



Proclamation

Mental illnesses are biologically-based brain disorders that disrupt the way a person thinks, feels and functions, which can result in the inability to cope with the ordinary demands of life. Mental illnesses can affect anyone, regardless of race, age or income. They are also treatable. By identifying and caring for mental illnesses properly and ensuring that individuals receive the best possible care, everyone benefits, including Hawai'i families and communities.

Founded in 1979, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has been dedicated to the eradication of mental illness and to the improvement of the quality of life for those who are afflicted with these conditions. NAMI provides support, education and advocacy through their website, hotline, educational programs and support groups. They also coordinate events such as the NAMI Walk, an annual gathering where thousands of supporters across the nation walk to raise money and awareness about mental illness, and programs like StigmaBusters, which strives to eliminate the inaccurate and hurtful portrayals of mental illness and promote understanding and respect instead.

Many people who suffer from mental illness resist treatment because they believe it is not serious, or that it is a personal weakness rather than a serious medical condition. Fortunately, NAMI Hawai'i has partnered with the state as well as various local agencies, professionals, employers and family members to decrease the stigma of mental illness, increase public awareness and enhance services.

Complete recovery requires action, understanding and teamwork and is possible due to improved research, increased community support and reduced stigma. However, significant barriers still exist, such as shame and insufficient insurance. In 1990, the United States Congress established the first week in October as Mental Illness Awareness Week in recognition of NAMI's efforts to raise awareness of mental illness.

THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor, and I, JAMES R. "DUKE" AIONA, JR., Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai'i, do hereby proclaim the week of **October 5 – 11 2008**, as

MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

in Hawai'i, and encourage our citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools to participate in statewide efforts to increase access to much-needed services for members of our 'ohana who suffer from mental illness.

DONE at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai'i, this twenty-second day of September 2008.

Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai'i

James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i