



OUT OF THE FOG

The monthly newsletter of NAMI San Francisco
www.namifsf.org

June Meeting Notes

By Suzanne Brady

Bob Cabaj, MD, the Director of San Francisco Community Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) was the speaker at the June meeting. NAMI San Francisco board member Dale Milfoy set the tone in her opening remarks.

With the current city budget proposing even greater reductions to county mental health programs, the meeting could have been antagonistic. Instead, systemic issues independent of the current budget cuts were the focus.

Dr. Cabaj began with an overview of CBHS and then addressed some of the 15 questions NAMI-SF submitted to him prior to the meeting. San Francisco's mental health and substance abuse services were combined into CBHS five years ago. CBHS was created because the

Continued on page 5

Advocacy Urgently Needed in Support of Health Care Reform!

June 26, 2009, enews@nami.org

Separate House and Senate Committees are now moving forward on comprehensive health reform legislation. With Congress scheduled to begin its week-long July 4th recess, it is now a critical time for advocates to contact their House member and Senators to urge support for reform that will expand coverage, control costs and meet the needs of children and adults living with serious mental illness.

Act Now!

Contact your Senators and House member to urge support for a strong health reform bill. Please consider doing any or all of the following:

1. Call Congress. You can reach all Congressional offices by calling (toll-free) 866-210-3678. Urge all members of Congress to support health reform that:
 - Expands coverage to the uninsured,
 - Brings costs under control, and
 - Includes full coverage of mental illness treatment on the same terms and conditions as all other medical conditions.
2. Send a letter to your House member or Senators using NAMI's Legislative Action Center (see <http://capwiz.com/nami/issues/alert/?alertid=13633211>).
3. Reach out while Legislators are at Home. During the

Continued on page 2



2009 NAMI National Convention

July 6-9 in San Francisco

All activities will be held in the SF Hilton and Towers located at 333 O'Farrell Street. For more information visit www.nami.org.

The Monthly Meeting

3rd Wednesday of each month
6:30 - 8:00 pm
1010 Gough St.
(between Eddy & Ellis)

July 15

A celebration of our May NAMI Walk and reports from the National Convention

August

There is no General Meeting in August - see you in September!

September 16

Baron Miller, Attorney at Law, will discuss special needs trusts and Proxy Parenthood PLAN of California

Independence Day recess, reach out to members of Congress at July 4th parades and picnics, radio call-in shows, town hall meetings and other public appearances to press for support of health reform legislation.

Learn More - What is NAMI's position on health reform? NAMI supports President Obama's goals for health care reform including: Universal coverage, Cost containment, Quality improvement, and Protecting existing coverage for those who have it.

Beyond these principles, NAMI is also supporting a range of specific priorities to address the needs of children and adults living with serious mental illness. As part of this process, NAMI has submitted detailed recommendations to Congress and is supporting a range of discreet legislative proposals that are expected to be a part of debate in Congress.

Stanford 5th Annual Bipolar Education Day

**Saturday, July 25 • 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Stanford Campus**

It's back! Attendance is FREE. But, each person planning to attend must pre-register. Visit our website www.bipolar.org for information and a link to the registration site. Due to space limitations and decreased resources we can only accommodate a limited number of people. Each attendee must be registered separately. It is not recommended to just show up on the day of the event - there is no guarantee of space or staff to accommodate you.

County Mental Health

The County Mental Health Access Line
for all consumers
415-255-3737

Substance Abuse Treatment Access
1380 Howard, First Floor
415-503-4730 or 1-800-750-2727

The Mobile Crisis Unit
415-355-8300

Animal Model for Schizophrenia Identifies a Novel Approach for Treating Cognitive Impairments

Source: Elsevier

Philadelphia, PA, 9 June 2009 - Researchers have been seeking a safe and effective way to treat cognitive impairments associated with schizophrenia by enhancing N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) glutamate receptors. Functional deficits in NMDA receptors may contribute to the underlying neurobiology of this disorder. The first generation of studies trying to stimulate NMDA receptors administered large amounts of substances, like glycine or D-serine, which indirectly enhance NMDA receptor function. While there were some positive reports of efficacy, findings across studies were more inconsistent than was hoped.

