

Conference spotlights link between mental illness, violence

By Jaclyn O'Malley, Reno Gazette-Journal

Recent headlines of violence – from double murders to child kidnappings – committed by suspects with a history of mental illness, is causing concern to local mental health advocates who say there is a lack of awareness on the issue.

A Friday conference hosted by the National Alliance on Mental Illness Northern Nevada chapter – free to the public – could provide families with some help, said NAMI president Bunchie Tyler. A continental breakfast and lunch will also be provided.

Tyler said mental health experts at the conference will be discussing treatment and medications, coping strategies, how to erase stigma toward mental illness and describing what local resources are available. NAMI officials will also be donating \$10,000 to the Reno Police Department so that it can continue to maintain its specialized van used for transporting mentally ill persons in crisis to treatment facilities.

Tyler, who also teaches a 12-week course for relatives of the mentally ill, said recent news stories regarding mentally ill suspects committing acts of violence demonstrates a lack of available treatment, or awareness that the person needs immediate psychiatric help. For example, Eyward Pereyra, of Reno, remains jailed without bail on charges he fatally stabbed his elderly parents in an August unprovoked attack, and tried to kill his brother. Court records show he has a history of mental illness, including two stints in the county's mental health court. At the time of the slayings, he was an out-patient at the state mental hospital in Reno,

according to court records.

Read the whole story