



The Link

A Community Mental Health Services of Livingston County Newsletter

Volume 2 • Issue 4

September 2007

Executive Director's Note

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I hope each of you are enjoying the rest of your summer. By the time this edition of our newsletter goes to press, we will be in early September and winding up for another year of activities! I've received a number of requests for budget updates and would like to provide you with the information that I have:

- ◆ We were able to avoid a proposed 6% budget cut. This was accomplished by the legislature using a one-time only solution to Michigan's budget crisis. It is not a long term solution to budget problems facing Community Mental Health agencies by any means.
- ◆ The State of Michigan is facing a serious shortfall of funds. The only way to remedy this situation is to either increase revenues or to cut funding, or both. Thus far, the State has not taken action.
- ◆ One very strong note of optimism remains: the Governor has recommended that rates for Medicaid reimbursement increase. Should the Legislature adopt this approach, CMH's will be in a much better position than they are currently.



As always, **action from consumers makes a difference**. I encourage you to *express your views*, whatever they may be, *to your elected representatives*. If you are unsure of who they are, or are in need of assistance, please contact Customer Services at 517-546-4126.

~ Mac Miller



Psychiatrist Change

Dr. Wittekindt, psychiatrist for children and families, will be leaving Livingston County Community Mental Health on August 15, 2007. We appreciate Dr. Wittekindt's years of service and will do our best to ensure a smooth transition for those of you who are currently seeing him.

Our new psychiatrist, Dr. Andreas Sidiropoulos, will be seeing children and families beginning Tuesday, August 21, 2007. Dr. Sidiropoulos is a University of Michigan graduate and we are looking forward to having each of you meet him.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your case manager, therapist or Customer Service at: (517) 546-4126

Upcoming Events: Sharing Hope Conference

SAVE THE DATE!

It may seem early, but mark your calendars for the annual Sharing Hope Conference on October 25, 2007 in Ypsilanti, Michigan. This conference is organized by and for consumers to celebrate recovery and recognize the challenges and struggles faced by people with mental illness and developmental disabilities.

This year, the events include, as always, workshops - and the special entertainment this year is a talent show (read the article below to find out how you can participate)! This is a day long event and meals are provided.

For more information regarding times, etc, please call Customer Service at 517-546-4126.

GOT TALENT?

The Sharing Hope Conference planning committee is in the process of organizing a number of events, one of which is a talent show featuring consumers.

Each CMH in our affiliation is invited to have three 15 minute talent acts to be performed on October 25, 2007.

Please contact Leslie, Customer Service Representative, at (517) 546-4126 by August 30, 2007 if you are interested in participating.

Remember we can only have **3 entries** so call Leslie ASAP!



Let your 'star' shine through!

What is a Co-Occurring Disorder?

Stigma and Discrimination

The stigma associated with addiction is one of the greatest challenges to recovery. Each year only 10 percent of Americans who need alcohol and drug treatment get the help they need. Yet with treatment and support, people with addiction can lead productive lives.

A *Co-Occurring Disorder* refers to a person who has *one or more substance abuse disorders and one or more psychiatric disorders at the same time*. In conservative estimates, 40-60% of people with a mental health issue also have a substance use disorder. Both mental health and addiction issues are chronic disease - - just like diabetes and asthma. As a result, they can also be managed with

good treatment, just like other chronic illnesses. Often people don't realize how effective treatment for addiction can be.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), treatment reduces alcohol and drug use by 40-60%. It also reduces criminal activity during and after treatment as well as HIV infection rates. Treatment can improve the prospects for employment, with increase in jobs by 40% after treatment. Like with any chronic disease, people in recovery often require monitoring and support to maintain their treatment gains.

Treatment of addiction is as successful as treatment of other chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma.

~ National Institute on Drug Abuse NIDA

Peer Advocates in Training

Two of CMH's peer advocates (Mark Gibney and Stephanie Miller) went through the extensive DCH training and certification process for Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) this spring. It involved a week-long training with the Appalachian Consulting Group (a mental health recovery training program), several additional day-long modules with DCH, training with their supervisors and a lengthy essay certification exam on 5/31/07. Congratulations to Mark and Stephanie for their hard work both to earn this certification and to help others on their recovery journeys every day! As of the printing of this edition, our other peer advocate, Greg McIvor, is also in the process of earning his CPSS. Greg was very active in Oakland County for years before moving to Livingston County to share his knowledge with us!



Welcome New Staff!

