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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Free NAMI meeting on August 4 features on smoking cessation and behavioral health**

SAN DIEGO—On Thursday, August 4, 2011, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI San Diego) will be holding a free monthly Education and Advocacy meeting on smoking and behavioral health.

Tobacco use continues to be the number one preventable cause of death in the United States. California's Tobacco Control Program has made great strides in the fight against tobacco, showing a steady decline in cigarette smoking to a historic low of 11.6% adult smoking prevalence in 2008. However, smoking rates within California and San Diego's diverse communities are disproportionately higher. Not only do some of these communities experience an unfair burden brought on by the disparities of tobacco use, they are also aggressively targeted by the tobacco industry.

The behavioral health community continually tops this list with some of the highest smoking rates. The San Diego County Tobacco Control Coalition is working on various projects to outreach and engage providers working with these diverse populations. The Coalition will be at the NAMI San Diego meeting on August 4 to discuss their latest projects and ideas to decrease smoking rates for people with mental illness.

NAMI San Diego is a non-profit organization that provides education, support services and advocacy to improve the lives of everyone affected by mental illnesses. They hold monthly Education and Advocacy meetings at no charge to the public that feature expert speakers on timely topics.

The meeting on August 4 starts at 6:30 pm and will be held at the University Christian Church Friendship Hall at 3900 Cleveland Ave in San Diego (across from the Post Office). Prior to the main program at 7 pm, there will be an ask the doctor discussion group. Here you can ask the questions you've wanted to ask a psychiatrist and learn from other members of the group as well.

Mark your calendar and if you need more information, contact NAMI San Diego at (800) 523-5933. Or visit [www.namisandiego.org](http://www.namisandiego.org)

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