



# Brain Storm

Newsletter of NAMI Tri -Valley

www.namitrivalley.org

Volume 2 Number 1, February, 2006

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## **Advisory Committee**

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## **National Depression Survey Reveals Gap in Awareness of Treatment Goals**

### **Findings Highlight Importance of Physician/Patient Communication**

**R**esults of a new national survey reveal a disparity between what people with depression say they know about their illness and how they manage it. Although 91% of those surveyed say it is very important to take their antidepressant medication exactly as prescribed, at some point approximately 40% stopped taking their medication without the advice of their health care professional because they personally believed they were no longer experiencing symptoms of depression. These insights come from an online survey of 1,086 people with depression sponsored by NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) and funded by Wyeth Pharmaceuticals.

“These findings are of great concern because people who prematurely discontinue antidepressant therapy are much more likely to experience another episode,” said Ken Duckworth, M.D., Medical Director of NAMI, the nation’s voice on mental illness. “If patients are unsatisfied with their treatment or believe they no longer need medication because their symptoms are improving, they may stop treatment too early and slip back into the cycle of depression. If this cycle continues, people with depression may eventually give up all hope of ever getting better. What this means to physicians is that we must select appropriate therapies and provide the education and sup-

port necessary to help patients understand their illness and achieve success.”

People with depression who are well informed about the illness stand a much better chance of achieving the treatment goals of having little or no symptoms. Yet the results of this survey suggest that there are gaps in awareness among people with depression about their illness and treatment goals. In fact, only 53% of respondents in this survey feel well informed about their illness, and only 22% have ever been told that it is possible to achieve a state of having little or no symptoms of depression.

In addition, less than 25% are aware of the difference between a partial and full response to medication. And while the majority of respondents report they have experienced six or more episodes of depression in their lifetime, only 34% of people with depression have ever discussed their risk of relapse with their physician.

These findings are important because clinical research shows that the longer people with depression experience symptoms, the less likely they are to achieve their treatment goals. In fact, those who experience one episode of depression have a 50% chance of relapse, while those who

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## **Our Mission**

“NAMI Tri-Valley in collaboration with other community agencies and organizations provides information and referrals to resources, education programs and advocacy support to consumers and families.”

## President's Outlook

Become a NAMI Tri-Valley volunteer and here's why . . .

**V**olunteerism is the willingness of people to work on behalf of others without the expectation of pay or other tangible gain. Volunteers may have special training as advocates, teachers, rescuers, guides, assistants, and in other positions. But the vast majority work on an impromptu basis, recognizing a need and filling it.

Volunteering helps build more cohesive communities, fostering greater trust between citizens, and developing norms of solidarity and reciprocity, which are essential to stable communities. Activities undertaken by volunteers would otherwise have to be funded by the state or by private capital, so volunteering adds to the overall economic output of a country and reduces the burden on government spending.

Many of us consider "it is better to give than to receive" to be a basic spiritual truth. Let's start with what's good for business. A survey of corporate executives conducted by the Points of Light Foundation shows that 74% say volunteerism increases employee productivity and 93% say volunteerism builds employee teamwork. What about young people in their early 20s? 46% of young adults volunteer. In 2000, a Harvard University study showed 60% of college students volunteered in the past year.

Seniors benefit from volunteering. Research published in 2003 in the "Journals of Gerontology" indicates that 34.5% of adults 60 and older volunteer. These seniors average 71.5 volunteer hours per year. Seniors who volunteer have less depression and better overall health.

Americans believe in volunteering. It is said that volunteering is good for your spirit, good for your health, good for business, good for your community and even good for your weight loss program.

So become a NAMI Tri-Valley volunteer!

Marsha McInnis,  
President, NAMI Tri-Valley

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## Library Growing by Volumes

Here are a few selections from our new library:

*Unholy Ghost* by Nell Casey

A unique collection of stories about depression. This book depicts the most complete portrait of the illness.

*The Noonday Demon* by Andrew Solomon

This book examines depression in personal and cultural terms. Drawing on his struggles with the illness and interview with fellow sufferers.

*The Unquiet Mind* by Kay Medfield Jamison

A memoir of moods and madness.

## CALENDAR

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**February 6, 2006**

**7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**NAMI Tri-Valley General Meeting**  
**Guest Speaker: Marye Thomas, M. D.**

Livermore Public Library,  
1188 So. Livermore Ave., Livermore  
Contact: Marsha McInnis  
Phone: (925) 980-5331  
e-mail: marsha\_m@pacbell.net

**February 13, 2006**

**7:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**NAMI Tri-Valley**  
**Family Support Group**

Livermore Public Library,  
1188 So. Livermore Ave., Livermore  
Contact: Marsha McInnis  
Phone: (925) 980-5331  
e-mail: marsha\_m@pacbell.net

**February 27, 2006**

**7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**NAMI Tri-Valley**

**Family Support Group**

St. Clare's Episcopal Church  
3350 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton  
Contact: Donna & Russ White  
Phone: (925) 455-6901  
e-mail: russdonnawhite@comcast.net

