NAMI Awards Major Research Grants in Serious Mental Illness
NAMI Research Fellowships Benefit Academic Departments of Psychiatry

ARLINGTON, VA, October 8, 2015 – NAMI today announced the award of five-year grants to promote research in serious mental illness in two of the nation’s leading university departments of psychiatry.

The University of Michigan Health System’s Department of Psychiatry and the McLean Hospital Psychotic Disorders Division, affiliated with Harvard Medical School, will each receive a grant to support a NAMI Research Fellow, in conjunction with NAMI’s medical director, Ken Duckworth, M.D. Each was selected following a nationwide Request for Proposals (RFP).

“One of the most important things about the grants is that our NAMI Research Fellows will help individuals who live with serious mental illnesses and their families feel more connected to research,” said NAMI Medical Director Ken Duckworth, M.D. “We’re confident both academic centers chosen will do an excellent job bringing the development and practice of research to life for people impacted by mental illness.”

Each academic institution, in conjunction with the NAMI Medical Director, will identify individual early career investigators to become NAMI Research Fellows. A close working relationship is planned between NAMI and each center: Fellows will come to NAMI’s annual convention, contribute to NAMI’s resources and discuss their research work with NAMI members in person or via media.

Grant proposals were reviewed by a panel of NAMI’s scientific council, the NAMI medical director and additional NAMI leaders. Each academic center selected was able to demonstrate:

- A commitment to academic study and productivity in serious mental illness research
- A history of mentoring young investigators
- Capacity for research designed to:
  - improve the understanding of the basis of psychiatric disorders
  - enhance the application/translation of current treatments for serious mental illness, or
  - improve the quality of life for people living with serious mental illnesses
- A current collaborative relationship with a NAMI State Organization and/or NAMI Affiliate.

The University of Michigan fellow will do research work in first episode psychosis, with Stephan F. Taylor, M.D., as mentor. Areas of study will include stem cell research, digital application of symptom monitoring and pharmacogenetics.

The fellow with McLean Hospital of Harvard Medical School will research a creative recovery-oriented approach to hospital care that involves shared decision-making, patient engagement and the inclusion of family members. Dr. Dost Öngür, M.D., Ph.D., will mentor the fellow, who will work from the perspective that integrating recovery into inpatient care is key in improving outcomes.

Awards will be disbursed for the Fellows in time for their research to begin July 1, 2016.