

the challenger

A Publication of the NATIONAL ALLIANCE on MENTAL ILLNESS in Buffalo & Erie County

vol. 1, no. 2
April-May 2009

Mark Your Calendar

All regularly scheduled monthly meetings are held at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 4007 Main Street, Amherst (near the intersection of Main and Eggert Rd.) Board Meetings and monthly educational meetings are held on the second floor; support group meetings are held on the first floor (church entrance at ground level at the left rear of the building.)

April

NAMI Board Meeting, Thursday, April 2nd, 7:30 PM. All members are invited to attend!

NAMI Family-To-Family Classes beginning April 7th. Once again, our energetic co-teachers, Debbie and Max Gabriel, will be teaching the Family to Family 12-week educational course on serious mental illnesses, medications, side effects, symptoms, coping strategies, and much more. Participants have said this is a "life-changing experience" for families. The course will be held in West Seneca. For further details contact Debbie and Max at 677-4517.

NAMI Educational Meeting, Thursday, April 9th, 7:00 PM. Guest Speaker: To Be Announced.

NAMI Family Support Meeting, Wednesday, April 22nd, 7 PM.

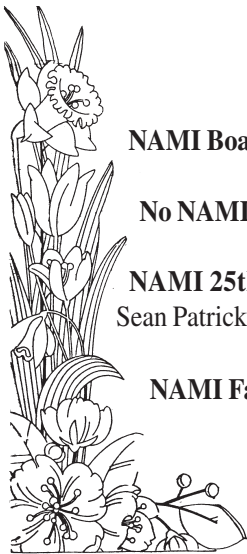
May

NAMI Board Meeting, Thursday, May 7th, 7:30 PM

No NAMI Educational Meeting

NAMI 25th Anniversary Luncheon, Saturday, May 9th, 12:30 PM,
Sean Patrick's Restaurant, 3480 Millersport Highway, Amherst 14068

NAMI Family Support Meeting, Wednesday, May 27th, 7 PM.



NAMI'S 25th Anniversary Luncheon!

A special year for us join long-time NAMI Buffalo friends and new members for a delicious luncheon and a wonderful afternoon with inspiring guest speaker Darci Brasch, a WTOP reporter in Washington DC, who is a family member herself and the recipient of a 2008 NAMI National Heroes award. Special guests will be our honorees:

Jeanne Figurel

JoEllen Pennella

Herman Szymanski, MD

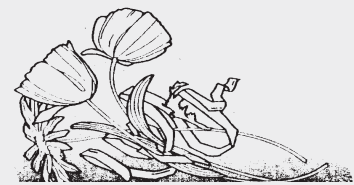
Clarence Presbyterian Church

HSBC

*And our wonderful
president,*

Mary Kirkland

**We'll see you on
May 9th!**



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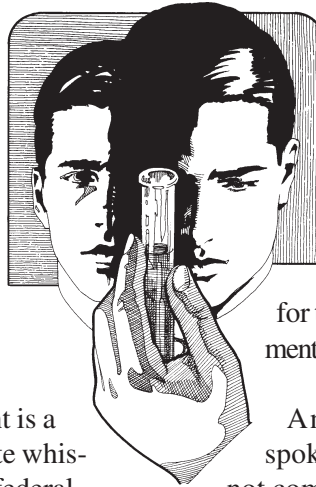
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Zyprexa Charges May Cost Lilly \$1.4 Billion

Drug giant Eli Lilly is expected to agree as soon as today to pay \$1.4-billion to settle criminal and civil charges that it illegally marketed its blockbuster antipsychotic drug Zyprexa for unauthorized use in patients particularly vulnerable to its risky side effects.



Zyprexa's use in children has soared.

The case is being prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Patricia Hartman, a spokeswoman for the office, declined to comment.

The amount of the settlement is a record for so-called corporate whistle-blower cases, which are federal lawsuits prompted by tips from company employees or former employees.

