



NAMI Delaware lauds passage of mental health bills



Delaware Governor John Carney signs multiple bills in support of mental health resources for schools and students.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness Delaware celebrated the passage of three mental health bills on the final day of the 2022 Delaware Legislature.

"We are grateful to the Delaware General Assembly for its action on this legislation," said Dr. Joshua Thomas, NAMI Delaware CEO and executive director.

"These three bills have been a top priority for us. They will help address Delaware's youth mental health crisis and ensure our youth thrive academically, socially and emotionally."

House Bill 300 brings more school mental health professionals, including school counselors, social workers and psychologists, to all Delaware middle schools. It follows similar legislation for elementary

schools that was signed into law by Gov. John Carney in August 2021.

House Bill 303 requires health plans to cover annual mental health well-being checks, including at school-based health centers.

House Bill 301 requires mental health education for each grade, in each school district.

"Early intervention can be the difference between learning strategies to manage symptoms for a short time and struggling with consequences of unmet needs for a lifetime," said Annie Slease, NAMI Delaware director of advocacy and education. "These bills will save lives."

NAMI Delaware named state organization of the year

ChristianaCare's Dr. James Ellison also receives 2022 Exemplary Psychiatrist Award

Each year at the NAMI National Convention, individuals and organizations are honored for their outstanding work to further the goals of our movement. Delaware received two honors:

1. The 2022 Outstanding NAMI State Organization Award for its exceptional efforts on the state level to carry out the NAMI mission as defined by NAMI Standards of Excellence.

2. The 2022 Exemplary Psychiatrist Award, given to James Ellison, M.D., MPH, for his exceptional contributions to improving the lives of people with mental health conditions. A specialist in geriatric psychiatry, Dr. Ellison was recruited to Delaware in 2015 to help ChristianaCare's Swank Center for Memory Care and Geriatric Consultation. *See his story on page 5.*



Barry family inspired Gold Alerts legislation

Legislative advocacy often begins with a personal story. For HB 476, a bill legislating public Gold Alert postings, Max Barry and his mother, Stephanie Barry, shared a story that led to the legislation.

After witnessing Max's crisis-level distress in June 2020, Stephanie contacted his ACT team for help ensuring he was safe. She also called his house manager.

Max recalls: "I was having a really, really, bad night. I was frustrated, angry and most likely incoherent in conversations with my parents. I stopped answering the phone and went to sleep in the basement of my apartment building."

Within the hour, Max called his mom and confirmed he was safe. But they were unaware that police had been notified and issued a Gold Alert for Max.

A Gold Alert is a public notification used to help locate a person with a disability, a senior citizen, or someone who may be suicidal.

A few weeks later, after he had stabilized and resumed his recovery management, Max found the Gold Alert post on social media. "There was my picture, an old mugshot, on a post with my name stating that I was missing and in crisis. I looked like a criminal," he said.

By the time Max, his mother, and other family members discovered it, the post had been shared multiple times, each post with comments from concerned community members. The family also received personal messages from friends and acquaintances, each requiring a delicate explanation and assurance that Max had recovered.

"One of my biggest fears is that I am being defined by one of my worst days," he said.

The Barry family tried to have the posts taken down. Family members did get a notation that the Gold Alert had been canceled but were unable to have the posts removed. They contacted NAMI Delaware for help.



Because NAMI works closely with law enforcement agencies such as New Castle County Police Department, they discussed this complex issue with us and cooperated on a solution: change the Gold Alerts law and require the removal of public posts within 72 hours of finding the person.

The Gold Alert bill passed the House and Senate on June 30, but it has not been signed into law by the Governor yet. No date of signing has been set yet.

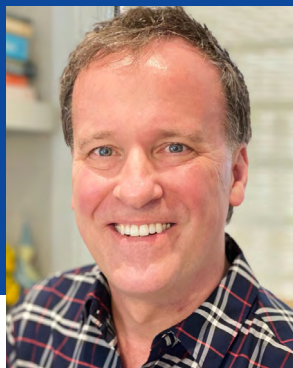
No date of signing has been set yet . . . but we look forward to celebrating this law's passing in the near future.

Become an advocate like Stephanie and Max

Learn how to share your story effectively for policy change with NAMI Smarts training on Sept. 13. See page 7 for details.

Dr. Joshua Thomas

CEO/Executive Director



Dear Friends,

Summer is a great time to get away, enjoy downtime and recharge before schedules get busy again in September. I hope summer 2022 has been pleasant.

We have a reason to celebrate: A record fundraising year for our NAMIWalks Delaware event. Thank you to all who raised funds, donated or walked at one of our three locations on walk day. I am very grateful for your support. It was an honor for our national organization to select us as the State Organization of the Year. To be voted the top chapter in the country is an amazing accomplishment and speaks to the hard work and dedication of our staff, board of directors, advisory board and our volunteers. Our award was formally announced at the NAMI National Convention in June. We celebrate the progress we have made and continue to work to serve our community.

We have an exciting fall planned with many events, programs and opportunities. Check out our website and we look forward to seeing you soon.

With gratitude,

Joshua Thomas, Ph.D.
CEO/Executive Director

Thank you, Delaware General Assembly!

NAMI Delaware thanks the Delaware General Assembly for supporting critical funding that helps us serve more people affected by mental illness! Through Grant in Aid funding, nonprofit organizations in our state like NAMI Delaware receive much needed operating funding.

We are very grateful for the support!

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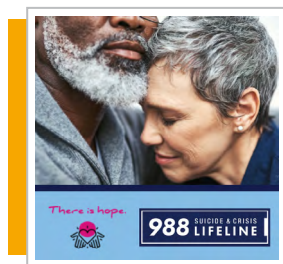
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MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Instagram campaign raises awareness of barriers

For Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, Nyemade Boiwu captured the thoughts of community members about mental health.

