



National Alliance on Mental Illness

**nami**

**Illinois**



*News From  
NAMI Illinois' President*

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July 20, 2015

Dear Friends,

**I am writing to provide you with some updates regarding NAMI Illinois.**

First, the **good news**. NAMI Illinois remains a strong, focused, mission-driven organization committed to improving the lives of individuals and families challenged by mental illness through education, advocacy and support. We have a dedicated board of directors from all corners of our State who recognize that NAMI Illinois has a unique role to play, while providing support for our affiliates and serving as the local voice for the national organization. We are blessed to have a very capable staff and many, many volunteers across the State who implement our life-changing programs and train others to fulfill that mission as well.

However, I must also share some **bad news**: for the first time in over thirty years we are not receiving any financial support from the State of Illinois. We were notified that the Governor's budget did not include funding for NAMI Illinois. While annual grant support from the State has been modest, to NAMI Illinois it has been a significant, meaningful portion of our budget that empowered us to fulfill our mission. We're proud to report that each year NAMI Illinois delivered a substantial return on the State's investment in education and support. We have created strong, educated individuals, families and communities that have been changed by NAMI. While as of today there is no State budget and no organization is getting paid, the resolution of the current impasse in Springfield will not mean anything for NAMI Illinois unless the Legislature appropriates sufficient funds and the Governor releases them. Of course our advocacy on this matter has been very active, but at this time we must plan for the very real scenario that we'll receive no State funds.

The **Board of Directors** met last week, and we'll be meeting regularly in the coming weeks. We are working diligently to manage our organization within the parameters of our financial situation while continuing to provide the education & support services, public awareness efforts, public policy work and information and referral services on which the people of Illinois have come to rely. **We will not let them or you down.** Following a

board retreat in May, each board member joined a work group to address our three priority areas of education, advocacy and partnerships. Watch for developments that come out of these work groups in the coming months. Our expectation is that **NAMI Illinois** will not only survive the current challenges, but **thrive**.

### **What can you do?**

1. The first priority for all of us must be to support those in our lives and in our communities who are living with mental illness.
2. Work with us to advocate for State budget decisions that fund treatment and prevention services, as well as programs like **NAMI Illinois**, at an acceptable level.
3. Give us your ideas, input and volunteer time as together we create new alliances and partnerships to find twenty-first century ways of actualizing our mission.
4. Plan to come to the **NAMI Illinois State Conference on October 2 and 3**. In addition to exciting conference sessions, the Board will provide a full report to the membership on our activities and our plans for the future and, more importantly, will engage the membership in open dialog about our shared vision for the future as a State organization, affiliates and individual members.

This is a challenging time for all of the people of Illinois, but especially for those who are living with mental illness and are uncertain about the availability of services they need to stay well. I welcome your questions, feedback and ideas for NAMI Illinois.

Please contact me at [jwshust@gmail.com](mailto:jwshust@gmail.com) or by telephone at (312) 488-6035. I hope to see you at the conference in October.

Sincerely,

John W. Shustitzky  
President  
Board of Directors  
NAMI Illinois