Angela Sekson, a Lilly spokeswoman, said she could not comment on the status of the Zyprexa negotiations. Last fall, the company, anticipating a settlement, had set aside \$1.4-billion for that purpose.

Last year, the St. Petersburg Times published several investigative stories highlighting the aggressive promotion of Zyprexa amid growing concerns about dangerous side effects, particularly for children and elderly people with dementia.

Lilly executives for years insisted the company's Zyprexa marketing efforts were legal and appropriate. When asked whether she could repeat those assurances, Ms. Sekson said, "It would be inappropriate for me to comment further right now".

Zyprexa is not federally approved for use by children and the elderly.

Without a settlement, Lilly risks being barred from participating in the federal Medicaid and Medicare programs, a huge part of its business.

In one marketing effort, the company urged geriatricians to use Zyprexa to sedate unruly nursing home patients so as to reduce "nursing time and effort," according to court documents. Like other antipsychotics, the drug increases risk of sudden death, heart failure and infections like pneumonia in elderly patients with dementia-related psychosis.

In the United States, most of Zyprexa's sales are paid for by government programs because so many of those taking Zyprexa are indigent or disabled. Zyprexa had sales of \$4.8-billion in 2007, making it the biggest seller by far for Lilly, whose revenue that year was \$18.6-billion. Depending on dosage, the drug can cost as much as \$25 for a daily pill.

The company also pressed pediatricians and family practice doctors to treat disruptive children with Zyprexa, court documents show, even though the medicine has a tendency to cause severe weight gain and metabolic disorders in children. Over the last decade,

New York Times
January 2009



Building a **CARE Kit**

Being well prepared to address a crisis for a loved one suffering with severe mental illness is important. One step you can take is to build a CARE Kit (Critical Advocacy Resources for Emergency) that contains a ready file of materials that can be shared with treatment professionals and others. These materials may be assembled in a three-ring binder, a file box, or other easily-transportable storage system.

Psychiatric history summary

A one-page summary of your loved one's psychiatric history can be very useful for professionals who may not have time to review a complete set of medical records. Keep at least five copies of this important document in your CARE kit, so it can be easily and quickly shared with more than one person in a short span of time. Keep it current (update it regularly) and short (one page is best) but be sure it contains the most critical information, including the following:

- Full name
- Current age
- Psychiatric diagnosis
- Age at diagnosis
- Town or city of residence
- Current symptoms and concerns (suicidal, homeless, missing, vulnerable, violent, abusing substances, other)
- Psychiatrist's name and number
- Local service provider's name and provider
- Dates of previous hospitalizations and locations
- Dates of previous arrests or jailings and charge (s)
- Current medication name(s)
- Past medication(s) that have helped
- Past medication(s) that have not helped
- Past history of symptomatic behaviors (e.g., running up huge debt, getting into car

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accidents, threatening family members, failing to care for basic needs)

- Full name, contact numbers, and address for emergency contact person

Recent picture and description

. Keep a recent picture of your loved one, a list of vital statistics (such as height, age, weight, hair color), and any pertinent physical medical conditions (such as allergies or diabetes). Ideally, keep these in a format that allows them to be easily faxed or emailed to police and mental health agencies. Leave space to add a description of clothing last worn in case that information is needed.

List of emergency numbers

Create, and periodically update, a comprehensive list of emergency numbers, including: **(1)** Psychiatrist; **(2)** Case manager; **(3)** ACT/PACT team; **(4)** Community mental health center; **(5)** Mobile crisis team; **(6)** Crisis intervention team (**CIT**); **(7)** Police department; **(8)** Local hospital; **(9)** Local emergency room; **(10)** Court for civil commitment; **(11)** Mental health court; **(12)** Homeless shelter(s); **(13)** Friends of family member. Also, keep numbers handy for the suicide prevention hotline (**1-800-SUICIDE**) and your local **NAMI** chapter.

Copies of important criteria

Print out a copy of your state's criteria for emergency evaluations and for civil commitments (as mentioned in the "research" section). That way if anyone along the way contradicts or misunderstands the law, you have a copy of it in hand.

