



The Link

A Community Mental Health Services of Livingston County Newsletter

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Executive Director's Note

The news is full of reports of plants closing, layoffs, rising employment, and State budget cuts. It makes sense that when the economy slows, tax revenues drop and something has to give. The State must balance its budget either by cutting services or raising taxes or some combination of both.

A six percent cut to Medicaid funded mental health and substance abuse services was announced by the Michigan Department of Community Health to be implemented June 1, 2007. After many years of cuts and flat funding, we have done all of the obvious things to cut costs without reducing services to consumers.

Fortunately, the State Legislature worked out a last minute deal which averted the need for the cut for the next four months. Letters, emails and phone calls to our Legislators let them know that protecting the mental health safety net was important. Many consumers got "thank yous" from their Legislators. Advocacy makes a difference.

The State Legislature will begin immediately working on the budget for the next fiscal year which begins October 1, 2007. They are facing the same problem all over again. Please continue to watch and make your opinion heard. Advocacy works!

~ Mac Miller



**Just Some of the Beautiful Art Work Entered in Our Affiliation Art Show
See Page 4 for More Information**

10th Annual Michigan Consumer Conference



“Energizing Our Hope: Together We Inspire”

July 26, 2007

Michigan State University Kellogg Center
55 South Harrison Road East Lansing, MI

8:30 am to 4:15 pm

This is the 10th annual event of an exciting opportunity for people who wish to network with other consumers. This conference has been created, organized and delivered by consumers who have a serious mental illness.

The planning committee, made up of consumers, has been working to provide a day filled with topics, activities and speakers that are relevant to the needs of consumers.

The fee for the conference is \$30 and the registration deadline is July 18, 2007. For questions about the conference, which is sponsored by the Michigan Department of Community Health, please contact Teri Baker at 517-241-5066.

The keynote speaker is Frances S. Priestler, who will be speaking on “Hope is for Everyone.” Frances will be speaking from her own experience, which includes graduating from law school and then having a diagnosis of mental illness prior to being able to begin her practice. She inspires others to master their own lives. Her special interest is helping consumers find employment, as she understands the hard core reality of homelessness from her own life. She has an outstanding ability to connect with consumers. Focusing on strengths and abilities, she believes in hope for everyone.

You can also contact Leslie Hall at 546-4126 for additional information.

Adapted from MDCH Brochure

Walk a Mile

The annual Walk a Mile in My Shoes Rally was held on May 24, 2007, on the steps of the Capitol. This event drew approximately one thousand consumers from across the state. The intent of the rally is to ensure that legislators and the public are aware of the impact of mental illness.

This year, a cloth map of the State of Michigan was available for each consumer to either sign or put a



thumbprint on as recognition of their participation. This cloth ‘map’ will then be displayed throughout the state at different CMH’s.

Ten members from Genesis House, Livingston County’s Clubhouse, attended. Claudia, a member of Genesis House and Livingston County’s representative, presented this statement on the steps of the Capitol:

My name is Claudia Gillenwater. I live in Livingston County and I have struggled with mental illness for 30 years. I am very concerned that the proposed reduction to Medicaid will affect the services that have helped me so much. The services that I receive from CMH and especially the Clubhouse are the best that I have experienced in my 30 year struggle. It has helped to stabilize my disease. I am happier, healthier and more accepted by my community.

Walk a mile in my shoes.



Look at all the CMH’s represented!



Donna C. and Claudia G.



Genesis House members who attended.

Spotlight On... “Extraordinary Women”

Our own Tiffany Kline, age 15, was recently front-page news in the Livingston Daily Press & Argus May 13, 2007 edition. The paper is running a series featuring Livingston County’s “Extraordinary Women”, and an article about Tiffany and her many successes was the first of this series. For those of you who don’t know Tiffany, she is a remarkable young woman and advocate who has overcome many barriers in her life.



