



*NAMI Collin County, by encouraging research and by providing proven Support, Education and Advocacy Programs, will empower those living with severe Mental Illness and their Families to live life to their fullest potential.*

## **FEBRUARY MEETING**

**Thursday – February 12, 2009**

Custer Road United Methodist Church – Lower Level  
6601 Custer Road, Plano, TX 75023

- \* Peer-to-Peer Support: 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
- \* Family Support: 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
- \* Fellowship: 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
- \* Meeting & Program: 7:30 – 9:00 P.M.

**Rick O'Connor, Jr. will be speaking about  
"Special Needs Trusts & Guardianships".**

## **Save the Date**

**Feb. 7: PLAN's Open Your Heart Dinner and Silent Auction. Contact Cynthia James at 817-416-5086 for more information.**

**Feb. 12: Rick O'Connor, Jr. will be speaking about "Special Needs Trusts & Guardianships".**

**Feb. 16-17: Green Oaks Conference**

**Mar. 4: Mental Illness Rally on Capital Hill**

Our February 12th program will feature Richard D. (Rick) O'Connor, Jr. He will be speaking about "Special Needs Trusts & Guardianships". See page 2 for more information about Rick.

If you are not a member of NAMICCO and would like to join us or it is time to renew your membership go to page 3 of this News Letter and follow the instructions there.

Save the date and get on the bus to march forth on March 4<sup>th</sup> for a Mental Illness Rally in Austin on the Capital steps. We will also visit our legislator to advocate for persons with Mental Illness. You can register for a seat by calling NAMI Dallas at 214-341-7133. It is first come, first serve, and persons who have taken advocacy training will take precedence. Bus fare, lunch at the Capital and snacks will be provided at no cost. You will be contacted when and where to board the bus.

**Go Green and help save a tree.** You can get your NamiCCO Clarion by email in PDF format by sending your email address to [newsletter@namicco.org](mailto:newsletter@namicco.org). You will get your News Letter 5 to 7 days earlier and save us the printing costs.

NAMICCO's phone number has been changed. The new number is (214) 908-NAMI (6264).

**Go to page 2 for more information on the Green Oaks Conference.**

NAMICCO members that are consumers, see page 7 for an exciting opportunity.

The deadline for submitting news for the March Newsletter is February 17. Anything received after the deadline might not be included. Send your articles to [news@namicco.org](mailto:news@namicco.org).



**Our February 12th program will feature  
Richard D. (Rick) O'Connor, Jr.  
Speaking about Special Needs Trusts & Guardianships**

Rick is a partner in the law firm of Blankenship, Wiland & O'Connor in Dallas, Texas. He has been practicing law in the Dallas area for his entire thirty-year career and specializes in the areas of estate planning and probate, with a particular emphasis in special needs planning and guardianship.

Rick has been involved as a Board member and officer of various organizations whose purpose is to promote the interests and welfare of people with mental disabilities. He is a former chairman and twelve-year member of the Volunteer Council of the Denton State School, a former member of the Board and Vice President of Planned Living Assistance Network of North Texas (PLAN) and a former member of CPAC, an advisory panel to the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. In 2006, Rick received the "Arc Angel" award for significant professional contributions to the Arc of Dallas. He currently serves on the Board of PLAN Homes, Inc., a non-profit corporation that operates a residential facility for persons with mental illness as well as the Board of the Dallas Chapter of the Autism Society of America.

Rick speaks frequently to family groups on the subjects of special needs planning and guardianship. We are very fortunate that Rick will come speak to our NAMICCO meeting on Thursday, February 12th, from 7:30 to 9:00 PM.

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## **Green Oaks Conference**

Green Oaks will be presenting a two day conference featuring Fred and Penny Frese with "An Inside Perspective of Schizophrenia" at City Hall, Building E, Medical City Dallas Hospital, at 7777 Forest Lane, Dallas TX.

Monday Feb. 16 will be co-sponsored by NAMI of Collin County and will be for consumers, caregivers and professionals. This is FREE to members of NAMICCO, breakfast and lunch are included, but you **MUST** register with John Dornheim at 972-701-3607.

Tuesday Feb. 17 will be co-sponsored by Nami of Collin County, Mental Health America and the Dallas Police Department and will be for the Law Enforcement Community. For more information call John Dornheim at 972-701-3607 or 214-335-8334.



