the providers had shown a likelihood of success on the merits. Pharmacies were losing money on nearly every Medi-Cal transaction and many pharmacies have been forced to turn away Medi-Cal patients.

In addition to pharmacies, the Court's order includes relief for physicians, dentists, adult day health care centers, clinics, health systems and other health care providers and applies to services on or after July 1, 2008.

"This case has been a rollercoaster ride wince the beginning. The California Pharmacists Association applauds Judge Snyder for recognizing the damage that the cuts were having on pharmacies and the patients they serve," said Lynn Rolston, chief executive officer of the California Pharmacists Association. "We are grateful for this much needed and timely victory."

**SURROGOTE
PROGRAM**

Occasionally a NAMI-CC family has found it useful, if not imperative, to have a non-family member talk to their mentally ill loved one.

In the past, families would use a professional. The family doctor, the psychiatrist or therapist. The current reality is that the average family can't afford the professionals in the private part of the market and the time the patient spends in the county mental health system has been drastically reduced due the years of severe budget cuts.

So occasionally a family will simply ask another NAMI member to have a serious discussion with their loved one and give that person a script. That person would be the *Surrogate*.

For information on how it can work for you, contact the First Tuesday Support Group. (See page 2)

xnamicc@aol.com
925-676 5771

PROP #63 DOOMED BY INITIATIVE ORIGIN

(Continued from page 1))

by Rose King - Special to The Bee
Published 12:00 am PDT Monday, August 11, 2008

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.

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.

Finally, the issue is that when you legislate by initiative, there is no guarantee that implementers will make good on “intent,” and there is no documentation to challenge the institutional interpretation. Legislation that is passed and signed on the other hand has a paper trail of testimony and committee consultant analyses and research that actually have to be achieved.

DR. MAYBERG'S RESPONSE

Note: Dr. Steven Mayberg is the director of the Department of Mental Health and has served under three Governors.

Rose King's assertions ("Mental health act doomed by initiative origin," Viewpoints, Aug. 11) 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.

(Continued on page7)

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.


SEPTEMBER DONATIONS

Donations Have Been Received From:

- Lareen Z. Fender
- Scott and Kerri Shawn Denison
- Darlene Lanka
- Dick and Mary Lou Parks
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- Al and Sarah Tatum
- Gary Zimmerman
- Dean and Lottie Williamson
- John D. Stassen

United Way of the Bay Area

Chevron Humankind
Matching Gift Program



A STATEMENT

(Continued from page1)
by Donna Wigand
Mental Health Director

demonstrate the challenges that counties have faced during the past three and a-half years in our local MHSA planning and implementation processes. Two of King's points are especially cognizant: 1) The majority of the dollars are held at the state level and are not in county coffers; and 2) there is no overall plan at the state level for rolling out the Act's several components. This is not a criticism of our county staff, contracted agencies or county partners. We have experienced strong collaborations and positive outcomes.

We are glad to have funding available to us from MHSA; however, DMH has a long road ahead to achieve transformation of California's public mental health system.

DONATION FORM

Make check payable to NAMI-CC
Mail to: Treasurer, NAMI-CC
P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA. 94521
NAMI-CC Tax ID # 68-0209474

Use Donation For:

- Peer to Peer Program
- NAMI-CC General Fund
- Family to Family
- K.I.D.S. Program
- Housing
- IOOV (In Our Own Voice)

E mail address: _____

Name

Street Address

City State Zip

Phone: _____

NAMI Contra Costa
 P.O Box 21247
 Concord, CA
 94521

Stamp

If You Need To Talk . . . If You need Support . . . You Need to Visit the
FIRST TUESDAY Support Group
In Its 10th Year.
 There will be a discussion of the *Surrogate Program*
 Tuesday, September 2, 2008, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
 Hillcrest Congregational Church
 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill
 Call: 925-676 5771 xnamicc@aol.com

NAMI Contra Costa

The annual membership dues are \$40. This makes you a member of NAMI National, NAMI California and NAMI Contra Costa. You are automatically a member of all three organizations.

If you are solicited for membership or special donations from the State or National organizations, give generously if you can, but all such donations are voluntary and would be over and above your membership in NAMI Contra Costa.

Dues paid in October, November and December provide membership for the following year.

Send your membership application to:

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 94521
 E mail: xnamicc@aol.com
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Affiliated with NAMI National and
 NAMI California

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 Make check payable to NAMI Contra Costa
 Complete this information cut-out and return it to:
 Treasurer, NAMI-CC
 P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA., 94521
 E Mail Address: xnamicc@aol.com

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Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Membership is: New A Renewal

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Affiliate | 20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Membership | 40.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Membership | 50.00 |
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