New approaches following this line of research are just beginning to be tested in patients. For example, several pharmaceutical companies are studying drugs that block the glycine transporter (GlyT1) and thereby raise synaptic glycine levels. A new study in *Biological Psychiatry*, published by Elsevier, by Dr. Kenji Hashimoto and colleagues may represent a "next step," which is to prevent the inactivation of D-serine by the enzyme D-amino acid oxidase (DAAO). The authors found that . . . although D-serine is used as a treatment for schizophrenia, it is metabolized by DAAO, reducing its availability in the brain. So, using an animal model of schizophrenia, these scientists co-administered D-serine and a compound that blocks the effects of DAAO. This increased the levels of D-serine in the mice and therefore its effectiveness in treating the abnormal behaviors in this animal model that may be relevant to schizophrenia.

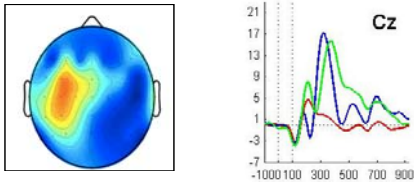
"We still do not have effective treatments that specifically target the cognitive and functional impairments associated with schizophrenia. These findings are very interesting because there is a continued sense that we have not yet captured the therapeutic promise associated with the glycine site of the NMDA receptor. GlyT1 blockers and DAAO inhibitors may be important new clinical research tools," comments John Krystal, M.D., Editor of *Biological Psychiatry*.

Further research is still needed to see whether these findings can be extended to humans, but it is hoped that this combination therapy proves to be a novel and effective treatment of schizophrenia.

Opportunities to Participate in Brain Imaging Research Studies

University of California at San Francisco
San Francisco VA Medical Center

Get paid for helping scientists understand complex mental illnesses. Call (415) 221-4810 ext. 2403



The Laboratory is located in two places—the San Francisco VA Hospital and the Neuro-Imaging Center at UCSF.

The Laboratory is led by Dr. Daniel Mathalon, Ph.D., M.D., and Dr. Judith Ford, Ph.D. Dr. Mathalon is a psychiatrist, and Dr. Ford is a neuroscientist. They are both committed to understanding the complexities of mental illness using a variety of brain imaging techniques.

People diagnosed with schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, or schizophreniform disorder, are invited to participate in research studies about how the brain works! Participants will earn approximately \$20/hour.

Changes to Formulary for SF

This is the information sent to me by Jennifer Denning, the Bristol Meyers community rep who I met with last Monday. This looks pretty grim because a client has to fail on a generic before getting Abilify, Seroquel or Geodon. This is for clients who DO NOT have Medicare Part D for drug coverage, or no insurance. Low dose Seroquel 25mg is used to help with sleep. I know that it has been a problem at the VA where they only allow high doses for psychosis, while low doses are helpful with PTSD. The goal is to force the drug companies to lower their prices. Some of this I understand because they all are pushing these new medications at low dose for mild depression, anxiety, etc., but the result is that our kids cannot get the new meds unless they first fail on the old ones. Ms. Denning pointed out that "Patients on prior therapy will be grandfathered."

—Dale Milfay

Mental Illness is California's Budget Tipping Point

From the Treatment Advocacy Center website, June 26, 2009

It's just two beds, but it embodies how the pennywise and pound foolish approach to treating mental illness has the Golden State tied in financial knots.

Over the course of the last five years, San Mateo County has paid nearby Santa Clara County at least \$1,200 a day or about a half million dollars a year for just two specialized jail beds for inmates with mental illness. Now, lo and behold, the price could climb to \$1,418 a day.

The proposed rate increases has the Silicon Valley County looking for a cheaper way to provide the same services. Therein lies the heart of the problem. Criminalizing a disease—any illness—makes bad social policy. Bad policies create a mess. Cleaning up after mistakes is always costly.

In California, the problem is compounded by a whole host of budget issues that has many in the social services world panicking. And for good reason. Hospitals that provide in-patient service for people with the most severe forms of mental illness are starting to shut their doors. Community mental health centers are unsure of where their next dollar will come from. A federal judge is threatening to release tens of thousand of inmates who need mental health care onto the streets.

This budgetary tipping point cries out for a starting point. California's counties need to utilizes the immediate tools at there disposal to make sure that those with the most severe forms of mental illness receive treatment. In 2002, the state gave the counties an important tool with the enactment of Laura's Law that opens up the doors to assisted outpatient treatment as an alternative to costly jail and hospital care. Unfortunately only one county has put Laura's Law in place.

