

## NAMI Union County advocates for mental health at Georgia State Capitol



NAMI Georgia Staff with Jim Moore of NAMI Rome

On Feb. 7, over 1,200 advocates gathered in Atlanta for the annual Mental Health Day at the Capitol.

This effort included eight nonprofits and agencies that provide services for people with a mental illness, including The National Alliance on Mental Illness in Georgia. Local member Suzanne Moore attended, along with 130 other NAMI GA members.

The purpose of this event is to meet with legislators and their staffs regarding issues and legislation related to mental illness.

NAMI Union County held a luncheon in November to gather input from the professionals in health care, law enforcement, charities and faith groups, government officials and citizens about local needs.

These results, from civic dinners all over the state, were compiled to create three legislative priorities that were emphasized on Capitol Day. The priorities are mental health parity, protecting budget funding, and maximizing federal dollars to provide more services.

NAMI originated in the 1970s, from families of the mentally ill meeting to share support and resources for their family members. NAMI's mission is to educate, advocate and offer support to individuals and in our communities.

It's important to our whole community to keep the conversation going about mental illness. For instance, there is a national effort to reclassify the serious mental illnesses as neurological illnesses, such as



Brandon Waterman of NAMI Albany, GA and Suzanne Moore of NAMI Union County in Atlanta

schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, which affects about 4 percent of the population.

There are physical similarities seen in schizophrenia, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and autism. One symptom is called anosognosia. It manifests itself as the inability of the person to recognize that they are sick, or have abnormal behavior, and require help and treatment.

These brain diseases are medical illnesses that require medication to control, improve function, and recover to the highest level possible. Early diagnosis and treatment are vital in order to prevent further brain damage.

NAMI.org and NAMI-GA.org websites include information that is helpful to determine if someone you love is showing signs of a mental illness.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and NAMI Union County

have signed onto the Stepping Up Initiative. Their main goal is to identify and treat people who are in jail with a mental illness.

Jails and prisons have become the new "hospital" or "asylum" for many, because there are not enough services and long-term treatment beds to properly treat. This is a national problem that we need to address in North Georgia as well.

Please call Suzanne Moore at 352-817-2030 or Linda Beaver at 706-835-6649 if you have any questions or want to help with the mission of NAMI.

The local family support group meets on the first Thursday of every month from 12-1:30 p.m. at New Hope Counseling, and the Connections Group meets on Saturdays at 2 p.m. in the conference room between New Hope and the Avita offices. N(Mar18 225)CA

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ship, Hood, Huff and WCM will co-sign writers for artists that Hood & Huff work with. The publisher has also signed Hood to a worldwide publishing deal.

"My relationship with Dann has been a navigational beacon for me as a guitarist, producer and songwriter. He's someone as close as family to me, and I could not be more excited to have his mentorship become more official in my career," said Hood. "I'm thrilled to partner with him and the entire Warner Chappell family to pursue development opportunities with incredible artists."

A Nashville native, Huff's versatile career spans decades and includes playing session guitar for superstars from Madonna to Michael Jackson, to producing for some of the biggest names in country music like Keith Urban, Carrie Underwood, Rascal Flatts, Faith Hill, Thomas Rhett and Reba McEntire, to name a few.

Some of his most recognizable country hits include Keith Urban's "Blue Ain't My Color," Brett Young's "In Case You Didn't Know," and Thomas Rhett's "Die A Happy Man," which landed Single of the Year at the 2016 CMA Awards.

Huff has been named CMA's Musician of the Year, ACM's Producer of the Year, and Music Row's Producer of the Year three times each, and he was honored as Billboard's Producer of the Decade in 2010.