



*A Community Voice on Mental Health... Empowering People Toward Recovery*

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## Parity Bill Needs your Support: Equal Coverage for Mental-Health before Iowa Legislature

**Insurers** offering health coverage in Iowa will no longer be able to put restrictions on what they pay out for mental health treatment under a bill introduced this year in the Iowa legislature. The bill, **HF 139**,\* requires that health insurance coverage for costs relating to mental health conditions be provided at the same rates, terms and conditions associated with other health coverage.

This *parity law* would be extended to mental health coverage and will include alcohol and substance abuse treatment services as well.

The effect of this bill is that insurers that provide health coverage could no longer have different financial limits, cost-sharing requirements or make coverage any more restrictive than coverage offered for other health or medical expenses. In other words, deductibles, co-pays, out of pocket limits, visit limitations and any other financial components of benefits coverage must be identical.

This bill is the result of years of advocacy and education work by NAMI and other mental health advocates. It reflects the growing awareness nationwide of the prevalence of mental illness in our society and the cost-effectiveness of treatment. So far 42 states have some form of parity in mental health and alcohol and substance abuse treatment services.

The Iowa bill is much like the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act that was passed in October 2008 that covers health plans that do not fall under state regulation.

### Parity is Cost Effective

Objections to requiring insurers to cover mental health and alcohol and substance abuse services at the same level as other health conditions mistakenly assume that such coverage will greatly increase insurance costs overall. There have been a number of studies demonstrating that equitable coverage of mental illness can be cost effective, without significant escalation in premiums.

According to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2006, the cost of the extended coverage was identified as close to zero. The Congressional Budget Office estimated the added cost of parity between 0.2% and 0.4% on average. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration study estimated that full parity could increase premiums up to 3.6% and as high as 5% for fee-for-service plans. While these costs would first fall on the employer, it was estimated that more than likely these costs would trickle down to consumers in the form of higher premiums and co-pays for the employees.

It is believed however that these upfront cost increases will be offset over time. Through proper management, mental healthcare can reduce costs overall because parity will provide more people with full access to treatment. Untreated mental illness was cited as leaving people more susceptible to physical illnesses such as heart attacks and other expensive ailments.

This legislation is also important because parity in health care coverage will help end the stigma long associated with mental illness. Parity articulates in law the basic principle that mental illness is a disease like any other. It will put the treatment of mental illness for diagnosis such as bipolar disorder, and depression on the same footing with medical conditions such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

**Please call your State Representative and State Senator today!**

## Contribute personal stories, poems, pictures, and artwork for our new book celebrating NAMI's 30 years, *"Walking in our Shoes"*

In recognition of NAMI Scott County's 30th Anniversary, we invite you to submit your personal story about your journey of recovery. We will be using excerpts from as many of you as possible to include in our book which will reflect various perspectives from consumers, family members, and health care professionals. We are also in need of poems, artwork, photos, old newspaper clippings, etc. **The deadline for submissions is March 27th.** For more information, please contact Caroline at 563-322-8870 ASAP!

## NAMI EVENTS

### NAMI Scott County March Education Program

**Mon, March 16, 2009**  
Bettendorf Library, 7pm  
National Nutrition Month:  
Dietician, Stacey Mitchell,  
will discuss basic nutrition  
and metabolic screening.

### NAMIWalks Kick-Off Luncheon

**Sat, Mar 21, 2009**  
Holiday Inn/Conference Center,  
Rock Island—Call Jay or Kathy for  
more info: 563-322-8870

### In Our Own Voice Presentation: Living with Mental Illness

**March 31, 2009**  
Muscatine Community College  
4:20pm—6pm  
(in the student lounge)  
RSVP Required by March 27th.  
Contact Vicki Walters at  
563-260-7780

### You Can Make a Difference!

Lobby with NAMI Scott County  
Advocating Change Day 2009  
**Wednesday, April 1, 2009**  
NAMI Scott County has reserved a  
bus to take YOU to Des Moines.  
Please contact the NAMI office to  
reserve your space on the bus.  
ID Action provides lunch but you  
MUST register online at  
[www.idaction.org](http://www.idaction.org).

