



**THE CNMI DESIGNATED PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEM:**

Providing legally - based advocacy services on behalf of individuals with disabilities and their families

Advancing the understanding of and appreciation for P&A services and disability related issues

Enhancing the quality of P&A services and efficiency of the organizations operations

# Posse

Charging through Barriers of Discrimination

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 8

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2022

## NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH



By: **CLEO NENING**  
Program Coordinator

October marks the celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) with this year's nation-wide theme "Disability: Part of the Equity Equation", coined by the United States Department of Labor. We recognize the important role people with disabilities have within a diverse and inclusive workforce as we take another step closer towards being a fully integrated society. We also recognize our employers who have showcased supportive, inclusive employment practices and policies as they break the barriers of stigma and discrimination.

These barriers cannot be broken alone, but rather, it is a team effort between diverse agencies with a common goal of providing employment services for individuals with disabilities. The Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) can provide education and training for employers regarding enabling disability laws, employee rights, reasonable accommodations, disability etiquette and awareness, just to name a few. In collaboration with the CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), NMPASI provides these trainings to employers who are interested in providing on the job and work experience training for VR clients. Working together for a common goal of ensuring that the rights of individuals with disabilities are protected and that the employers are aware of these laws allow for meaningful collaboration for the individuals seeking employment.

The Disability Network Partners (DNP) is an organization of various agencies that seek to provide services for individuals with disabilities through the CNMI. NMPASI is a member of the DNP, and together we are celebrating this year's NDEAM by hosting a series of conferences on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota aiming our employers, self-advocates, and beneficiaries of social security who are looking to gain or maintain employment. The important dates are as follows:

### SAIPAN

Wednesday, October 5, 2022: NDEAM Proclamation Signing, Employer Recognition Ceremony, Employer Training @ Taga Hall, World Resort, beginning at 8:00 a.m.  
Thursday, October 6, 2022: Self-Advocates' Training @ Taga Hall, World Resort, beginning at 8:00 a.m.  
Saturday, October 8, 2022: Beneficiaries of Social Security Training @ Taga Hall, World Resort, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

### TINIAN

Thursday, October 13, 2022: NDEAM Proclamation Signing, Employer Recognition Ceremony, Employer Training @ Bar-K Diner, Tinian, beginning at 8:00 a.m.  
Friday, October 14, 2022: Self-Advocates' Training @ Bar-K Diner, Tinian, beginning at 8:00 a.m.  
Saturday, October 15, 2022: Beneficiaries of Social Security Training @ Bar-K Diner, Tinian, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

### ROTA

Thursday, October 20, 2022: NDEAM Proclamation Signing, Employer Recognition Ceremony, Employer Training @ Chesa, Rota, beginning at 8:00 a.m.  
Friday, October 21, 2022: Self-Advocates' Training @ Chesa, Rota, beginning at 8:00 a.m.  
Saturday, October 22, 2022: Beneficiaries of Social Security Training @ Chesa, Rota, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

For more information regarding these upcoming NDEAM celebrations and events, please contact OVR at (670) 322-65357/38 or NMPASI at (670) 235-7273/74.

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*This publication is made using Federal funds from the US Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), the US Department of Education (DOE), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), and the Social Security Administration (SSA). The views set forth are from the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the DHHS, DOE, SAMHSA/CMHS, or SSA.*

# MENTAL ILLNESS FACTS



By: **JOHN CABRERA**  
Client Advocate

Mental illness keeps rising by the numbers each year. It is vital to recognize in what way common mental illness stands, so we can understand its effect. These statistics are also guides for raising community awareness, eliminating stigma and promoting improved health care.

You are NOT  
**ALONE**

Millions of people are affected by mental illness each year. Across the country, many people just like you work, perform, create, compete, laugh, love and inspire every day.



1 in 5 U.S. adults  
experience  
mental illness

**1 in 20**

1 in 20 U.S. adults  
experience serious  
mental illness

**17%**

of youth (6-17 years)  
experience a mental  
health disorder

## Fast Facts

1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year.

1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year.

1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year.

50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24.

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-14.

NAMI, Mental Health by the Numbers, <https://www.nami.org/mhstats>.

Common warning signs of mental illness could be feeling sad for a long period of time, severe changes in attitude, actions, behavior or sleeping behaviors, daily worries that bother everyday events, and dangerous daring behavior that causes injury to the person or others. Treatment, rehabilitation, and medicine have made mental health recovery a reality for individuals facing mental illness. Although it can be unclear, it's important to start looking for options.

