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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



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United Behavioral Health shows great support for upcoming NAMI Walk

SAN DIEGO – In 2008, thousands of concerned citizens in more than 60 communities across the nation will join the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Campaign for the Mind of America. They will walk together to raise money and awareness about our country's need for a world-class treatment and recovery system for people with mental illnesses.

The San Diego County NAMI 5K WALK/RUN will be held on Saturday, April 19, 2008 in Balboa Park. In past years, this walk has proven almost magical, with over a thousand people coming together to learn more about mental illnesses, to develop stronger ties with one another, and to celebrate a beautiful day with friends and loved ones.

One of the walk supporters this year is United Behavioral Health, a company that is deeply committed to serving the behavioral health needs of San Diego County. UBH's public sector division is the Administrative Service Organization for the County of San Diego Mental Health System. They operate the Access and Crisis Line, offering referral to mental health and alcohol and drug treatment providers, and crisis intervention 24/7. UBH also operates the U.S. Behavioral Health Plan of California, a specialty behavioral health plan that serves more than two million members throughout San Diego and California.

In California, 600,000 children, adults and elderly are in need of mental health services. Here in San Diego County, more than 244,000 people are living with mental illness right now. Nationally, one in five people will suffer from a serious mental illness in their lifetime.

“As a community partner, United Behavioral Health's public sector is committed to supporting critical groups like the National Alliance on Mental Illness who provide needed advocacy and support to individuals and their families coping with mental illness,” said Ruth Kenzelmann, Ph.D., United Behavioral Health's San Diego public sector executive director. “Recovery from mental illness is possible with treatment and support, and United Behavioral Health is proud to be part of solutions that help people get and stay healthy.”

Your participation in the walk can assist the many who are in desperate need of diagnosis and care. NAMI San Diego is our city's own voice on mental illness. Your support of this organization shines a light on the stigma attached to mental illness — a stigma that comes from fear due to lack of knowledge. NAMI in San Diego County is at the center of education, support and advocacy regarding these brain disorders.

“U.S. Behavioral Health Plan of California is a specialty behavioral health plan serving more than two million California members. In partnership with United Behavioral Health Public Sector serving the County of San Diego, we are looking forward to our joint sponsorship of NAMI Walks 08,” said James E. Davis, president, U.S. Behavioral Health Plan of California. “At USBHPC, we are dedicated to improving access and affordability of behavioral health care in San Diego and throughout the state. It is an honor for us to participate in this fun and important event each year.”

Mark Saturday, April 19 at 8:00 a.m. on your calendar as the day to make a difference with your feet! Sign up for the San Diego County NAMI Walk today. There will be music, entertainment, and a health/resource fair.

A proper walk needs a proper kick off, so this Saturday, March 8, is the official kick-off party for the San Diego County NAMI Walk. It will be held at the USD Campus from 9-11 a.m. Plan on a free brunch, team T-shirt fashion show and complete instructions on how to form a team and do individual fundraising for April's big walk.

For more information, go to www.namiwalksandiego.org or call (619) 584-5564 today!

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is a non-profit organization that provides education, support services and advocacy to improve the lives of everyone affected by mental illnesses. Visit www.namisandiego.org or call 619-543-1434 or 1-800-523-5933.

Celebrating 30 years as San Diego's voice on mental illness.

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