### NAMI Scott County April Education Program

**Mon, April 27, 2009**  
Bettendorf Library, 7pm  
STD & ETOH Awareness  
Daryl Vincent with CADS

### NAMIWalks Volunteer Committee Meeting

**Wed, March 11, 2009**  
6:30pm  
NAMI Scott County Office  
Join us! Volunteers welcome.

### NAMI Scott County Marketing Committee

Seeking creative minds to help us  
plan our 30th Anniversary Celebration!  
- Call Caroline at 563-322-8870.

### NAMIWalks for the Minds of America

**May 2, 2009**  
Credit Island Park  
8:30am Check-in  
10:00am—Walk Time  
*See you there!*

## Update

We look forward to seeing and meeting many more of you at our

### Kick-Off Luncheon

Saturday, Mar 21st.

11:30 am

Holiday Inn Conference Center  
Rock Island, IL

This Kick-Off Luncheon is free for anyone who wants to create a Walk team or learn more about the Walk and the many opportunities to participate in this exciting event!

If you have not received your invitation, contact Jay or Kathy ASAP!  
[namiwalks@namiscottcounty.org](mailto:namiwalks@namiscottcounty.org)  
or call 563-322-8870

#### IOOV - Looking for a Speaker?

Churches, rotary clubs, PTA groups, colleges, community centers, etc. Call Alice Thiemann to schedule speakers: 563-323-7453.

#### Why Do People Kill Themselves?

Suicide has always been a conundrum for psychologists and other researchers interested in human behavior. Self-preservation is one of the strongest human instincts, so the drive to commit suicide must be even more powerful. But what causes it? What the statistics do not tell us - and what psychologists most want to know - is exactly which people are most at risk. The vast majority of depressed, hopeless people do not commit suicide, so why do some do it?

In 2005, psychologist Thomas Joiner, a suicide specialist at Florida State University in Tallahassee whose own father committed suicide, set out to answer that question. Joiner believes he has found a common thread others have missed. To learn more, read the full article at: [www.newscientist.com/article/mg20126971.900](http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20126971.900)

## NAMI Supports You!

### NAMI Connection

Recovery Support Group

2pm—3:30pm Every Sun & Fri

Vera French Manor- Community Room  
215 E 37th St, Davenport, IA 52806

#### NEW VENUE!

### NAMI Family Support Group

7-8pm, 4th Monday of each month

(March 23rd & April 27th)

NAMI Scott County Office

1706 Brady St, Suite, 200, Davenport.

Please spread the word!



### Visions for Tomorrow

FREE Classes for Parents, Caregivers who are caring for Children or Teens with Brain Disorders or Mental Illness.

VFT workshop topics: AD/HD, ODD & Conduct Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Bipolar, Depression & Suicide, Anxiety, Reactive Attachment Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive, Eating Disorders, Empathy & SOUL, Communication Skills, Problem Management, Coping & self-care, Therapy & Alternative Treatments, Stigma, Advocacy & the Judicial System, and more. Please contact the office for more info.

#### Iowa Peer Support Training Academy

*Become a peer support specialist*

Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa, June 6-12, with follow-up training and testing to be held July 9 and 10. Applications will be due March 31, 2009. To receive an application call Outlooks at:

515-243-2000.

#### Quad Cities Coming Together:

What We Need in Health Care Reform

Saturday, March 28, 1—4pm

Augustana—Olin Hall

Share your ideas about meaningful and measurable changes for Health Care in America—Direct input to Washington DC !

## Reflections

### Day to Day

Doctors checking...  
mind affecting drugs,  
Can't sit still...  
got no will,  
Sleep is avoided...  
got shivers and chills,  
Can't comprehend...  
lost my friends,  
Will I survive?  
Well hell, that all depends.

-Lance Baker-

### Chicken Soup for my Bipolar Soul

My chicken soup is made of meds;  
five little pills, for my five heads.

The pink one keeps me  
smooth and mellow,  
If it is not enough  
I take one that's yellow.

My bright blue pill  
will make me drowse,  
the tiny white one,  
headaches to pause.

The blue and yellow  
keep me up —  
all swallowed down with water,  
Would you like a cup?

My chicken soup I take each day  
because without it I would stray  
and not be able to always be  
the person that I know is me.

- Joye Chizek -

#### NAMI Scott County

Anne Corbi, President  
Michael Freda, Vice President  
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