Petition forms

Get blank copies of involuntary commitment forms if your state permits this. Complete any nonincident-related information ahead of time. You may never have to use them, but at least you will have them ready.

Medical release (if applicable)

If possible, have your loved one sign a release that allows you access to his or her medical information. If you have such a document, keep a copy in your CARE.

Thanks ...

To **Gail Battaglia**, a NAMI member and HSBC employee, who arranged for NAMI Buffalo to receive the proceeds from a month of HSBC employees' "dress down" days, which resulted in a gift of over \$3,000!

To **all our NAMI members and friends** who provide financial support for our many activities. We couldn't do without you!

To **Dr. Adam Ashton** for the latest book he has donated to NAMI Buffalo's library.

To **Marcy Rose and JoEllen Pennella** for serving as convener and secretary respectively of the Erie County Partnership for Quality Psychiatric Hospital Care. They are articulate, persistent, and determined to bring our concerns and problems to the attention of those professionals who can change the delivery of care for the better.

To **President Mary** and husband **Jim Kirkland** for many trips to the post office and various agencies, libraries, and hospitals delivering cartons of the new edition of *The Mind Matters*.



Please Remember

NAMI

Buffalo

&

Erie County

in your Will



Patients Deserve Facts About Drug

Pharmaceutical companies spend millions each year to market drugs to doctors and potential patients. That makes it all the more outrageous that AstraZeneca is asking an Orlando court to keep information about the performance of its lucrative antipsychotic drug Seroquel secret.

The company is claiming public safety, saying it shouldn't be required to release information about the drug that could cause a panic among "a vulnerable patient population" that might stop taking the drug without a doctor's oversight. But the real public safety issue is one of public health and whether the company hid findings that Seroquel causes weight gain and diabetes. The legal system must put public health - and a patient's right to know - above a company's interest in secrecy.

Seroquel has been approved for treatment of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, but the drug is widely prescribed for other health problems such as depression and insomnia. Last year, this blockbuster drug racked up \$4.5 billion in sales and was prescribed to more than 22 million people.

But there have been serious questions about potential side effects. AstraZeneca is facing more than 9,000 personal injury lawsuits filed by at least 5,000 patients. Forty percent of these cases have been consolidated in federal court in Orlando.

The lawyers for patients say that AstraZeneca knew for nearly a decade that Seroquel caused weight gain and diabetes. As Times staff writer Kris Hundley reported Sunday, a hearing is scheduled for Feb. 26 on the public disclosure of documents produced during the trial's discovery phase, including unpublished results of drug studies and notes of company sales representatives on marketing strategies.

The plaintiffs' lawyers want the

court to unseal the documents. AstraZeneca wants the seal to remain and the hearing to be closed to the public. The company claims that disclosure could jeopardize public safety by causing "confusion and alarm" and prompting patients to end treatment.

What the company really means is that disclosure could make drug consumers more aware of any downside

risks of taking Seroquel - which might take a bite out of revenues.

It would not be the first time a drug company is suspected of putting profits before public health. Internal documents on the Eli Lilly drug Zyprexa, also an antipsychotic, indicated that the drugmaker ignored evidence that its drug was causing weight gain and diabetes. Those documents were put under seal, and had it not been for an expert witness who disseminated them against court orders, the public may never have been sufficiently warned. Since then Lilly pleaded guilty to marketing Zyprexa illegally and paid a record \$1.4 billion in fines.

AstraZeneca points out it won its first two cases, with the judge finding that the patients had not successfully linked their health problems to Seroquel. That doesn't lessen the public's interest in the results of clinical trials and what the company's sales representatives were saying about the drug.

There is altogether too much secrecy in court cases that implicate public health. If the records being held back contain information that the judge would like to know before taking Seroquel, then the public should know as well. No other interest should take precedence.

St. Petersburg Times
February 17, 2009



We get letters....