We'd like to take this moment to introduce some of our new staff to you. Welcome to each one!

Donna Coleman will be working on Tuesday nights as a support staff.

Gabrielle Guglielmotti, MSW, is our new Supports Coordinator in the Community Supported Living Program.

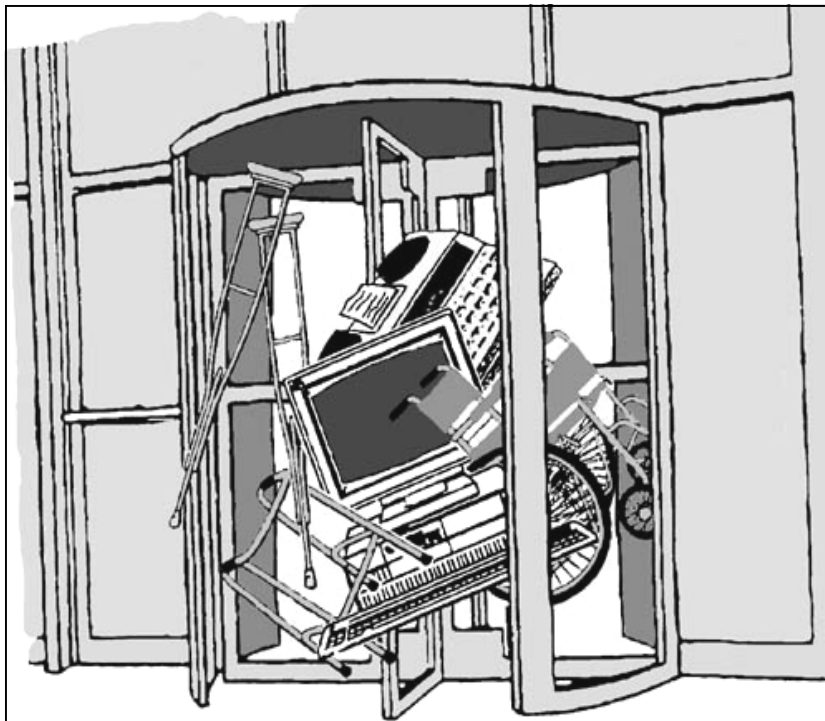
Debbie Martin, LMSW, is our new Wraparound Prevention Facilitator for the Family Partner Program.

Jewel McGowan, LPC, is our new Contractual Outpatient Therapist for Children.

Eileen McHenry, LMSW, is our new Intake Clinician.

Jason Newberry, LMSW, is our new Access Clinician and Jail Liaison.

NEW Assistive Technology Exchange Website!



Find what you need. Sell or donate what you don't.

What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology-or AT, for short, is any item, product, system, or equipment that improves life for people with disabilities. AT includes everything from walkers, "reachers", grab bars, and hospital beds, to power scooters, custom vans, Braille machines, and software that reads computer screens out loud.

~ Do you have a used AT item in storage that could help someone with a disability?

~ Would you like to sell-or give-the item to someone who will truly benefit from it?

~ Do you need a certain AT item to improve your daily life? Would you like to find it a bargain price?

What is the ATXchange.org?

ATXchange.org is a nonprofit, Michigan-based web site where *anyone* can buy, sell, or donate used assistive technology. Designed to help people with disabilities get the tools they need. Visit this classified-ad website at: www.ATXchange.org.

No computer access? - If you don't have a personal computer handy-or Internet access-simply visit the ATXchange.org website through your public library or contact your case manager for help.

ATXchange.org is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Questions? - Find answers in the FAQ's online at ATXchange.org. Or, contact Michigan Disability Rights Coalition toll free at (800) 760-4600. Or, e-mail us at ATX@prosynergy.org.

"With Liberty and Access for All"

Ask A Team Member

Each month we will a space where questions can be submitted for Team members within the agency to answer. This month, the questions was:

"What do I do if I disagree with my diagnosis?"

Kerrie Opal, LMSW, answers the question:

"It is very important to have a discussion about your concerns with your psychiatrist and/or treatment team. Ask for clarification and information about your diagnosis."

If you have a question you'd like answered, please contact your Customer Service representative at 517-546-4126



One Family's Story: Learning How to Advocate

Bill Schiesel has been receiving Community Mental Health Services for the past seven years, and lives in the Briarwood Group Home. Bill enjoys basketball and he also enjoys doing recycling at the ARC of Livingston, an organization that advocates on behalf of persons with disabilities. Bill is a person who is also autistic. His mother, Vicki, has been a strong advocate for her family and would like to share with other families some of the techniques she's learned over the years - some the easy way, some the hard way.