Implementing Laura's Law now is the smartest, most cost-effective step any California county can take that will provide long-term costs savings and, at the same time, get people needed mental health care.

Photos from the Walk!

Check out www.namiwalkSFbay.org for more Walk photos and information - donations still accepted!



MRI's 50th Anniversary Conference

Forum for Change: Inviting the Next Generation of Innovation

August 13-15, 2009 • San Francisco

Since 1959, The Mental Research Institute of Palo Alto has been one of the leading sources of innovative models, including Brief and Strategic therapy. Join us as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary with today's most influential therapists, interactional thought leaders, and special guests. We are reaching out to educators, agencies, social workers, marriage and family therapists, students, and anyone interested in our unique approach to problem-solving therapy by adding our conference to your Calendar of Events and Resource Center. For more details please visit our website: http://www.mri.org/50th_Conference.html.

Neuroscience Grant to Stanford From NIMH

By Diana Samuels, Daily News Staff Writer,
www.mercurynews.com

Stanford University neuroscientists have received a \$10 million, five-year grant to establish and operate a new neuroscience research center, Stanford announced Monday.

The award from the National Institute of Mental Health will fund the Silvio O. Conte Center for Neuroscience Research, according to a university statement. It will be devoted to the study of neuroplasticity, or how the brain changes.

"The synapses and circuits that the brain uses to process information are modified throughout life by experience," Dr. Robert Malenka said in a statement. "This plasticity is critical for the normal function of the brain, and when plasticity mechanisms go awry, devastating mental illness can result."

The work at the center could help scientists understand schizophrenia, autism, bipolar disorder, pain syndromes and many other conditions.

Remember to donate to the



Community Thrift Store

This is one of our *best sources* of income for the NAMI SF Chapter!!

625 Valencia Street at 17th Street
415-861-4910
www.communitythriftsf.org
(check with us about acceptable items to donate)

majority of clients and their families are coping with both health problems.

CBHS provides primarily outpatient services to San Francisco residents who are uninsured, on Medi-Cal, or enrolled in Healthy San Francisco. CBHS helps fund an inpatient network of long-term care beds, some on locked wards, and others on unlocked wards. It also funds 41 beds at Napa State Hospital, a significant decrease from the hundreds of patients once sent there.

The most common way that people access CBHS is the County Mental Health Access Line (415-255-3737) or by walking into one of the eight city-operated clinics or one of the 35 city contracted clinics. By calling the access line residents can get a referral to a mental health clinic. The next two most common ways to access mental health services are through emergency services or jail/juvenile hall.

In recent years, St. Luke's, St. Mary's and Mt. Zion have closed their psychiatric units because they were not profitable. As a result, Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) at San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) is the only psychiatric emergency room in the city.

Ambulance, police officers or crisis care providers will bring a person in a psychiatric crisis to PES. The official upper limit of patients at PES is 18. When the patient number hits 20, incoming patients are diverted to the nearest hospital emergency room. The county Mobile Crisis Unit is then sent to that emergency room to perform a psychiatric assessment. When PES has an opening a person determined to need inpatient psychiatric care is transferred to PES.

Dr. Cabaj reported that 60 percent of those people screened in emergency rooms are released. NAMI-SF and other mental health patient advocates are concerned that the decision to release those people is made based on the bed shortage rather than on their actual state of mental health.

Another point of concern is that CBHS is cutting acute care inpatient beds and instead increasing the number of Acute Diversion Unit (ADU) beds. The purpose of ADUs is to prevent hospitalization, Dr. Cabaj said. Patients will not be transferred there post-hospitalization as has been done at times in the past.

The city is cutting inpatient acute care beds because CBHS has determined that patients do not meet the requirements for that level of care. The definition for who qualifies for acute care beds is based on Medi-Cal payment requirements. NAMI-SF and other mental health advocates are concerned that once again budget considerations are driving care levels.

Dr. Cabaj estimated there are 52 ADU beds in San Francisco at this time. There are 42 acute beds at SFGH and 22 non-acute. There are 18 acute beds at St. Francis Memorial Hospital and 12 to 16 beds for youth at McCauley Behavioral Health Services.


In response to a question regarding the number of community treatment beds for Axis I diagnosed clients, he said there are 755 beds in San Francisco. That number includes all board and care homes, ADUs, and residential treatment homes. It does not include single room occupancy hotels.