## Membership Registration Form

New memberships and renewals are valid for one year and expire at the end of the month in which your check is dated.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIPCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

### Choose your membership category

Individual \$35    Consumer/Open Door \$3    Organizational \$100    Sustaining \$500    Extra Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to contribute to NamiCCO by volunteering some of my time.    Renewal    New Member

Cut Here -----

**Make checks payable to NAMI Collin County**

**NAMI CCO Membership Committee  
Post Office Box 867264  
Plano, Texas 75086-7264**

Please print this page to get your membership application. If you get your Clarion by mail just cut out this form.

Then fill it out and mail it along with your check to NAMICCO at the address above.

The Consumer/Open Door category is for consumers with a limited income.

When you join NAMICCO you also get membership in Nami Texas and the NAMI national organization. You get eligibility to vote in all NAMI elections.

You get a subscription to “**The Advocate**”, NAMI’s quarterly magazine, as well as access to optional subscriptions to specialty newsletters and information at national, state, and local levels.

Access to exclusive members-only material on [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

You get the satisfaction of knowing that you are supporting the educational programs of NAMI, the phone line and web site that provides support and education for families and consumers, and the advocacy efforts of NAMICCO to improve the funding for services for persons with mental illness.

Donations of any size are greatly appreciated. Almost all of our funding comes from your donations.

**You can also join or renew memberships online using your credit card at [www.namicco.org](http://www.namicco.org). Just follow the instructions on the “Home Page”.**

To leave more space for news this month’s Clarion does not have the support groups listed. All the support groups and resources are available on our web page at [www.namicco.org](http://www.namicco.org). Just click on the correct link on the “Home Page”.



# The NAMICCO *CLARION*



## **February Adult "Ask the Doctor" Call**

Please join us for our monthly adult issues conference call with NAMI's Medical Director Dr. Ken Duckworth on February 6<sup>th</sup>. The call is toll free and scheduled from 11:00 AM-12:30 PM Eastern Time. To access the call, please dial 1-888-858-6021 then the access number [309918#](#). This call can be made from any phone.

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## **February Children's "Ask the Doctor" Call**

Friday children's conference call with Dr. Ken Duckworth will take place on February 20. The call is toll free and is scheduled from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. E.T. To access the toll-free call, please dial 1-888-858-6021 then the access number [309918#](#). We hope that you will join us! This call can be made from any phone.

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## **Referral for a Lawyer or Doctor**

We get lots of calls asking us for a referral for a Doctor or Lawyer. As an organization we are not allowed to make referrals.

For a doctor referral we suggest you call the UT Southwestern Medical Center at 214-648-3111 and they can refer you to a doctor that specializes in your type of problem.

For a lawyer referral we suggest you call the local Bar Association or call Legal Aid of North Texas at 972-542-9405.

Also you can come to our support groups that meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month from 6:30 to 7:30 at the Custer Road United Methodist Church (south east end, lower level) to get some feedback from other people.

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## **Some More Save the Date Opportunities**

The NAMI National Convention at San Francisco CA, July 5-9, 2009. See page 7 for an exciting opportunity for one lucky consumer.

Also the NAMI Texas Convention will be held on October 23 and 24, 2009.

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## **Economy taking a toll on marriages Cincinnati Enquirer January 11, 2009**

The sagging economy is taking a toll on marital harmony, counselors say. "We're seeing the beginning of a wave of problems, emotional and relational, but I don't think we're at the crest of the wave just yet," says Julie Lingler, a clinical social worker in Blue Ash, Ohio. The strain on marriages is evident among people at all income levels, and in couples where one or both spouses earn a paycheck, counselors say. The trend dovetails with an American Psychological Association survey, released in October, in which 80% Americans said the economy is a significant cause of stress, up from 66% in April.



# The NAMICCO CLARION



## COMI Meeting

Mental Health Association of Greater Dallas  
624 N. Good-Latimer, Suite 210, Dallas, Texas 75204  
Nannie Hogan Boyd Conference Room  
Comi meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Mental Health America of Greater Dallas is located in the historic St. James AME Church building on Good-Latimer Expressway between Swiss Avenue and Live Oak Street. It is a 3-story light brown brick building with white trim featuring white columns and a beautiful dome.

