

2019 NAMI Lobby Day Summary

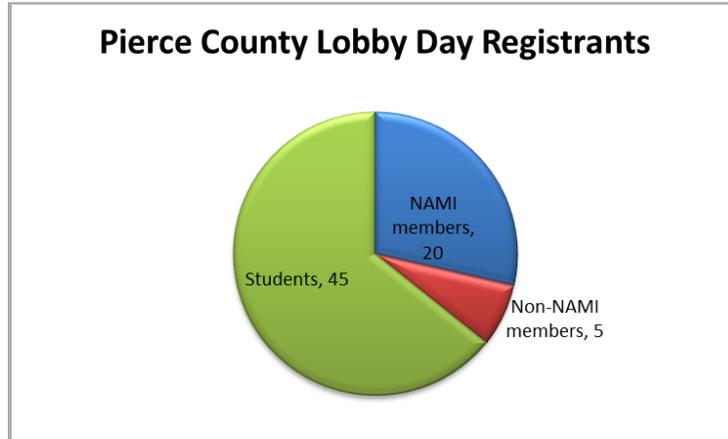
Advocacy is a cornerstone of NAMI activities. The annual Lobby Day in Olympia provides grassroots support for NAMI Washington's 2019 legislative agenda. The agenda focuses on a few of the hundreds of mental health bills and budgets under consideration. NAMI's four 2019 priority asks are:

1. **Teach Children Critical Mental Health Skills** and, more specifically, pass [HB 1876](#) or its companion [SB 5903](#) "Concerning children's mental health."
2. **Support the *Trueblood* Settlement** by passing either [SB 5444](#) or its companion [HB 1513](#) "Providing timely competency evaluations per the *Trueblood* lawsuit."
3. **Improve Inpatient Care and Support Early Intervention** by investing operating and capital funds in the behavioral health care system at least at the levels proposed by Governor Inslee.
4. **Increase Funding for the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Program** by \$69 million.

I'm glad to report all our priority bills are still under consideration after the first policy committee cutoff date.

NAMI public policy advocates roamed the halls of Washington government on a dry, cold, and snow free wintery Presidents' Day. The day kicked off with the NAMI Washington introductory meeting. The meeting speakers provided a session overview, introduced the 2019 NAMI legislative priorities, and tutored us on using NAMI Smarts skills to briefly tell our stories. Then our teams were off to visit the legislators.

Pierce County again provided the most grassroots advocates of any affiliate's service area. NAMI Pierce members were joined by Pierce College Social Works Mental Health Care students, University of Washington – Tacoma School of Social Work and Criminal Justice students, and other interested community members. Thanks to all who participated. We especially appreciate the continued involvement of our local college students whose assignments were coordinated by NAMI Washington staff.



NAMI Pierce County managed the visits for Legislative Districts 25, 27, 28, and 29. NAMI Pierce County members joined NAMI Thurston/Mason members in the Legislative District 2 calls, and joined NAMI Kitsap members in the Legislative District 26 visits. We met our goal of meeting all Pierce County legislators or their equally important legislative assistants.

A team was responsible for meeting the three legislators representing one Legislative District. Our 4 to 6 person teams had 15 minutes to tell our stories and to ask the legislators to support NAMI's legislative priorities. Feedback reports some wonderful meetings. Both our team members and the legislators were positively engaged.



One team is pictured here leaving Representative Muri Leavitt's office. Those pictured are from left to right Unique Smith, Rep. Mari Leavitt (LD 28), Raetta Daws, Andrea Bridges, Marguerite Christenson, and Bob Winslow.

Nine of 24 lobby day participants responded to our NAMI Pierce County lobby day survey. 100% report positive experiences. They also provided information about what went well and how their experience could be improved. Their feedback will be summarized and shared within NAMI Pierce County and with NAMI Washington for future lobby day planning consideration.