Photo by Alan Ward/Daily Press & Argus

For example, Tiffany’s biological mother was abusive and neglectful; Tiffany, however, has found, through therapy and the support of her adoptive family, inner peace and forgiveness for the actions her biological mom took against her. More importantly, she no longer identifies herself with stigmatizing or negative labels; instead, she empowers herself by taking care of herself. Part of taking care of herself is talking about her history and where she is now, and another part is being with the animals she loves. Tiffany loves pets of all kinds especially horses and hopes to be a veterinarian! Tiffany is an inspiration and we congratulate her on her well-earned success!!!



Photo by Alan Ward/Daily Press & Argus

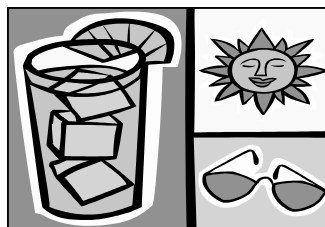
“It doesn’t matter how strong your opinions are. If you don’t use your power for positive change, you are indeed part of the problem.”

~ Coretta Scott King

Summer Sun Tips

With the summer here it is important to remember how to stay healthy while still enjoying the sun & warmer weather. Here are some tips you may find helpful:

- 1) Limit your time in the sun. Your medication may cause you to be more sensitive to the sun’s ultraviolet rays & result in causing you to become sun-burned more easily.
- 2) Stay in the shade and drink plenty of water. Water is the key ingredient for keeping you cool. Remember to drink even when you aren’t thirsty.
- 3) Be sure to use an SPF 15 sunscreen or higher to protect you from the sun.
- 4) Wear light clothing and sunglasses.
- 5) Limit strenuous exercise. When you do exercise, drink 2-4 glasses of water each hour & take regular breaks in the shade.
- 6) Avoid caffeinated or carbonated beverages as well as alcoholic drinks & those high in sugar. They cause you to lose more body fluids.
- 7) Be extra cautious when in the direct sun or when it is very hot, especially if you have diabetes, high blood pressure or other medical conditions.
- 8) Be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion which include the following:
 - * Cool, moist, pale skin (may appear red after physical activity)
 - * Headache
 - * Dizziness & weakness or exhaustion
 - * Nausea and/or vomiting
 - * Rapid, weak pulse
 - * Rapid, shallow breathing



Don’t get burned this summer!

*Play it safe
and
enjoy the summer!*



News from Around The Affiliation

Livingston County: Art Show By Leslie Hall, Customer Services

Livingston County Community Mental Health was proud to participate in the first ever Community Mental Health Partnership of Southeastern Michigan Art Show. The theme was the Art of Recovery. This juried art show was held at St Luke's Church in Ann Arbor, MI. Livingston County had twenty-nine artists who participated! Jerry Hernandez won an Honorable Mention for his piece "Falling Through the Cracks." A variety of media was represented ranging from oils and sketches to the art of needlework in embroidery and sewing. One of the three dimensional works was a series of created books that bore both images and messages.

One of the artists, Laura, submitted a portrait of a young woman. Laura, who is 16 years old, has been an artist and won an award in the fall of 2006 for her work about the Wrap A Round Program entitled, "Out of the Box". Laura describes her experience with this event as follows: "I thought it was an interesting collection of different art. I really liked that all people could submit their own creative outlet."

Another participating artist, Angela, age 17, submitted her work and attended the event. "I thought a lot of the art was really impressive. There were some really skilled artists there. I wanted to purchase one of the artworks!" Angela began taking photographs three years ago; the artwork that she submitted was a series of photographs. Prior to photography, she enjoyed drawing and still does. However, she prefers taking photographs. "I appreciate my worker, Deirdre, who told me about the event and encouraged me to do it!" Angela's work will be on display at the Sharing Hope Conference on October 25, 2007!

Washtenaw County: Third Annual "Walk A Mile In My Shoes Rally" Brings Crowds To Lansing by Donna Orrin, Customer Services

Over 1,500 courageous individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities from around Michigan came to the State Capitol Building in recognition of May is Mental Health Awareness Month on Thursday, May 24. A strong sense of camaraderie was felt as hundreds of people donned special T-shirts, visually expressing their message: "Walk a Mile in My Shoes." Banners representing counties filled the Capitol steps as people stepped up and delivered their statement for the day. Julius Saunders, representing Washtenaw County, "felt proud to hold up the banner and speak to the legislators." Advocates also were videotaped to capture more about their concerns and beliefs. The final copy will be sent to all of the counties.

