



March 28, 2024

NAMI
Attn: Elections 2024
4301 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear NAMI 2024 Elections Committee,

The NAMI Washington Board is proud to submit the name of Alex Sheehan, MBA, MPA, MPP, MSPS, as a candidate for the 2024-2025 NAMI Board of Directors. The nomination of Mr. Sheehan was confirmed on March 20, 2024 by a vote of the NAMI Washington Board of Directors. Mr. Sheehan is an active member of NAMI Washington and NAMI Pierce County (WA). He has participated and served at all levels of NAMI, starting with local affiliate work as a Signature Program Leader and Board Member, adding support and leadership to the state office and board, and now looking towards bringing his skills, talents, knowledge, and critical experience to the National organization.

Alex Sheehan is an exceptional candidate for the 2024-2025 NAMI Board of Directors.

1. He is a NAMI Washington board member – currently serving as Vice President, and as such he attends our meetings, is a leader of the organization, and in fact, is serving on the NAMI Grasstops Advocacy Pilot Program representing Washington State.
2. Mr. Sheehan is a NAMI Family Support Group Facilitator; NAMI Family to Family teacher; NAMI Ending the Silence presenter for all 3 presentations, and worked collaboratively with NAMI Washington to bring EtS to Pierce County Schools; he is Mental Health First Aid Certified for Adults, Youth, Veterans, and Active Duty Service Members.
3. He would bring to the national board his experience of working in Law Enforcement, Corrections, and Re-entry for over a decade, supervising both misdemeanor and felony cases, specializing in therapeutic court environments (Mental Health, Veterans, and Family Courts). He has experienced firsthand the mental health issues seen in our jails and prisons, and the challenges of exacerbated mental illness on those reentering society from incarceration, in both rural and urban settings. He will also bring his experience as a Behavioral Health Program Manager for the Washington State Health Care Authority. In this role, Mr. Sheehan combines his lived and professional experiences to help inform programs, projects, and initiatives at the intersection of quality access to mental and behavioral healthcare meeting the individual where they are at, and chronic homelessness and criminal justice system involvement.
4. Mr. Sheehan is himself a person living with a mental health condition in recovery. This experience, combined with his professional experience makes him a superior candidate for the board, especially in relation to the board's strategic plan focuses on decriminalizing mental illness and ensuring people get diverted from justice system involvement.
5. Mr. Sheehan is currently a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) student at Tulane University School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Research Scholar studying more effective pathways for individuals with lived/living experience to inform state health policies to increase equitable access to mental and behavioral health care treatment for criminal justice system involved individuals.

6. Mr. Sheehan's unique blend of lived and professional experience taught him to shift and operate from a health equALITY lens to a health equITY lens, because the corrections and re-entry fields are not black and white. His experience taught him that individuals struggling with mental and behavioral health conditions, especially those with criminal legal system involvement, need to be met where there at, and to be provided support and coaching so they, too, can not just live, but thrive and flourish.

For these reasons, the NAMI Washington Board of Directors supports the nomination of Mr. Sheehan to serve families and individuals affected by mental health conditions as a member of the 2024-2025 NAMI Board of Directors.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lauren B. Simonds, M.S.W.
Executive Director