



## Huntsville group wants mental health funding restored

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on July 24, 2015 at 2:39 PM, updated July 24, 2015 at 5:30 PM

Participants in NAMI Huntsville's training learned effective techniques for an average person to lobbying lawmakers.

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With the Legislature set to return to **Montgomery on Aug. 3** to solve Alabama's \$300 million budget gap, one Huntsville group is organizing to make sure mental health issues are not overlooked.

The Huntsville affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, or NAMI, led a training session on lobbying local representatives on mental health funding Friday morning at WellStone Behavioral Health center on Memorial Parkway Southwest.

"The majority of adults who need mental health treatment aren't getting it," said Nick Snead, treasurer for NAMI Huntsville.

NAMI hopes people who have been personally affected by mental illness and the lack of treatment opportunities will persuade lawmakers not to cut funding for mental health services in the state.

Brian Davis of WellStone said lawmakers were saying the right things, but they need to hear from their constituents to ensure mental health is adequately funded during the special session.

Rep. Mike Ball of Madison County was on hand to give tips on how best to communicate with legislative representatives. His first tip, calls and emails do matter, but tell your lawmaker why the issue is important to you.

"A personal email from your heart is more effective than a copy and paste email from a lobbying campaign," Ball said.

More information about NAMI Huntsville can be found at their or **website** or **Facebook page**.

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