Meetings are always related to public policy and Mental Health. COMI is a coalition of mental health professionals, public policy makers, and other advocates to address public policy affecting Mental Health treatment and services. You are welcome to attend.

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### Government's Mental Health Bill May Make Matters Worse

You may have heard that at long last Congress passed a new mental health bill. Known as the Paul Wellstone-Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, this long-awaited legislation represents a decade-plus, bi-partisan effort due largely to the efforts of senators Pete Domenici (R) of New Mexico and Edward "Ted" Kennedy (D) of Massachusetts, both of whom have family members who suffer from mental illness. Its proponents refer to parity for mental health insurance as no less than a civil rights issue, as it looks to treat people with conditions such as depression or schizophrenia or post-traumatic stress disorders the same way we treat those with heart disease or diabetes or cancer. It does deliver a limited form of parity... but as far as I am concerned, this bill offers only the barest of solutions. It is an unfortunate example of good intentions distorted by less benevolent political machinery.

Though representatives in Congress fought long and hard for even this, it's only an incremental step and more needs to be done, notes James S. Gordon, MD, director of The Center for Mind-Body Medicine in Washington, DC, and author of [\*Unstuck: Your Guide to the Seven-Stage Journey Out of Depression\*](#). In his view, this bill fails to address the underlying crisis in our mental health care system. We need a comprehensive, holistic and individualized approach which addresses the underlying physical, mental, social and spiritual processes that produce disease, he said, adding that this approach should be central to prevention as well as treatment to ensure that all Americans have access to the right kind of care.

#### COVERAGE FOR DEPRESSION AS WELL AS HEART DISEASE

In an earlier attempt, a 1996 law barred insurers from setting lifetime caps on mental health care that are lower than for other forms of health care. Insurers weaseled around this provision by charging higher co-payments and setting limits on how many mental health visits they'd cover each year. Also, treatment for substance abuse was not covered.

The new law will require group health plans of 51 or more employees to cover mental illness -- including substance abuse -- on an even par with physical ailments. When the bill passed, it was widely assumed that the 113 million Americans with access to employer-sponsored insurance would benefit from the legislation, which takes effect October 1, 2009. It sounds like a positive step to help individuals with mental and emotional challenges -- unfortunately, the reality falls short.

#### WHAT IT COVERS, WHAT IT DOESN'T



On the surface, there are positive aspects to the new mental health bill. It forbids insurance plans from demanding higher co-payments for mental health care or setting higher deductibles or limiting doctor visits or covering fewer days of hospitalization for mental illness and substance abuse than for physical illness. Yet there is a long list of loopholes employers can slip through to avoid covering mental health care, which end up nullifying the bill's effectiveness...

- The law does nothing for people who work for companies with 50 or fewer employees, or those Americans who have no health insurance at all.
- Under the new bill, if a company chooses to cover both physical and mental illness, it must do so at an equal level -- but they're free to opt out of or discontinue mental health coverage altogether. No incentive entices employers to offer mental health insurance and no penalty exists to dissuade employers from canceling it.
- Plans can vary in the mental illnesses and types of substance disorders they cover. For instance, a company may choose to cover alcohol abuse but not drug addiction.
- Companies may apply for a one-year exemption if their total insurance costs rise by more than 2% once mental health care coverage is added. This merely puts off an inevitable cost increase for the employers, and may boost the odds that the company will reduce or discontinue mental health care coverage in its entirety.
- The increased corporate health care expense for this added coverage will likely trickle down to employees as they push the higher health insurance premiums down to the employee contributions.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

A major problem with this bill is that it benefits a group already lucky enough to have insurance that covers mental health, Dr. Gordon observes. Their coverage may get even better -- if you see a therapist, co-payments may be lower when the new law goes into effect, and limits on the permitted number of annual therapy visits and days that are covered for psychiatric hospitalization should be lifted (or at least raised to the level covered for physical illness). But if you don't currently have coverage for mental health, nothing will change.

Dr. Gordon points out that ultimately, we have to look at the bigger picture. The current approach to mental health care and insurance still involves a practice he finds problematic, which he describes as "keeping everything in separate diagnostic silos." A diagnosis code -- for psychosis, for depression, for obsessive-compulsive disorder or whatever -- gets assigned and the care plan unfolds from there. In reality, however, every aspect of physical health has an impact on mental health; just as your mental and emotional state affect your physical well-being. For example, stress can accelerate risk and disease development for virtually every physical and mental ailment, so it is important for people to learn healthful ways to control stress levels before they get sick, notes Dr. Gordon. We need to look at health in a more holistic way that emphasizes not only treatment but prevention -- for mental health as well as physical health. This bill is a well-intentioned effort that will likely end up doing more harm than good. We clearly still have a long way to go.

