



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami

Albuquerque

Group Homes

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Who is NAMI

- National Alliance on Mental Illness
 - Started in 1979
 - Leading Voice on Mental Health in the US
 - National Non-Profit 501(c)3, headquarters in Arlington, VA
 - State Organizations in all fifty states, DC, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
 - Multiple affiliates in each state
- Purpose
 - Raise Awareness, Provide Support, Education
 - Educate through multiple education programs for families, individuals, educators, and professionals (supports hundreds of thousands via the no cost classes)
 - Advocates for families and individuals with mental illness
 - Listen via a toll-free help line and support groups through out all NAMI Affiliates

NAMI Affiliates New Mexico

- Albuquerque NAMI New Mexico (state office)
- Albuquerque NAMI Albuquerque
- Farmington NAMI San Juan County
- Gallup NAMI Cibola / McKinley
- High Rolls NAMI Otero County
- Las Cruces NAMI Dona Ana County
- Los Alamos NAMI Los Alamos
- Los Lunas NAMI Valencia County
- Milan NAMI Milan / Grants
- Raton NAMI Colfax County
- Rio Rancho NAMI Westside NM
- Roswell NAMI Southeast New Mexico
- Santa Fe NAMI Santa Fe
- Silver City NAMI Silver City
- Taos NAMI Arroyo Seco

NAMI Albuquerque

- NAMI Albuquerque provides advocacy, education, support, and public awareness so that individuals and families affected by mental illness can maximize their capabilities and enjoyment of life. NAMI Albuquerque envisions a world where all persons affected by mental illness experience fairness, recovery and wellness.
 - All Volunteer
 - Chartered in 1985 501(c)3
 - Approximately 150 members
 - Provide NAMI Programs (free of charge)
 - Provide support groups for individuals and families
 - Support community activities associated with mental health advocacy
 - Involved with Albuquerque APD, city, county and state initiatives concerning mental health.

Why is NAMI Concerned

- In general, individuals when faced with mental illness in a loved one become frustrated very quickly and ask

“What do I do, where do I go...?!”

- **Big Questions** Individuals Have:

1. Crisis Resolution
2. Medical Services
3. Housing (rapidly becomes a crisis)

- NAMI works to provide individuals and families with the best, most complete information possible on ALL these Critical Issues.
- In the area of housing we are frequently at a loss to provide this information especially for group homes. Neither can we provide people with any substantive reviews of these facilities.

Housing, Why Needed?

- Individuals with mental health conditions are frequently in need of housing and come into the situation via several scenarios:
 - ❖ Discharge from Hospital
 - ❖ Discharge from MDC
 - ❖ Need Separation
 - ❖ Respite
- There is no guarantee of housing for individuals in these situations
- Most individuals coming into these situations experience this as a complete shock and quickly realize the housing resources are minimal.
- Note: Not all individuals have social workers to help through this process. NAMI gets questions with regards to all these scenarios.

The Reality of Options for Housing

- Homeless Shelters (short term, not desirable, frequently offered by discharge planners)
- Hotel Vouchers (short term, not desirable, occasionally offered by discharge planners)
- Medicaid Supported-Licensed (limited availability, frequently not applicable to the bulk of individuals, also may require private pay along with Medicaid)
- Homes Primarily Serving Release from prison Private Pay (not desirable) Recovery Homes Private Pay (individuals are likely not ready for this level, zero tolerance)
- Section 8 (Bernalillo County, takes years)
- Homeless Programs Albuquerque (HUD requirements, very difficult to get into, even if requirements are met, it may take months)
- Apartment (if there is a previous eviction, can't qualify, individual may not be ready, budget issues)
- **Group Homes Private Pay (may be most viable solution for many)**
- Live with Family Member (may not be practical, may be last resort)
- MDC (without housing, this can be a consequence)

Group Homes

Outside Looking In

- Quality (no reviews)
- Very hard to find (no listings)
- Usually provide food and medication management
- Sometimes provide transportation
- Support with daily living planning, sometimes offered
- Frequently located in rural county areas
- Transitional living supports may not be available
- Understanding of mental illness may be minimal

Problem

- Insufficient information for clients to make educated decisions.

Licensing of facilities unknown except for Medicaid.

Condition and real services of facility is generally not available in any detail.

Clients may effectively be forced to buy sight unseen (Desperation because of situation).

Minimal Recommended Qualifications for Homes

- More Availability (not achievable short term)
- Directory of homes in each county (provides needed resource information to clients)
- Assurance that homes are safe and meet some form of minimum standards
 - Includes:
 - Definition of Services Provided (transportation, transition support, daily life planning, budgeting, access to programs like AA, access to faith groups and other services)
 - Handicap Accessible
 - Fire safety
 - Maximum number of individuals per room
 - Adequate bathroom facilities
 - Assurance of safe and adequate food services
 - Assurance of safe medication management services
 - Freedom from drugs and alcohol
 - Basic respect and dignity
 - Freedom from physical / psychological abuse

Recommendation

- Require registration of homes
- Require homes to maintain their descriptive information
- Require homes to meet (needs to be defined) minimal safety and operational standards.
- Oversight to assure safety, food preparation and quality, medication management.
- Develop web accessible home resource listing which is maintained by the State

Concerns

- Development of minimal standards may cause hardship on some home operators.
 - There is already minimal supply of housing; don't want to impact the supply of beds.
 - Elimination of beds may result in homelessness.
- Cost is critical to clients, many are on SSI (~\$730/m).
 - Registration and adherence must result in minimal costs to operators, and thus pass on to clients.
- Some form of inspections will be needed, this will cost both the home operator and the county where located.
 - Again cost issue for clients.
- A directory web site will require development and upkeep.
 - Lack of maintenance results in lack of usefulness. Housing has frequent changes

Benefits Of Registration

- Puts all homes on level playing field.
- Assures clients a safe and respectable place to live
- Provides clients and families a way to locate and select a group home
- Provides a feed back mechanism for system improvements over time.

Basic Approach

- Require basic registration for development of directory.
- Define minimum requirements via a combined committee of clients and operators.
- Develop a self assessment approach to adherence.
- Implement feed back mechanism for clients

NAMI Albuquerque Requests

1. The committee to look into the overall feasibility of requiring some form of registration and inspections for all group homes.
2. The committee to consider the development of a state wide directory for group homes.
3. Wishes to be involved in future housing related issues that involve those with mental health conditions.

Conclusion

- NAMI Albuquerque is interested in advocating for those with mental illness. Our concern is for the safety, wellness and comfort of all individuals.
- Good housing with access to services is critical to maintaining and improving outcomes.
- Sometimes, where none exist, some form of standard is needed. This is in effect every day in our homes (building code), cars (safety, emissions) and ADA requirements.

THANK YOU

Contact Information

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