Senator Liz Brazer gave a speech to hundreds of individuals, grateful for her support of parity (equality between mental health and physical health care coverage). Other legislators were there for the Rally to learn how they can promote mental health and wellness. Participants signed their names or stamped their thumb prints on a huge map of Michigan, showing which county they were from. The walk was designed to help put an end to the stigma and discrimination related to mental illness and developmental disabilities. The Rally raised awareness about the importance of mental health and mental health services among the public and policy makers. It was co-hosted by the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards, Mental Health Association of Michigan, Michigan Association of Clubhouses, National Alliance on Mental Illness and Justice in Mental Health Organization.

News Around The Affiliation (continued)

Monroe County: Certified Peer Support Specialists

By Chris Andreae & Britney Crawford, Certified Peer Support Specialists



Michigan is one of several states in the country that have adopted a common sense recovery based model that recovery is not only possible, but expected. This concept started several years ago with the Georgia Peer Specialist Certification Project in 2001. The Certification process entails 40 hours of intensive training. Topics covered are Advanced Directives, WRAP (Wellness, Recovery, Action, Plans), disabling power of mental illness, negative program environments, creating program environments that promote recovery, diagnosis on one's self image, using recovery stories, combating negative self talk, facing one's fears, problem solving and conflict resolution. After the training was complete, we both took the State Certification Test in September 2006 and passed.

We are working in the second year of a two year grant as Certified Peer Support Specialists. Peer support is social and emotional support (frequently coupled with instrumental support,) which is mutually offered or provided by consumers to consumers to bring about a desired social or personal change. Gartner and Riessman (1982), Mead, Hilton and Curtis (2001) have further elaborated that peer support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on the key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful through the process of offering support, companionship, empathy, sharing, assistance, feelings of loneliness, rejection, discrimination and frustration frequently encountered by persons who have a severe psychiatric disorder. (Stroll, 1993.)

Recovery means life does not end when you receive a mental health diagnosis, nor does it mean you have to be an endless consumer: when an individual is maintained by their illness. By hiring peers to support this program, by the nature of what they have been through and what they can share with others, consumers and staff alike can have hope and feel the understanding that someone else has been through the same thing that they are going through and things will get better. There is a team process where recovery is expected.

Our roles as Certified Peer Support Specialists work in tandem with Adult MI Case Managers in the Department. We assist with everything from housing and benefit assistance to the PCP process and are certified to do everything in the traditional sense, except assessments. We are looking forward to expanding our roles to include WRAP Facilitation and Advanced Directives. We look forward to working with the Continuous Supports Model that the Affiliation is adopting. We enjoy working with different consumers on a daily basis.



Need Medication Refills?



For a variety of reasons, people need to call and request refills of their medication. The nursing staff receives numerous calls of this nature every day. Effective July 9, 2007, there will be a change in how to request refills. If you call CMH for this purpose, your call will be routed to our new "Refill Request Line." Messages will be taken off the phone daily and processed by the afternoon of the next business day if there are no problems with the request.

Please keep the following in mind when requesting a refill:

- 1) **Be aware** of when your medication is running out so you can call to request your refill several days ahead.
- 2) Often, people drop their prescriptions off at the pharmacy after a prior med clinic appointment. The pharmacist places those prescriptions on file. Even if your bottle says "no refill" **call your pharmacy first to ask if you have refills available.**
- 3) **Refill requests for persons who miss their med clinic appointments will be reviewed** on a case by case basis and are subject to the approval of the prescriber.
- 4) Please **call ahead for medication samples** so a time can be arranged for pickup. If you are requesting to pick up **sample medication**, remember they **cannot be dispensed if a physician is not on site.**
- 5) If you leave a message, please **provide specific information**, including your name, the medication you need, the pharmacy you use and a phone number where you may be reached if there are questions or problems with your request.
- 6) After leaving a request, you can **contact your pharmacy the next business day to inquire** if your medication is available for pick-up.

