

Dear Friend of NAMI South Dakota:

I am writing to invite you to consider becoming a sponsor of the second NAMI South Dakota **NAMIWalks For the Mind of America** walkathon. NAMI South Dakota is a state affiliate of NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill), *the Nation's Voice on Mental Illness*.

The 5K (2.8 miles) Walk will be held May, 2005 at Falls Park. A fact sheet in the right-hand pocket of the enclosed folder will give you the particulars on our plans for the event.

The goal of the walk is to raise both money and awareness of the need for America to build a world-class treatment and recovery system for people with mental illness. The proceeds from the Walk will be used by NAMI in the following ways:

- To provide support to persons with serious brain disorders and to their families
- To educate families and consumers
- To advocate for nondiscriminatory and equitable federal, state, and private sector policies
- To advocate for improved opportunities for housing, rehabilitation and meaningful jobs
- To support research into the causes, symptoms and treatments of brain disorders
- To support public education programs designed to help eliminate the pervasive stigma surrounding severe mental illness

These efforts are important because millions of Americans, involving an estimated one in five families (approximately 50,000 in South Dakota), are living with mental illness. (See enclosed fact sheet in the left-hand pocket of folder.) For example, of the approximately one million total hospital admissions in 1998, almost 262,000 (25.8%) were psychiatric admissions. Even more startling is the fact that the total cost of mental health services in the US is now estimated to be over \$200 billion a year.

NAMI, *the Nation's Voice on Mental Illness*, is getting stronger every day. In fact, *Worth Magazine* recently ranked NAMI in its "Top 100 charities most likely to change the world." You can help NAMI change the world substantially for the better -- helping those in your community who are struggling mightily with major mental illness -- by sponsoring **NAMIWalks For the Mind of America**.

In addition, your company will receive extensive recognition for your support; recognition that will show your employees and everyone in the community that you are committed to backing the effort to improve the lives of people with mental illness. (The specific ways that our Walk sponsors will be recognized are outlined in the sponsorship information materials in the right-hand pocket of the enclosed folder.)

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request for your support. You will be contacted soon in follow up to this letter and to answer any questions that you might have about NAMI or **NAMIWalks For the Mind of America**. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 800-551-2531, or Phyllis Arends at 605-296-3219 if you need any additional information before making your decision on this request.

Sincerely,

Kyrsten Larson
NAMI South Dakota Walk Coordinator