"Thank you for allowing our program to participate in "Christmas is for Kids." We held our annual holiday dinner on January 9th. Twenty families were in attendance. Each family received a game as a result of the generous donations from the "Christmas is for Kids" project.

"It is so rewarding to see families enjoying themselves, regardless of the daily challenges they face.

"Thank you for your support and your hard work!"

Jenny Laney
Child and Family Support Program

"Thank God you are there and we're not alone!" **Jeanne F.**

"Thank you so much for sharing your "Christmas is for Kids" donations with the families that we work with! All of our families were so unbelievably appreciative of the special items they received at Christmas. As we work with these families they become part of our lives, so it meant a lot to us as well to see them have gifts this holiday season. Families were especially thankful for warm clothing, winter gloves, scarves and hats they received.

"Additionally, the board games were very meaningful gifts for families as many of them have few options for sitting down for enjoyable times with their kids and doing anything but watching tv.

We cannot say thank you enough! The mission that you take on each year shows how wonderful and kind hearted you are!"

Sarah Brownstein and the New Directions Wraparound Team

"Thank you so much for the donation of toys for our children and teens.

It really helped make the holiday special for our patients. We really appreciate it".

The Therapeutic Activities Dept.
of BryLin Hospitals

Not All Antipsychotics Created Equal: Analysis Reveals Important Differences

An analysis of studies on antipsychotics reveals multiple differences among the newer, second-generation antipsychotics as well as the older medications, and suggests the current classification system blurs important differences, rendering it unhelpful. The analysis, partially funded by NIMH, was published online December 5, 2008, in *The Lancet*.

Stefan Leucht, M.D., of Technische Universitat Munchen in Munich, Germany, and colleagues looked at 150 studies from all parts of the world with a total of 21,533 participants. By examining these double-blind studies, they were able to compare nine second-generation (also called atypical antipsychotics) with first-generation antipsychotics. They examined symptom reduction; quality of life; side effects such as movement disorders, weight gain and sedation (sleepiness); and other factors.

Four atypical anti psychotics-amisulpride (Solian), clozapine (Clozaril), olanzapine (Zyprexa) and risperidone (Risperdal)-were found to be more effective in treating overall symptoms of schizophrenia than first-generation medications. The other five studied—aripiprazole (Abilify), quetiapine (Seroquel), sertindole (Serdolect), ziprasidone (Geodon), and zotepine (Nipolept)—were found to be as effective as first-generation medications in treating symptoms of the disease.

Other findings include the following:

Although quality of life was not reported in most studies, the few that did report it indicated that only amisulpride, clozapine and sertindole improved patients' quality of life more than first-generation medications.

All nine atypical antipsychotics caused fewer movement disorders than the first-generation medication haloperidol, which is highly potent. However, when compared with low-potency, first-generation medications such as chlorpromazine and thioridazine, studies showed that only a few atypical medications (clozapine, olanzapine, and risperidone) caused fewer movement disorders, but the lowpotency drugs also tended to induce weight gain and sedation like the atypicals. Few studies compared mid-potency first-generation medications, such as perphenazine and sulpiride, to atypicals with regard to movement disorders.

Amisulpride, clozapine, olanzapine, quetiapine, risperidone, sertindole and zotepine were associated with statistically significantly more weight gain than haloperidol. The researchers found no significant differences in weight gain between the atypicals and the lower-



potency, first-generation drugs.

Clozapine, quetiapine and zotepine were significantly more sedating than haloperidol, while aripiprazole was significantly less sedating than haloperidol.

The researchers conclude that antipsychotics are a heterogeneous group that defies generalization. Leucht and colleagues recommend that clinicians use the data in this report to determine individualized treatment plans for their patients with schizophrenia, keeping in mind effectiveness, side effects and cost of the various antipsychotic medications.

