



# nami

National Alliance on Mental Illness

# Wyoming

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Wyoming

September-October 2008

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### Calendar:

the meeting for you. For more info contact Rita Overfield at 527-7068 or Peg Strow at 587-9426.

- **Educational Meeting First Thursday of each month; Support Group Meeting Third Thursday of each month, NAMI Cheyenne. 7 PM,**

### CONTACT US!

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## The 2008 Presidential Election Mental Health: The Candidates & Party Platforms

### Explore the Candidates

In early 2008, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) sent a questionnaire to all presidential candidates in each party. The candidates were encouraged to provide NAMI with other relevant materials or explanations of their positions on issues involving mental health even if they did not have time to respond to the questionnaire.

NAMI offers these responses and excerpts from party platforms for educational purposes only. NAMI is a non-profit, non-partisan organization. Non-profit charitable organizations, including NAMI state and local affiliates, are prohibited by law from endorsing specific candidates. **This information is not intended to be used to endorse any candidate or party.** Source for the articles in this issue: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).

### Democratic Presidential Nominee

**Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois**  
• **Questionnaire response**

#### As President, will you:

*Increase America's Coverage and Improve Treatment for Mental Healthcare*

1. Support mental health and substance abuse coverage in all plans to provide affordable health care?
2. Support federal parity legislation to provide equivalent coverage of mental health and substance abuse conditions?
3. Ensure that active duty military, veterans and reservists receive the mental health care and disability payments they need to live successfully with mental illness?

### Republican Presidential Nominee

**Sen. John McCain of Arizona**

- Sen. McCain provided NAMI with a Mental Health Statement in lieu of a response to our questionnaire. The Campaign informed NAMI that it is his policy not to respond to questionnaires.

### Statement of U.S. Senator John McCain

**Submitted to NAMI on December 31, 2007**

The next President will face a great challenge due to the rising cost of health care of all types. America has the finest doctors and medical science, and the treatment of mental health has shared in these advances. However, as with other aspects of our health care system, spending on mental and behavioral health treatments is

## Calendar Continued:

Unitarian Universalist Church, 3005 Thomes, Cheyenne. Call 632-0974 for info.

- **“In Our Own Voice” Training**, Oct. 17th-19th, Casper. Call NAMI Wyoming office at 307-265-2573 or 888-882-4968 for info. .

### Sen. Obama Questionnaire response Continued

Continued from Page 1

4. Support parity of mental health coverage in all federal health programs?
5. Support policies that remove barriers and promote full access to mental health medications in Medicare, Medicaid and other programs?
6. Support renewing Medicare Part D guidance ensuring access to mental health medications?
7. Support Medicaid coverage and reimbursement of effective, recovery-oriented and evidence-based mental health services?
8. Support repealing the Medicaid IMD policy that excludes coverage for inpatient care in certain facilities?
9. Support parity of mental health coverage in the SCHIP program?
10. Support investing new resources in the Mental Health Services Block Grant?
11. Support policies that eliminate the inappropriate use of seclusion and restraint and foster humane alternatives?

*Accelerate America’s Investment in Research on Mental Illness*

12. Support accelerated investment for National Institute of Mental Health research on mental illness, co-occurring disorders, recovery and reintegration into the community?

*Eliminate Disparities in America’s Mental Healthcare*

13. Support incorporating cultural competence standards in requirements for federal mental health funding?
14. Support federal incentives to recruit and train mental health professionals, particularly to increase workforce diversity and serve rural areas?

### Sen. McCain Statement Continued

Continued from Page 1

rising rapidly. The challenge is to ensure high quality care, establish incentives to control the growth of costs, and thereby permit greater affordable choices.

Mental health is a necessary complement to physical health in all aspects of our daily lives. Fortunately, the path to greater quality and lower costs is to recognize this fact and where possible provide incentives to treat physical and behavioral health together. Chronic disease is a dominant component of the growth in spending on health care and many of our citizens with chronic illnesses have a behavioral health problem as well. For example, untreated depression raises dramatically the cost of treating the physical ailment of a diabetic. A sensible goal is to design reimbursement for taking care of the whole patient, whatever ails them, and recognize the essential role mental health treatment plays in the overall health of the patient and the reduction in physical health needs.

I have stressed the central role of personal responsibility in leading to lower health care costs. Personal fitness and better lifestyles, especially reduction in addictions of all types—food, narcotics, or cigarettes—can yield dramatic improvements in the cost of chronic illness and high-cost medical care. We can do a better job treating addictions, but we also have an obligation to do a better job of teaching our children the benefits of good lifestyles and the perils of addictive activities.

### Sen. Obama Questionnaire response Continued

15. Support the integration of mental health and primary care to achieve better health outcomes, particularly for older adults and communities of color?

*Improve the Mental Health of America's Children and Youth*

16. Support increased funding for the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act to expand youth and young adult suicide prevention and early intervention strategies?
17. Support full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and passing legislation to fund school-based mental health services?
18. Support passing Keeping Families Together legislation to end unnecessary custody relinquishment by families seeking mental health services for their children?

*Provide Opportunities for Homes and Jobs for Americans Living with Mental Illness*

19. Support increased investment in permanent and supportive housing for people living with serious mental illness?
20. Support programs and policies that result in competitive employment for people living with serious mental illness?
21. Support maintaining health care coverage for people with disabilities who return to work?

*End the Inappropriate Jailing of Americans with Mental Illness*

22. Support increasing programs to divert people with mental illness from jail into appropriate community treatment?
23. Support increasing programs to identify youth with serious mental disorders at first contact with

### Sen. McCain Statement Continued

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I have a strong record fighting for the needs of America's most vulnerable including those seeking better mental health. I have consistently supported public housing programs that play a significant role in helping meet the housing needs of many seriously mentally ill Americans, and have been a leader in the effort to eradicate homelessness among our Nation's veterans—many of whom are fighting mental illness. I believe America needs strong leadership and a commitment to bold solutions to address the challenges that it faces. We can provide quality mental health that is more responsive to our needs and is delivered to more people at lower cost.