"For therapy to work, you have to be open to change. I'm proud to say that I changed. Therapy saved my life." – NAMI Program Leader

The past 2 years were bumpy years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several fought to get needed mental health care, with tele-health showing upright outcomes.

For more information, contact NMPASI at (670) 235-7273/4 or visit us on the web at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org), [www.facebook.com/NMPASI](https://www.facebook.com/NMPASI), and follow us on Instagram [@nmpasi670](https://www.instagram.com/nmpasi670).

# NOVEMBER IS **ALZHEIMER'S** DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH



Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills; and eventually, the ability to carry out the simplest tasks. Alzheimer's is caused by a combination of genetics, environmental, and lifestyle factors. Early signs of Alzheimer's are:

Memory loss that disrupts daily life

- **Challenges in planning or solving problems**
- **Difficulty of completing familiar tasks**
- **Confusion with time or place**
- **Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships**
- **New problems with words in speaking or writing**
- **Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps**
- **Decreased or poor judgement**
- **Withdrawal from work or social activities**
- **Changes in mood and personality**

Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's, [https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/10\\_signs](https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/10_signs).

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed November as National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month.

In the United States of America, more than 6 million people are affected with Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's is projected to grow up to 14 million people by 2060. Alzheimer's does not only affect the individual; it also affects the family members and caregivers. Here are ten ways to help families living with Alzheimer's:

Educate yourself about Alzheimer's disease

- **Educate yourself about Alzheimer's disease**
- **Stay in touch.**
- **Be patient**
- **Offer a shoulder to lean on.**
- **Engage the person with dementia in conversation**
- **Offer to help the family with its to-do list.**
- **Engage family members in activities**
- **Offer family members a reprieve**
- **Be flexible.**
- **Support the Alzheimer's cause**

10 Ways to Help Family Living with Alzheimer's [https://www.alz.org/blog/alz/october-2019/10\\_ways\\_to\\_help\\_a\\_family\\_living\\_with\\_alzheimer\\_s](https://www.alz.org/blog/alz/october-2019/10_ways_to_help_a_family_living_with_alzheimer_s)

Individuals with Alzheimer's still have rights, and if you know someone who has Alzheimer's and has had their rights violated or has been discriminated against because of their disability, they can contact NMPASI. NMPASI is the CNMI designated organization that protects the civil, legal, and human rights of people with disabilities.

For more information on our programs and services, please contact NMPASI at our office numbers (670) 235-7273/4, text message (670) 287-0652, or visit our website at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).



By: **MAGGIE REYES**  
Program Aide

# WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY



By: **TIAVA TO'OMATA**  
Projects Specialist

At the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI), we provide legally-based advocacy to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. This means that the sources of our advocacy come directly from various enabling laws that outline the rights of individuals with disabilities. One of these laws that I recently came across and present on in a Web Accessibility Training is Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. This is a federal law that requires federal agencies and agencies who receive federal funding to develop, procure, maintain, and use information and communication technology

(ICT) that is accessible to individuals with disabilities. This is regardless of whether or not they work for the federal government: it must be accessible to all. To further elaborate: federal employees with disabilities should be able to access items such as office equipment (desktop, laptop, copier, faxing machines), take online trainings and webinars, even access the agency's internal website to get needed information. An individual with a disability applying for a federal government job and/or an individual with a disability using the agency's website must also be able to access these employment resources.

- Telephone, mobile phones, smart phones
- Content on DVDs and CDs
- Online Trainings and Webinars
- Technical Support Call Centers
- Remote Access Tools
- Software and Operating Systems
- Copiers, printers, fax machines



Ensuring accessibility for all is another step closer to a fully integrated, diverse society that is accepting of people's strengths and abilities. At NMPASI, advocating for these accessibility rights for individuals with disabilities who have been discriminated against on the basis of their disability is what we do.

For more information about Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, you can visit this website: <https://www.epa.gov> and for more information on NMPASI, you can visit our website: [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).

# EXPANDING OUR SERVICES



By: **GREG BORJA**  
Executive Director

This year, NMPASI received Public Health Work Force grant funding which has allowed us to hire staff members on the islands of Tinian and Rota. It is our goal to increase the access to our services to these traditionally underserved population by expanding our workforce to our neighboring islands. Please allow us to introduce our Intake Specialists.