Reference

Leucht S, Corves C, Arbter D, Engel RR, Li C, Davis JM. Second-generation versus first-generation antipsychotic drugs for schizophrenia: a meta-analysis. *The Lancet*. Online ahead of print December 5, 2008

In Brief

Buffalo Psych Center's Olmsted Complex: A Hotel? Following the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars on various experts, a recent report proposes the historic BPC Olmsted Complex should be converted to an upscale hotel with renovations and alterations costing in excess of \$75 million.

—What's clearly missing from all the expensive and grandiose plans are two major items: what about the patients?

—What about the Strozzi Building (admittedly an ugly, 1960's turquoise ten story highrise that is a blight on the landscape.

Neither patients nor building are particularly scenic, and some have argued that both are a blight on the landscape. But these are real people we're talking about, and until everyone concerned in the "new" Olmsted project signs in blood that both patients and their facilities won't be evicted or displaced, NAMI families need to keep a wary eye on whatever develops.

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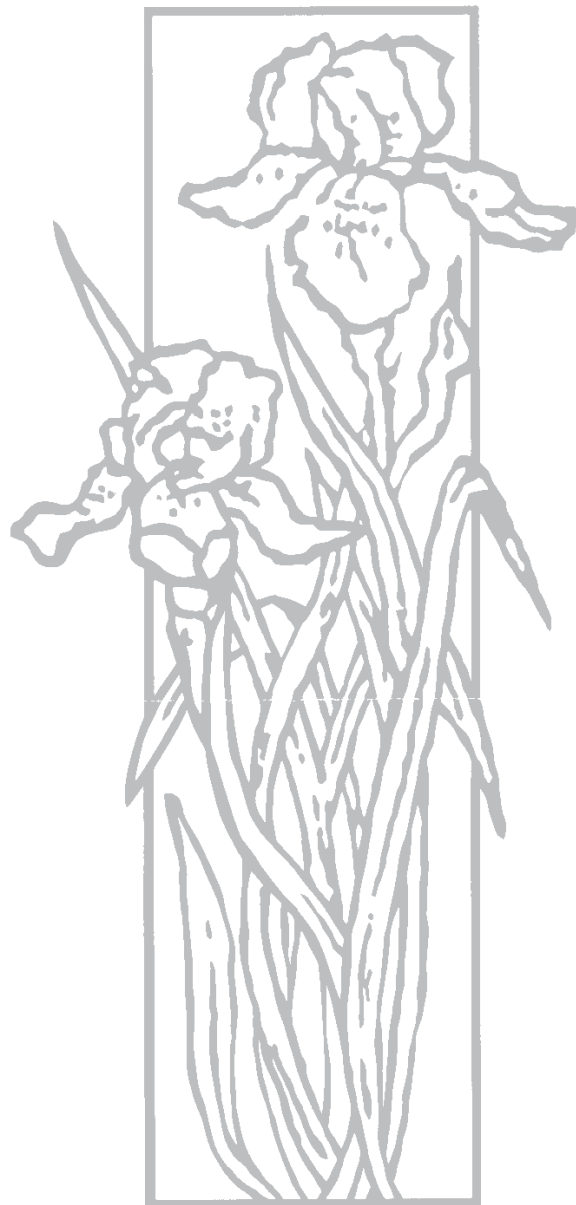
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in helping us make a difference for people
with mental illness and their families**

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302 Parkhurst Blvd. Buffalo, NY 14223

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*If you also want to be a member of NAMI New York State,
add \$3.00 to your membership dues. If you want to be a
member of the National NAMI, add \$10.00 to your dues.*

*No one will be denied membership due to financial
hardship. If you are on a limited, fixed income,
contact Mary at 832. 4035*

I'd like to help with the following:

- Fund Raising Office & Clerical Phone Tree
- Legislative Advocacy Speakers Bureau

Other _____

I'd like to be put on the phone tree to receive
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Please send a copy of this Newsletter to:

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The power of vision is in foreseeing better things to come, then making them happen. When a collection of minds, hearts and talents work together, great things can happen.

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough to those who have little.

Nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime: therefore, we must be saved by hope.

Reinhold Niebur