Vicki with her son Bill.

Vicki shares, firstly, her gratitude that she has a close and involved family. Her husband is very involved, as is Bill's brother, Steve. She stresses that even though the family involvement is key, the connection with Community Mental Health is critical. Her son's supports coordinator, Chris Fisher, works hard on behalf of her family and she provides clear information to Chris about how best to communicate with her son regarding his hopes and concerns, as well as the hopes and concerns of the family.



"It's important for families to educate themselves about what's out there in terms of resources," Vicki says. "Unfortunately, until you have a problem you often don't know that the help is actually there." It's best for parents to familiarize themselves with community services and with Community Mental Health rather than wait for a referral - and Vicki acknowledges how difficult that is.

Vicki shares that her family's difficulties became apparent during his attendance at Pathway School - and it was only at that time that she realized that services, such as respite, were available to her son. She encourages all families to be pro-active, and to ask questions. "Don't wait!" Vicki encourages; ask questions!

"Asking the ARC of Livingston to facilitate a person-centered planning meeting was a great experience. If you choose to do that, make sure that you spend time before the meeting thinking about what's in your family's best interest! Caregivers and guardians need to be strong advocates."

Lastly, Vicki encourages families to 'get involved'. "I was involved with my son who does not have a disability, just as I'm involved with Bill. With Bill, we all go to Special Olympics, the ARC, and Community Mental Health. Get involved with other parents, too - first of all, that's support for you and your family. Providing support to a loved one is an extremely hard job. When you talk to others, you may hear of activities or doctors that you may not know of. If you can get involved with any group it gives you a little relief, where people understand what you're all going through."

"Don't wait!"

Be proactive, ask questions!

"Caregivers and guardians need to be strong advocates."

~ Vicki Schiesel

For additional information on support for your family, please call Customer Services at: 517-546-4126.

Helping Keep Families Together: CMH Pilot Program

Livingston County Community Mental Health is part of a pilot program with Clinton Eaton Ingham Community Mental Health that is designed to strengthen families who have adopted children. The two pilot sites will provide a model of collaboration between the mental health system and child welfare services that can be duplicated around the state. Matt Vergith, Program Director for Child and Adolescent Services and Mac Miller, Executive Director of Livingston County Community Mental Health, have been instrumental in developing this approach.

In the past, if a child was adopted from the state, resources that would assist the child, such as outpatient

therapy were reimbursed by the state. Many of these children have intense mental health needs, and families would be in the position of finding a therapist in the community capable of meeting those needs. Often this approach was ineffective, and the families eventually, after years of frustration, came to Community Mental Health for the intensive services that their children needed.

This effort will reverse that approach. Community Mental Health will be the designated point of entry for mental health services, providing initial assessments for these families. Based on the assessment, the family will access Community Mental Health services if that is what they need. The State of Michigan is hoping that by identifying CMH early as the service provider, families will be able to get the support they need quickly and thus be kept together. This new approach is expected to begin in the Fall of 2007. More information will be provided in upcoming newsletters as the details become available.



Family And Community Training Series

FACTS is an educational group that provides support to families with loved ones who are mentally ill. While the focus of this group is on the families' issues, mentally ill family members are also welcome to attend. There are six (6) weekly sessions that will offer various topics and presenters with plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion. Any family member or friend is welcome to attend! Sponsored by CMH, this informal group is offered to you at no cost, with light refreshments provided. As always, confidentiality will be respected.

Starts: Tuesdays, September 4, 2007 for six (6) weekly sessions

Time: 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm

Location: CMH Main Building Boardroom

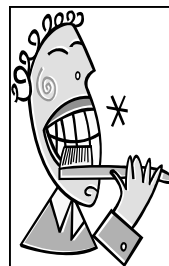
Contact: Mike Wines, Kerrie Opal, Mary Leitkam at (517) 546-4126

Affordable Dental Care Comes To Livingston County!

Livingston County is pleased to offer the U.S. Dental Care Access Card in an *exclusive* offer to all county residents regardless of age, income or personal health.

COST: \$62/year or \$6.50/month
Cash is not accepted.

BENEFITS: All household members are covered with *one membership*. Members receive up to a **30% discount** on a comprehensive list of dental procedures, including annual oral exams, cleanings, x-rays, fillings, crowns and orthodontics.