Source(s):

James S. Gordon, MD, author of *Unstuck: Your Guide to the Seven-Stage Journey Out of Depression* (Penguin), and the founder and director of The Center for Mind-Body Medicine in Washington, DC. Dr. Gordon is a clinical professor in the departments of psychiatry and family medicine at the Georgetown University School of Medicine and the former chairman of the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy. He has been a frequent contributor to *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *The Atlantic*, as well as to leading professional journals, and is also author of *Manifesto for a New Medicine: Your Guide to Healing Partnerships and the Wise Use of Alternative Therapies* (Addison-Wesley) and the author or editor of 10 other books.



# The NAMICCO *CLARION*



This year NAMICCO will be sending one consumer to NAMI National Convention, July 5-9, in San Francisco, Ca and 2 consumers to NAMI Texas convention, October 22-24.

Any consumer member of NAMICCO may apply. Applications for the National convention must be in by March 16. Applications for the State convention must be in by September 14.

You can pick up an application at our monthly meetings and return them at a monthly meeting or mail them to **NAMICCO, P.O. Box 867264, Plano, TX 75086-7264.**

A Sponsorship Application to attend the NAMI National Convention is printed below. Just cut it out and mail it to the address listed above or bring it to our meeting on February 12 or March 12. Applications will also be available at the meeting.

An application for the NAMI TEXAS convention will be available later.

NAMI Collin County  
Sponsorship Application to attend the NAMI National Convention  
San Francisco, CA  
(July 6—9, 2009)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief explanation of why you would like to attend the conference:

Do you have friends or relatives in San Francisco with whom you could stay, or will you need hotel accommodations?

I have been a member of NAMICCO for \_\_\_\_\_

How many NAMI meetings have you attended in the past 9 months? \_\_\_\_\_

What NAMICCO events have you participated in since joining? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you require any special accommodations? If so, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

I understand if selected for sponsorship, I will be expected to present a report at a NAMICCO meeting about the conference, what I learned and how it is helpful in my recovery.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



# The NAMICCO CLARION



## NAMI Collin County

An affiliate of NAMI Texas and NAMI (The National Alliance on Mental Illness)

P. O. BOX 867264

PLANO, TX 75086-7264

(972) 922-5095

Email: info@namicco.org

### RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

### Open Your Mind



**Mental Illnesses are  
Brain Disorders  
Treatment Works!!!**

### NEXT MEETING IS THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12, 2009

#### NAMI Collin County Board of Directors: bod@namicco.org

President:	Sharon DeBlanc	972-906-2637
Vice Pres:	Mary Taddiken	972-442-2369
Treasurer:	Dominic Tolotta	972-712-1292
Secretary:	Doris Nissley	214-509-0085
At Large:	Cheryl Andrews	214- 986-5633
At Large:	Linda Denke	318-470-2268
At Large:	Ronald Holley	972-596-5849
At Large:	Caroline Philo	972-542-5711
At Large:	Linda Smith	469-229-0443
At Large:	Nora Tsai	214-289-1724
At Large:	Tracy Westhoff	972-542-5302 ext 226
	<b>ALTERNATES</b>	
Past President:	Sherry Cusumano	972-701-3639

#### UPCOMING Events

**February 12 - Monthly Meeting**  
**Rick O'Connor, Jr. will be speaking about**  
**"Special Needs Trusts & Guardianships".**  
**Custer Road United Methodist Church**  
**Lower Level**

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**February 17 - Board of Directors Mtg.**  
**10:30 AM - 12:00 Noon**  
**Custer Road United Methodist Church**  
**Lower Level**  
**6601 Custer Road, Plano, TX 75023**

*The NAMICCO Clarion is a monthly publication of NAMI Collin County*

Take your medicine on time, in the prescribed manner—eat a healthy diet—mostly grains, fruits and vegetables—high fiber/low fat.

**Since 1987 - Empowering People with Mental Illness and their Families to Live Better Lives!**