### Sen. Obama Questionnaire response Continued

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- juvenile justice systems and increase diversion to community treatment?
24. Support access to SSI/SSDI, Medicaid and other federal benefits upon release from jail or prison for people with mental illness?

*The possible responses for each question of this questionnaire were: Strongly Support, Support, Neutral, Oppose, and Strongly Oppose. Senator Obama responded: **Strongly Support** to each of the 24 questions. Additionally, supplementary comments were made to each question. See [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) for those.*

## DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM



## REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

*“Coverage should be made affordable for all Americans...” - Democratic Platform.*

*“Republicans believe all Americans should be able to obtain an affordable health care plan...” - Republican Platform*

### General

Families and individuals should have the option of keeping the coverage they have or choosing from a wide array of health insurance plans, including many private health insurance options and a public plan. Coverage should be made affordable for all Americans with subsidies provided through tax credits and other means.

Health care should be a shared responsibility between employers, workers, insurers, providers and government. All Americans should have coverage they can afford; employers should have incentives to provide coverage to their workers; insurers and providers should ensure high quality affordable care; and the government should ensure that health insurance is affordable and provides meaningful coverage. As affordable coverage is made available, individuals should purchase health insurance and take steps to lead healthy lives.

### Pre-existing conditions

Health insurance plans should accept all applicants and be prohibited from charging different prices based on pre-existing conditions. They should compete on the cost of providing health care and the quality of that care, not on their ability to avoid or over-charge people who are or may get sick.

### Portability of Coverage

No one should have to worry about losing health coverage if they change or lose their job.

### General

Republicans believe all Americans should be able to obtain an affordable health care plan, including a health savings account, which meets their needs and the needs of their families.

Families and health care providers are the key to real reform, not lawyers and bureaucrats.

The current tax system discriminates against individuals who do not receive health care from their employers, gives more generous health tax benefits to upper income employees, and fails to provide every American with the ability to purchase an affordable health care plan. Republicans propose to correct inequalities in the current tax code that drive up the number of uninsured and to level the playing field so that individuals who choose a health insurance plan in the individual market face no tax penalty. All Americans should receive the same tax benefit as those who are insured through work, whether through a tax credit or other means.

### Pre-existing Conditions

Individuals with pre-existing conditions must be protected; we will help these individuals by building on the experiences of innovative states rather than by creating a new unmanageable federal entitlement.

### Portability of Coverage

To empower families, we must make insurance more affordable and more secure, and give employees the option

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### **Mental Health & Addiction Coverage**

Families should have health insurance coverage similar to what Members of Congress enjoy... We will finally achieve long-overdue mental health and addiction treatment parity.

Chronic-care and behavioral health management should be assured for all Americans who require care coordination. This includes assistance for those recovering from traumatic, life-altering injuries and illnesses as well as those with mental health and substance use disorders. We should promote additional tobacco and substance abuse prevention.

### **Federal Research**

For the millions of Americans and their families suffering from debilitating physical and emotional effects of disease, time is a precious commodity, and it is running out. ... We need to invest in biomedical research and stem cell research, so that we are at the leading edge of prevention and treatment...

We will increase funding to the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the National Cancer Institutes.

### **Medications**

We should increase competition in the insurance and drug markets; remove some of the cost burden of catastrophic illness from employers and their employees; and lower drug costs by allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower prices, permitting importation of safe medicines from other developed countries, creating a generic pathway for biologic drugs, and increasing use of generics in public programs.

(Continued from page 4)

of owning coverage that is not tied to their job. Patients should not have to worry about losing their insurance.

### **Mental Health & Addiction Coverage**

A culture of wellness needs to include the treatment of mental health conditions. We believe all Americans should have access to affordable, quality health care, including individuals struggling with mental illness. For this reason, we believe it is important that mental health care be treated equally with physical health care.

### **Federal Research**

We support federal investment in basic and applied biomedical research. This commitment will maintain America's global competitiveness, advance innovative science that can lead to medical breakthroughs, and turn the tide against diseases affecting millions of Americans—diseases that Account for the majority of our health care costs.

We call for a major expansion of support for the stem-cell research that now shows amazing promise and offers the greatest hope for scores of diseases—with adult stem cells, umbilical cord blood, and cells reprogrammed into pluripotent stem cells—without the destruction of embryonic human life.

### **Parental Rights**

Because the family is our basic unit of society, we fully support parental rights to consent to medical treatment for their children including mental health treatment, drug and alcohol treatment, and treatment involving pregnancy, contraceptives and abortion.

*“We will finally achieve long-overdue mental health and addiction parity.” -  
Democratic Platform*

*“...we believe it is important that mental health care be treated equally with physical health care.” -  
Republican Platform*



National Alliance on Mental Illness

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- INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY [ ] \$35
PROFESSION [ ] \$35
OPEN DOOR [ ] \$5

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

- [ ] CHECK [ ] VISA
[ ] MASTERCARD [ ] DISCOVER

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

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PLEASE SEND CHECKS TO: NAMI Wyoming 133 W. 6th St. Casper, WY 82601

NAMI Wyoming/NAMI National Membership includes delivery of the NAMI National Quarterly Newsletter, The Advocate, the NAMI Wyoming Newsletter, and access to membership site on the national website, www.nami.org.

NAMI Wyoming
133 West 6th St.
Casper, WY 82601

Interested in an Online Social Community for Adults with Mental Illness?

Checkout:

NoLongerLonely.com

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