### Other mental health support groups

**Every Wednesday**

**7:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.**

**Depression and Bipolar**  
**Support Alliance Chapter**

Tri-Valley Bipolar Support Group  
St. Clare's Episcopal Church  
3350 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton  
Contact: Krista Radojevich  
Phone: (925) 560-0842

e-mail: trivalleybipolar@hotmail.com

**Every Friday**

**7:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.**

**Depression and Bipolar**  
**Support Alliance Chapter**

Castro Valley Bipolar Support Group  
Eden Hospital Conference Center  
Conference Room A, Ground Floor  
20103 Lake Chabot Road, Castro Valley  
Contact: Jennifer Garrison (925) 413-3784  
jenn@dbsacastrovalley.org

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# Marye Thomas, M.D. is guest speaker at NAMI Tri-Valley's February Meeting

On Monday, February 6, NAMI Tri-Valley is pleased to present Marye Thomas, M.D., Director of Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS). Dr. Thomas will give an overview on Behavioral Health Care services in our county.

Dr. Thomas's department is responsible for the delivery of all publicly funded mental health, alcohol, and other drug services in the County. With a budget of \$260 million, more than 3000 employees in county and community based organizations deliver more than 1.6 million units of BHCS services to 29,000 people each year.

As the physician/administrator for BHCS, Dr. Thomas has more than 20 years experience in the provision of services and the administration of federal, state and local programs. During her tenure as director, the behavioral health service system has evolved from a \$58 million county operated mental health service to a more comprehensive be-

havioral health care system of nearly \$300 million. Through her leadership, the resource base for children's services has grown by more than \$40 million annually, developed and opened numerous behavioral health facilities (including an adolescent sub-acute facility, a regional neurobehavioral program, and an acute psychiatric hospital), and increased revenues for alcohol and drug services by approximately \$9 million annually.

A native of Texas, Dr. Thomas began working in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1969 and in Alameda County in 1978. Dr. Thomas is a psychiatrist, a graduate of Fisk University and Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tennessee. She completed her psychiatric training at Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute, University of California at San Francisco. Dr. Thomas has won numerous local and national awards, and holds leadership positions and membership in many professional societies and community organizations.

**February 6, 2006**  
**NAMI Tri-Valley Presents**

**Marye Thomas, M.D.**  
*Director of Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services*

**7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

Livermore Public Library, Community Room B  
1188 So. Livermore Ave., Livermore

*Refreshments to follow*

## First Person .....

### How NAMI's In Our Own Voice Changed My Life

*by Jennifer Garrison*

I saw my first In Our Own Voice presentation in May of 2006. I was awestruck by the presentation. I related so closely with the prerecorded and live presenters. I had never heard anyone explain my "issues" so clearly.

I was energized and inspired, and wanted to be part of this. I wanted to share my story so that I too may be able to connect with others. Three short months later I was trained as a speaker.

I have now given more than a dozen presentations. Each and every presentation is unique, and it's effect on the audience is different each time.

Since I started doing the presentations I have regained my confidence and taken a leap in my career that I had been too afraid to previously. I now have a very fulfilling life; which includes family, work, and volunteering with NAMI.

FU:

for Consumers:

**Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
DBSA Tri-Valley**

Meets each Wednesday 7:15-8:45  
St. Clare's Episcopal Church  
3350 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton  
Contact: Krista Radojevich, 925.560.0842  
trivalleybipolar@hotmail.com

**Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
DBSA Castro Valley**

Meets each Friday 7:15-8:45  
Eden Hospital Conference Center  
Conference Room A, Ground Floor  
20103 Lake Chabot Road, Castro Valley  
Contact: Jennifer Garrison (925) 413-3784  
jenn@dbsacastrovalley.org

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**Depression Survey**

continue to experience subsequent episodes have up to a 90% chance of relapse.

“As a physician, I know that lack of awareness of treatment goals and low expectations can undermine treatment, resulting in people with depression continuing to experience symptoms or relapse,” says Dr. American adults each year. People with depression can learn more about their illness and how to manage symptoms through organizations such as NAMI, which advocates for expanded access to information, services and treatment.

*Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness*



NAMI is a non-profit, grassroots, self-help, support and advocacy organization of consumers, families, and friends of people with severe mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic and other severe anxiety disorders, autism and pervasive developmental disorders, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and other severe and persistent mental illnesses that affect the brain.

*Brainstorm* is published by NAMI Tri-Valley, an affiliate of NAMI National and NAMI California

for Families:

**NAMI Tri-Valley  
Support Group**

Meets 2nd Monday of the month 7:15-9:00  
Livermore Library  
1188 S.Livermore Ave.  
Contact: Marsha McInnis, 925.980.5331  
marsha\_m@pacbell.net

**NAMI Family Support Group**

Meets 4th Monday of the month  
St. Clare's Episcopal Church  
3350 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton  
Contact: Russ or Donna White 925.455.6901  
russdonnawhite@comcast.net

**Membership Application  
NAMI Tri-Valley**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

General \$35

Consumer \$15

Professional \$45

Century \$100

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory Of: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor Of: \_\_\_\_\_

\$20.00 of your membership dues is tax deductible. Membership entitles you to receive NAMI Tri-Valley Newsletter "Brainstorm", NAMI California publication "The Connection" and NAMI National "The Advocate".

Send this application form with your check payable to:  
NAMI Tri-Valley  
1989-A Santa Rita Road PMB 129  
Pleasanton, CA 94566