This Instagram campaign raised awareness about the cultural and structural barriers that people of color may face when trying to get mental health services. Nyemade is the NAMI Delaware Equity & Inclusion Fellow.



If you or someone you know is struggling or needs support now, call or text 988.

PEER SERVICES FUNDING

NAMI Delaware received American Rescue Plan Act funding through the governor's office to provide more services for peers (people living with mental illness).

The money will be used to hire full- and part-time staff to help with outreach, foster educational and support programs, and raise awareness about mental illness and resources available through NAMI Delaware.

The new Peer Services Initiative is an opportunity to recruit and train more volunteer facilitators and build programs to help support those living with mental illness in our community.

"We are thrilled with the opportunity to substantially strengthen our peer services," said NAMI CEO/Executive Director Dr. Josh Thomas. "This vital funding is going to help us build stronger programs and serve more people in our community."

If you are interested in full- or part-time employment in Peer Services, send your cover letter and resume to Dr. Josh Thomas at jthomas@namide.org. No phone inquiries.

AWARD WINNER

ChristianaCare geriatric psychiatrist receives national award for improving care for older adults with mental health needs

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) honored James Ellison, M.D., MPH, with a 2022 Exemplary Psychiatrist Award for his exceptional contributions to improve the lives of people with mental health conditions.

A specialist in geriatric psychiatry, Dr. Ellison was recruited to Delaware in 2015 to help ChristianaCare's Swank Center for Memory Care and Geriatric Consultation improve the care of older adults whose lives are affected by neuropsychiatric conditions.

With the help of his colleagues, Ellison expanded the Swank Center's services to include general geriatric health care consultation, fall prevention assessments through their Safe Steps program, and community education about healthy cognitive aging through their Memory Ambassadors program. The center now serves

Dr. Ellison
Exemplary Psychiatrist
Award



Delawareans from three locations and anticipates adding more.

"Dr. Ellison is a true gift to Delaware," said Dr. Joshua Thomas, NAMI Delaware CEO and executive director, who nominated Dr. Ellison for the award. "I have personally witnessed the respectful and dignified way he presents information, offers reassurance, provides hope and works to surround individuals and families with needed care and support."

NAMI DELAWARE – PARTNERS CORNER

NAMI Delaware is eager to support your organization.

NAMI Delaware partners closely with businesses, corporations and faith communities to support workplace mental health. Our goal is to encourage positive mental health at work, offering recommendations to community resources for employees potentially experiencing declining mental health (for themselves or others).

Statistics show that early intervention leads to faster, better outcomes, and engaged, healthy, motivated employees. We offer one-hour presentations, in English and Spanish, that can easily be covered during a “Lunch and Learn” or a “Snack and Chat.”

Topics include:

1. Mental Health: Signs, Symptoms and Ways to Help
2. Addressing Signs of Burnout in the Workplace
3. Workplace LGBTQ+ Allyship
4. Suicide Prevention Certification

NAMI also offers classes including Mental Health First Aid (six hours), NAMI Family to Family (eight-week series), and In Our Own Voice (from people who have “been there”).

NAMI Delaware would like to partner with you. Contact Sue Mulhern at smulhern@namide.org for information.

Become a NAMI member

NAMI Delaware membership is right for you because you care about the mental health of your family, your employees and your community.

Your NAMI Delaware membership puts you in a network that provides life-saving information, support and education. You join thousands of Delawareans fighting for hope and recovery – people who understand the realities of mental illness and its challenges. You also will have access to educational opportunities, including an annual conference.

Learn more at www.namidelaware.org/membership

HOUSING HIGHLIGHT

Housing is one of the biggest barriers to recovery. Our housing program is critical.

NAMI Delaware provides housing for people living with mental illness with low incomes. Those who qualify for HUD subsidies or the Delaware Housing Authority's State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) vouchers may have an opportunity to live in a NAMI Delaware-managed property. Those residing in our independent living properties must be able to live independently and receive necessary case management and medical support from community providers or private practitioners. We have housing options statewide.



For more information, contact Merton Briggs, senior director of housing and facilities, at mbriggs@namide.org.

Thank you to
everyone who
supported us
at our events.

NAMI WALK, MAY 5



EVENTS

NAMI SMARTS

Learn how to share your story effectively for grassroots advocacy with NAMI Smarts.

The hands-on advocacy training helps people living with mental illness, friends and family transform their passion and experience into skillful grassroots advocacy.

The online training is offered from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Tuesday, Sept. 13.

Register at www.eventbrite.com/e/nami-smarts-for-advocacy-tickets-387525448047

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide Prevention and Mental Health –
Community Discussion

Now more than ever, our communities need
suicide prevention awareness and training.

Middletown Library

All are welcome (in-person event)
2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 10
204 E. Main St.
Middletown, DE.
Enter from Catherine Street

FAITH DAYS

Join us to share how mental health affects our
faith communities.

NAMI Delaware Faith Day #1

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Aug. 27
Academy for Peace
(Wilmington)
All faiths welcome
(Hybrid event onsite and via
Zoom)

NAMI Delaware Faith Day #2

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sept. 17
Church on Main
(Middletown)
All faiths welcome
(Hybrid event onsite and
via Zoom)

We support, educate and advocate for people with severe and persistent mental illness.

**Please help us
help Delawareans.**



The pandemic has affected our mental health.

1 in 3

Americans has reported **anxiety or depression** since COVID-19

1 in 5

Americans sought **mental health help** since COVID-19

1 in 4

U.S children shows symptoms of **depression**



Donate

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Wilmington, DE 19805

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Membership with NAMI Delaware gives you a great discount on the annual conference
www.namidelaware.org/membership



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