

May 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:
NAMI San Diego
Albright Information and Referral Center
(619) 543-1434
(800) 523-5933

‘MIND your health’ during Mental Health Month in May

SAN DIEGO – Mental illness is an especially cruel disease, as it sickens the body and the mind on many levels, affecting a person’s feelings, moods, and ability to relate to others. This often results in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life. However, treatment of mental illnesses is very effective and many people with them are living quite productive lives.

May - officially recognized as "Mental Health Month" by Congress since 1949 - is the perfect time for everyone - friends, loved ones, parents, caregivers, professionals and government at all levels - to focus on mental health.

As a brain disorder and a biologically based medical problem, mental illness has nothing to do with lack of will power, nor is it based on race, age, religion or social status.

To put it in perspective, more than 244,000 people are living with mental illness in San Diego alone. In the state of California, 600,000 children, adults and elderly are in need of mental health services that aren’t readily available. In our nation, one in five people will suffer from a serious mental illness in their lifetime. Simply put, a mental illness can affect anyone anywhere.

“MIND your health” is the theme of this year’s mental health month to remind us of the powerful connection between a healthy body and healthy mind. Chances are that you, or someone you know, will suffer from a mental illness at some point in your lifetime.

The first step toward improving mental health is seeking help. However, due to the stigma attached to mental illness, many people are reluctant to discuss symptoms with their physicians, as well as family and friends.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) can help. This non-profit organization is a valuable resource for information, support and advocacy that has been around since 1979. There are now more than 1,000 affiliates in the United States that adhere to a mission of reaching out, teaching and giving a voice to mental illness.

- more -

One of the ways you can demonstrate your support for Mental Health Month is by supporting this organization that shines a light on the stigma attached to mental illness - a stigma that comes from fear due to lack of knowledge. NAMI San Diego is at the center of education, support and advocacy regarding these brain disorders. You can show your support in many ways, such as monetary donations, volunteering, or even simply by passing along information about NAMI to someone in need.

NAMI San Diego takes a 360-degree look at mental illness by reaching out not only to those who have it, but also to the family and friends who are also affected. They offer comprehensive courses on mental illness and comforting support groups for all involved. These classes and groups are offered throughout San Diego County.

NAMI San Diego also provides a library of books, audios, videos, DVDs and brochures in the Albright Information and Referral Center located at 4480 30th Street, San Diego, 92116.

Celebrate Mental Health Month knowing that you have a valuable resource right here in San Diego to help all affected by mental illness. For more information, visit www.namisandiego.org or call 619-543-1434 or 1-800-523-5933.

###