The goal of CBHS is to treat people with mental health and/or substance abuse problems before they get to the crisis stage. However, the department has never been funded adequately to provide that level of care. Passage of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) in 2004 provided hope for a significant infusion of much needed funding. But to date, MHSA funding has targeted early intervention funding for young adults—a worthy but narrow focus.


Dr. Cabaj explained that the California Department of Mental Health (CDMH) became the regulatory agency for MHSA funding and has been very slow to disperse it. He said that San Francisco CBHS has protested CDMH's MHSA policies. But the CDMH continues to drag its feet. He said that a statewide mental health directors' organization has been calling for changes but the CDMH and the governor are not listening.

The San Francisco Advanced Access Policy calls for those seeking CBHS services to be seen within 24 hours unless a risk assessment session determines the client is well enough to wait for a standard appointment. Dr. Cabaj acknowledged that delays do happen due to tight budget and staffing shortages.

Two months ago the Behavioral Health Access Center opened at 1380 Howard Street. This location now provides walk in mental health and substance abuse screening from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday. In the last two weeks, the Dore Urgent Care Clinic hours were extended to 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. The goal is for Dore Urgent Care to provide 24 hour services when funding becomes available.



**The SFGH CAB
CLOTHING PROJECT**



This program is a big help to consumers who are in need of clothes while they are at SF General Hospital.

Just call and they will pick up your donation or meet you at the front door of the hospital when you bring it in.

Please call Amelia Truman, 415-206-4465

Support Groups



Family Members' Groups

Healing Circle African American Family Support
1st Thursdays, 6 - 7:45 pm at 1099 Sunnydale Ave (The Village). Call La Vaughn at 415-832-9616

Sibling & Adult Children Network
Call Mary Gullekson at 474-7010 for information

Berkeley Sibling Support Group
Call Carolyn Defay at (510) 644-8579

Bilingual & Monolingual Support Groups

Asian Mental Health Resources
The Culture to Culture Foundation's directory of Asian-American mental health services in the Bay Area can be accessed at www.asianmentalhealth.info or call 925-938-9988

Chinese Families Mental Health Alliance. Ed Koo 352-2047

Spanish Language Support Group for family members and caregivers. 1st Tuesday 5:30-7:30 pm at Mission Mental Health, 2712 Mission Street. Call Carmen Burgos 415-401-2733 about the meetings, and for information call Anita Madrigal at 415-701-5302.

Consumer Self-Help Groups

Depression & Bipolar Support All. (formerly DMDA)
Saturday afternoons at 1:30-3:00 and
1st Mondays at 6:45-8:00 pm in the Saint Francis Hospital, 900 Hyde St., 2nd Floor Conf. Room. Call 519-0171

OASIS (Office of Self Help)
1095 Market Street at 7th, Suite 202 (415) 575-1400

RECOVERY, Inc. for nervous ailments
(415) 333-6454 Community Miracles Center,
2269 Market Street (between Noe and Sanchez)

Consumers with Schizophrenia
3rd Wednesday of each month, 5:30-6:45pm
1010 Gough. Info: Susanne at 558-5900

Hoarding & Cluttering Support
2nd Monday and 4th Wednesday of each month.
Antonio (415) 421-2926 x306

Health and Wellness Action Advocacy
1st Thursday of each month, 1-3pm. Antonio at
(415) 421-2926, x306

Alcoholics Anonymous: San Fran: (415) 621-1326
Marin: (415) 499-0400 San Mateo: (650) 573-6811

Narcotics Anonymous SF Helpline: (415) 621-8600

Harm Reduction Therapy (415)-863-4282



NAMI-SF Support Groups

For Family Members, Caregivers and Friends Only

- 1) 1010 Gough
2nd Wednesday at 6:30
Contact Vicki Evans at 661-5208
- 2) SF General Hospital
7th Floor, Room 7 M 30
Tuesdays, 5:15 – 6:45 p.m.
Call Susanne Killing at 558-5900

DBSA

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of San Francisco



Regular Support Group:

every Monday at 6:45-8:15pm and
every Saturday at 1:30-3:00pm.

Young Adults Support Group:

1st and 3rd Monday of each month at 6:45-8:15pm for 18 to 25+ year old people.
Contact Harry at 650-430-2909 for information.

Friends And Family Support Group:

1st and 3rd Monday of each month at 6:45-8:15pm. Contact Jane Norbeck at 415-519-0171 or Harry Walters at 650-430-2909 for information.