**PAULINE MANGLONA**  
Intake Specialist-Rota

Born and raised on Guam, Pauline has been residing on Rota for the past five years. She is married to an “old fashioned” gentleman from Rota and they have two wonderful children. Pauline and her spouse enjoy spending family time with teaching their children our Chamorro culture after making the big decision to move transi-

tioning from their Guam lifestyle of strolling through the Micronesian Mall and watching at the Movie Theaters to a simple and safer lifestyle on Rota like going Hunting, Fishing, and raising livestock. Pauline’s eldest child was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) at an early age and later also diagnosed Gastrointestinal Disease. Being a proud parent of a child with a disability is the main reason that she became interested in working for NMPASI, as she wants to help other parents build up their confidence and speak up for their children with disabilities. When asked about work-

ing for the community of Rota, Pauline says, “Honestly, I want to assist and help [individuals with disabilities] within my community that aren’t able to speak up and want to be heard. I’m lending out my hand and especially my friendly smile to my community to trust me if they need someone to turn to. I want my community to know that NMPASI programs are here on Rota to assist them.”

Rota residents seeking NMPASI services may schedule an appointment to meet with Pauline by calling her at (670) 287-9943 or by email at [pman-glona@nmpasi.org](mailto:pman-glona@nmpasi.org).



**JENNIELYN CRUZ**  
Intake Specialist-Tinian

Born on Saipan and raised on Tinian, Jennielyn (Jen for short), is pursuing a degree in Early Childhood at Northern Marianas College. Jen counts cooking, listening to music, dancing, and singing as her hobbies along

with spending quality time with her two children and her Dudus Chihuahua, Paris. She values her family, friends, and her community. Having experiences in interacting with students with disabilities and a desire to help her community “in way or another” brought her to NMPASI. When asked about what interests her in working for NMPASI, Jen says, “my interest [in] working with NMPASI is protecting the rights of our people who have [problems with] accessibility around our community today and

knowing that I am capable of making a positive impact in anyone’s life.”

Tinian residents seeking NMPASI services may schedule an appointment with Jen by calling her at (670) 287-9937 or by email at [jcruz@nmpasi.org](mailto:jcruz@nmpasi.org).

# NDEAM and Reasonable Accommodations



By: **SHANIAH ALVAREZ**  
Client Advocate

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and it is the perfect time to enlighten the community about employment and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, and what that may look like. I just got back from a PABSS (Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security) Conference in Portland and on the last day, we touched on the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and reasonable accommodations. It is extremely important to note that an employer should never directly ask about a disability or medical exams that would lead to a person disclosing a disability during the application/hiring process. As long as a person with a disability can perform the

essential functions of a job with or without reasonable accommodations, that person is considered a qualified individual and shall not be overlooked due to disability or need for accommodations.

Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to job functions, work environments, policies or procedures, or “in the way things are customarily done” so that a qualified individual with a disability gets an equal employment opportunity (42 U.S.C. § 12111 (9); 29 C.F.R. § 1630.0; EEOC ADA Enforcement Guidance: Reasonable Accommodations and Undue Hardship under the ADA). This is not to get confused with providing the “best” or “ideal” accommodation; it only needs to be reasonable and effective. A reasonable accommodation should result in assistance in performing job functions and duties. It is a change or adjustment to the job or work environment that allows a person to partake in the job application process, perform the essential job functions, and enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment.

Some examples of reasonable accommodations may include:

- **Job restructuring.**
- **Modified work schedules, including leave.**
- **Reassignment to a vacant position.**
- **Providing an assistive technology (AT) device.**
- **Provision of qualified readers or interpreters.**

Some examples that are not reasonable accommodations may include:

- **Lowering legitimate quality and quantity requirements.**
- **Not complying with policies and procedures that are legitimate, non-discriminatory, and fundamental.**
- **Accommodations that cause undue hardship or are a direct threat to an organization/business such as altering a job or the organization, tolerating violent or abusive behavior, using alcohol or narcotics during working hours, etc.**

If you are an individual with a disability seeking to gain, maintain, or secure employment and have questions about your rights for employment, reasonable accommodations, or discrimination, please visit the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) office or contact us at 670-235-7273/4 for more information and help. We are your designated protection and advocacy organization in the CNMI and we are more than willing to help you understand your rights or provide services that you or someone you know may need.

# EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: AWARENESS AND LAW



By: **JEANNE RAYPHAND**  
Legal Counsel

As we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we recognize the important role that people with disabilities play in our economy and celebrate their contribution to our diverse and inclusive workforce.

Through the years, we have become more educated and informed about issues related to disability and employment. In 1945, the U.S. Congress declared the first week of October each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week. Then, in 1962, the word “physically” was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. And then some 25 years later, Congress expanded the week

to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Significant laws have been enacted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in the employment setting. Civil rights laws now protect persons from being discriminated against on the basis of their disability. Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against a qualified individual with a disability because of the disability in regard to employment

Prohibited discrimination includes “not making reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee,” unless to do so would cause undue hardship on the employer. 42 USC § 12112(b)(5). Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments “in the way things are customarily done that enable an individual with a disability to

enjoy equal employment opportunities.” For more information, see <https://www.eeoc.gov/enforcement-guidance-on-reasonable-accommodation>.

Other laws have been enacted to enforce those laws. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is a federal agency that was established by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to administer and enforce civil rights laws against workplace discrimination. Federal law has also established agencies for the protection and advocacy of persons with disabilities,

The Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) is a non-profit organization with the mission to protect the human, civil, and legal rights of individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and need assistance in protecting your civil rights, contact NMPASI at (670) 235-7273 (tel), (670) 235-7275 (fax), or [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org) (web).

NMPASI 2022 SERVICES (BY PROGRAMS)										
	CAP	PABSS	SPBSS	PAAT	PATBI	PAIR	PAIMI	PADD	TOTALS	
<b>1. INFORMATION &amp; REFERRALS</b>	3	5	0	1	2	75	11	32	129	
<b>2. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES</b>	8	11	5	6	5	8	38	12	93	
# People Reached	750	1373	690	696	690	965	3300	1420	9884	
<b>3. TRAINING ACTIVITIES</b>	6	5	2	7	0	6	5	13	44	
# People Trained	107	73	10	70	0	53	61	257	631	
<b>4. WEBSITE HITS</b>									210,765	
<b>5. INDIVIDUAL CASES</b>										
<b>Rights Defended</b>	Breach of Confidentiality	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	
	Education	0	0	0	0	0	1	14	15	
	Employment	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	6	
	Programs & Services	6	4	0	0	0	0	1	11	
	Abuse/Neglect	0	0	0	0	0	14	2	16	
	Government Benefits	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	19	
	Health Care	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	11	
	Insurance	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	
	Housing	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
	Financial Exploitation	0	0	9	0	0	0	1	11	
	Rights Violation	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	
	Architectural Access	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	
<b>TOTAL PEOPLE SERVED (1-5)</b>	6	5	9	0	1	21	24	35	101	
INDIVIDUAL CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS (BY PROGRAMS)										
CHARACTERISTICS	CAP	PABSS	SPBSS	PAAT	PATBI	PAIR	PAIMI	PADD	TOTALS	
<b>Age</b>	0-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	3 - 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
	Age 5-22	2	0	0	0	0	3	24	29	
	Age 23-59	4	5	8	0	1	12	18	55	
	60 +	0	0	0	0	0	9	3	15	
<b>Sex</b>	Male	5	4	1	0	1	14	15	62	
	Female	1	1	8	0	0	7	9	39	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Caucasian	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	8	
	Asian	1	1	1	0	0	5	11	24	
	Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Pacific Islanders	5	3	8	0	1	14	17	69	
<b>Disability</b>	ADD/ADHD	0	1	0	0	0	0	7	8	
	Autism	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	
	Blind	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	4	
	Cancer	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
	Cerebral Palsy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	Cognitive Impairment	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	
	Deaf	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
	Developmental Delay	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
	End Stage Renal Failure	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
	Environmental, Chemical Sensitivity	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
	Epilepsy, Seizure	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	Hard of Hearing	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
	Heart, Circulatory	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	1	
	Learning Disability	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	
	Mental Illness, SED, ODD	0	2	1	0	0	0	24	5	32
	Muscular/Skeletal Impairment	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	4
	Neurological, Org. Brain Syndrome	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
	Orthopedic Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	1	1
	Respiratory Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Speech Impairment	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
TBI	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Visual Impairment	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	
<b>Island</b>	Saipan	6	5	6	0	1	20	24	33	94
	Tinian	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	4
	Rota	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2

**Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy System, Inc**

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“To protect the civil, legal, and human rights of individuals with disabilities”