Open Wide!

PROVIDERS: Members must choose a dentist from the DenteMax network. (A search of zip code 48843 produced at least fifteen (15) dentists in the Livingston County area).

MORE INFORMATION: Visit the Livingston County Health Department at www.lchd.org or call DenteMax toll free at 888-780-8988 for an application.

Resources You May Need

FOOD

Commodity Distribution (OLHSA) ~ 517-546-8500
 Department of Human Services (Food Stamps) ~ 517-548-0200
 Family Impact Center (Fowlerville) ~ 517-223-4428
 Gleaners Food Bank (Low Income) ~ 866-GLEANER ext 335
 Hidden Springs Church (Latson Rd., Howell) ~ 517-546-3577

RENT/HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Department of Human Services ~ 517-548-0200
 Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly Section 8) ~ 517-548-9611
 OLHSA ~ 517-546-8500
 Salvation Army ~ 517-546-4750

EMERGENCY HOUSING

American Red Cross ~ 517-546-0326
 Salvation Army ~ 517-546-4750
 The Connection (Runaway & Homeless Youth Services)
 Livingston Family Center ~ 866-440-SAFE (7233) * 24/7 *

CLOTHING/HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Brighton Church of Christ ~ 810-229-7051
 LOVE INC (Clearinghouse) ~ 810-494-4056
 Pregnancy Helpline (maternity & baby clothing)
 ~ 810-494-5433
 Reachout Oakgrove ~ 517-546-3942
 Salvation Army Store ~ 517-552-9278
 Shalom Lutheran Church (Pinckney) ~ 734-878-6859
 Williamston United Methodist Church ~ 517-655-2430

TRANSPORTATION

Livingston Co Essential Transportation (LETS) ~ 517-546-6600



ADVOCACY/SUPPORT

ARC of Livingston ~ 517-546-1228
 Alzheimer Association (MI Great Lakes Chapter) ~ 800-272-3900
 Emmaus Ministries (Bereavement Support) ~ 517-546-4440
 Livingston Area Council Against Spouse Abuse (LACASA)
 24 Hour Domestic Violence Crisis Line ~ 810-227-7100
 24 Hour Sexual Assault Crisis Line ~ 517-548-4228
 24 Hour Shelter Line ~ 517-548-1352
 24 Hour Crisis Line Toll Free ~ 866-522-2725
 Livingston Family Center ~ 810-231-9591
 Livingston Parent Resource Center ~ 517-548-0030
 Mental Health Association in Michigan ~ 248-647-1711
 Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards
 (MACMHB) ~ 517-374-6848
 Michigan Disability Rights Coalition ~ 800-760-4600
 Michigan Relay Center (MRC) ~ 800-649-3777 or 711
 National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
 Livingston County Chapter ~ 810-231-6011
 Parents Without Partners (Livingston County) ~ 810-231-9947
 Visually Impaired & Blind in Livingston (VIABIL)~810-231-1277
 Women's Resource Center of Livingston County ~ 517-548-2200

HEALTH SERVICES

Children's Hospital Developmental Dentistry ~ 313-745-5551
 Hope Dental Clinic ~ 734-480-9575
 Hope Medical Clinic ~ 734-481-0111
 Integrated Medical, PC (Dr. Floyd) ~ 517-546-4000
 Livingston County Health Department ~ 517-546-9850
 Livingston Community Hospice ~ 517-545-6161
 Partnership for Prescription Assistance (MI) ~ 888-477-2669
 Pregnancy Helpline ~ 810-494-5433 (24 Hour Line)
 St. Joseph Mercy Livingston Hospital ~ 517-545-6000
 St. Joseph Mercy Health Line ~ 800-231-2211
 (Ask A Nurse M-F 5pm to 9 am, 24 hrs weekends/holidays)
 St. Luke Hometown Healthcare ~ 810-623-8182
 University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry ~ 313-494-6700
 University of Michigan School of Dentistry ~ 888-707-2500
 Whitmore Lake Health Clinic ~ 734-449-2033

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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Howell, MI



Check Out Our Website at:

www.cmhliv.org

Affix Label Here

New Providers for Livingston County

Wendy Lafontaine—Registered Dietician

Effective Date: September 2007

Agency Purpose: Provides diet and nutritional evaluations; treatment planning; as well as diet and nutrition services to adults and children with developmental disabilities; children with serious emotional impairment; adults and older adults with mental illnesses; and individuals with co-occurring disorders.