Location:

900 Hyde St., St. Francis Hospital
between Pine and Bush in San Francisco
At Outpatient Registration desk, take elevator down to lower level. Meeting rooms are next to the elevator.

Meetings are on a drop in basis and are open to peers, please note we do not allow observers. You do not need to be a member to attend, however memberships are \$20.00 a year and you are encouraged to join and support the organization.

NAMI-San Francisco is a self-help organization of family members, mental health consumers, friends, professionals and other interested citizens, united to provide support, education and advocacy for persons with severe mental illness. NAMI-San Francisco is a private, non-profit organization.

Family To Family Update

Two Family to Family classes graduated the end of June in San Francisco. One class was held at the VA Hospital on Tuesday evenings and the other was held at Kaiser Hospital on Saturday mornings.

If you would like to enroll in the classes that will be held in the Fall, please call the hotline, 415-905-6264, and leave your name and phone number or email the NAMI San Francisco office at namisf@fsasf.org and you will be contacted by one of the teachers.

What does the course include?

- * Current information about schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder (manic depression), panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, and co-occurring brain disorders and addictive disorders
- * Up-to-date information about medications, side effects, and strategies for medication adherence
- * Current research related to the biology of brain disorders and the evidence-based, most effective treatments to promote recovery

- * Gaining empathy by understanding the subjective, lived experience of a person with mental illness
- * Learning in special workshops for problem solving, listening, and communication techniques
- * Acquiring strategies for handling crises and relapse
- * Focusing on care for the caregiver: coping with worry, stress, and emotional overload
- * Guidance on locating appropriate supports and services within the community
- * Information on advocacy initiatives designed to improve and expand services



Recent Family to Family graduates and teachers

Out of the Fog is published 10 times a year by NAMI-San Francisco, a non-profit organization affiliated with the National Alliance on Mental Illness, which goes by the acronym NAMI, and NAMI-California, the statewide affiliate.

www.namisf.org

NAMI San Francisco

1010 Gough
San Francisco, CA 94109
415-474-7310 ext 437
namisf@fsasf.org

NAMI- San Francisco Executive Board

President: Gifford Boyce-Smith, MD
President Emeritus: Pamela Fischer
Vice President: Dale Milfay
Secretary: Belinda Sifford
Treasurer: Shima Harada

Board Members at Large

George Jurand Tom Purvis
LaVaughn King Carla Villalba
Alexandra Kutik

NAMI-SF Hotline 415-905-NAMI / 415-905-6264

Answering Team Carla Villalba (Chair)
Susan Bronstein Dale Milfay
Eileen Lemus Mary Vogt
Wanda Materre LaVaughn King

NAMI SF Board Committees

Internal: Wanda Materre
External: Dale Milfay
Governance: Dr. Gifford Boyce-Smith
Family-to-Family: Vicki Evans
Hospitality and Support Groups: Vicki and Bob Evans
Out of the Fog: Barbara Redfield and Ruan Frenette
PLAN: Baron Miller

Send newsletter additions/submissions/
change requests to roopa2nami@gmail.com



Please Join NAMI SF

NAMI-San Francisco is moving to a system where members renew in their anniversary months, but many of you are on the calendar-year system.

Please let us count you. There is power in numbers. We need the support of families, friends, consumers, professionals and others who share our goals. Your dues help us pay for the printing of the newsletter, educational materials and mailings and the Family-to-Family Education Course, an invaluable resource for people who love someone with a mental illness.

Checks may be made out to "NAMI San Francisco"

Please mail to:
NAMI-San Francisco Treasurer
1010 Gough St.
San Francisco, CA 94109

NAME _____
 (Please Print)
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE _____

This is a: •New Membership •Renewal •Address change
 What is your relationship to a person with a mental illness?
 •self • parent • sibling • spouse • health care/professional
 Other _____

Please Check One:
 • \$10 Consumer
 • \$45 Individual or Family Membership
 • \$100 Organization or Benefactor Membership
 • \$250 or more for Patron Membership
 • \$500 or more for Sustaining Membership
 • I cannot join NAMI-San Francisco at this time but I would like to receive *Out of the Fog* or I am enclosing a donation of \$ _____ to help cover the cost of *Out of the Fog*.

NAMI SAN FRANCISCO

1010 Gough St.
San Francisco, CA 94109

Return Service Requested

FIRST CLASS MAIL
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Francisco, CA
Permit No. 11751