The medical staff realizes this is a change from our current practice. We will continue to be available by phone for other issues. Thank you for your cooperation in making this a success.

Upcoming Events: Recovery Group

What is the Recovery Group?

This is a group focused on recovery, learning the techniques to change how you think about your life, using strengths and support to keep motivation and meet your goals. The text used is the *Traveler's Gift* by Andy Andrews. We will use a workbook especially written for the textbook.

When: Wednesdays starting June 20th from 3:30 pm to 5 pm

Duration: 24 weeks

Where: Sunshine Education Ctr. in the Maplewood Building at: 3760 Cleary Drive, Howell

Contact: Monica Wines or June McGregor at the Main Office 546-4126 or Jaime Mozden at Genesis 223-1393



** Please RSVP to Monica, June or Jaime so that we can have an adequate supply of materials available.

When you call Community Mental Health, who do you talk to first?

Introducing... the Front Support Staff

On any given day, three to five hundred consumers contact Community Mental Health and speak to our front office staff. The staff, who have a total of **sixty-three** combined years of experience among them, all focus on the enjoyment they get from helping people. This article is meant to introduce each of them to those of you who've probably spoken to them on numerous occasions!

Biggest question: Isn't it really 'customer helping' rather than customer service? And wouldn't you deliver better service if you thought of that way?
 ~ Jeffrey Gitomer

The senior member of the staff, Lisa, has been at the agency 8 years. "Consumers are the favorite part of my job", she says (while answering the phone!). Lisa enjoys reality TV shows. In addition to her other duties, Lisa serves a critical function, as does Candy, in the production of this newsletter!

Candy, unlike Lisa, watches NO TV and says, "Every minute here there's something different—I like that and I like the consumers!"

Candy loves to bake and has a family interest in CMH: both her husband and daughter work here. Candy also loves to read—A LOT!

Two of our support staff have reasons to celebrate: Dawn B. just got married—we send her our best wishes. Dawn was instrumental in assisting in the recent Art for Recovery exhibit. Dawn's favorite job is working with consumers, particularly consumers in the Older Adult Program.

Mora also has reason to celebrate—with four children and NINE grandchildren! She loves to quilt and has been at the agency since 1997.

Dawn L. has been here 12 years, and says, "I enjoy the fast pace here and the variety of the job duties." Dawn is a fan of the Detroit Tigers and loves golf—summer is her time of year.

Penny is not a current member of our team but is an alumnus and a person with whom many consumers connect. Penny currently works in Access and Intake, and says, "I like being able to make a difference by ensuring people get the services or referrals they need." Penny knits and gardens and loves her pug, Chester.

Our support staff are always ready to help you at Community Mental Health!



Introducing Your Front Support Staff...
 Pictured from left to right:
 Penny, Dawn L., Lisa, Dawn B., Mora and Candy



Customer Service Representative:
 Leslie Hall

Even though Leslie is not a part of the Front Support Staff she is always ready to talk to you about your needs and concerns.

Looking for a Support Group?



Customer Services is currently determining if there is a need for a support group for girls ages 12 to 15. If you are a parent of a youth who would benefit from being in a support group, or if you have questions, please call Leslie Hall, Customer Service Representative, at 517-546-4126 and let her know!

CMHSLC
2280 E. Grand River Ave.
Howell, MI 48843

Phone: 517-546-4126
Toll Free: 800-615-1245
Fax: 517-546-1300

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www.cmhliv.org

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New Providers for Livingston County

Day Break—Gerontology Network

4650 W. US 223, Suite A
Adrian, MI 49221

Phone: (517) 266-2588

Agency Purpose: Provides support and adult day services to adults with developmental disabilities or mental illnesses.

Livingston County Catholic Social Services

2020 E. Grand River, Suite 104
Howell, MI 48843

Phone: (517) 545-5944

Agency Purpose: Provides counseling services at their agency for children with SED, adults with MI and people with co-occurring disorders.