



Pennsylvania Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition
Opening Doors for Older Pennsylvanians

News You Can Use...

January 2015

Emergency Readiness for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

During extreme weather conditions, such as winter's snow and ice, it is important to consider how older adults and people with disabilities can ensure they have the resources they need. The Administration for Community Living has posted tips on helping these individuals prepare for a natural disaster or extreme weather conditions, which can occur at any time and with little warning. The plan includes involving the community in meeting the individual's needs, creating an emergency medical kit, and ensuring service animals and pets are included in the plan. To read more, click here: http://www.acl.gov/NewsRoom/blog/2014/2014_09_25.aspx.

For more information on emergency preparedness plans for individuals, service providers, and communities, please visit the Emergency Preparedness webpage at http://www.acl.gov/Get_Help/Preparedness/index.aspx.

Analysis Shows Widespread Discrepancies in Staffing Levels Reported by Nursing Homes

A report by the Center for Public Integrity shows that the self-reported data from nursing homes conflicts with their official Medicare reports. The report found that, "in 2012 more than 700 facilities... had daily care levels that were lower than the levels required by the states, after applying the cost report analysis." While the Affordable Care Act included a plan for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to implement a more accurate recording process by 2012, the CMS were unable to meet the deadline, and as of this article's publication the new system was still incomplete. Click here to read the full article: <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/11/12/16246/analysis-shows-widespread-discrepancies-staffing-levels-reported-nursing-homes>.



Parkinson's/RLS Medication Affecting Increase in Problem Gambling, A Gambling Webinar Session

The Office of Problem Gambling Treatment and Prevention in the Iowa Department of Public Health is offering a new webinar examining the medications used to treat Parkinson's Disease and restless leg syndrome (RLS) which can cause problem gambling and other compulsive behaviors. The webinar will take place on April 8, 2015, from 1:00 – 2:30 EST (please note the registration page lists the times in the Central Time Zone). Registration is required by April 1, 2015. To learn more, register, and view a list of other webinar topics, please visit <https://www.trainingresources.org/>.

Balance in Older Adults May Improve with Hearing Aids

A small study from the Washington University School of Medicine shows that older adults with balance difficulties may show improvement when using a hearing aid. This is the first study to show that sound, and not just balance, helps to provide postural stability. Timothy E. Hullar, senior author of the study, explains, "The participants appeared to be using the sound information coming through their hearing aids as auditory reference points or landmarks to help maintain balance." The study also showed that those who had more difficulty maintaining stability also saw the greatest improvement with a hearing aid. To read the full article, please visit <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/287180.php>.

First Annual Pennsylvania Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Forum Report

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging has released the 1st Annual Pennsylvania Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Forum Report. This report summarizes the September forum, including recommendations, agenda, proposed action steps, the keynote PowerPoint presentation, and contact information for attendees. To view the full report, click here:

<http://www.olderpa.org/Resources/Documents/2014%20ADRD%20Forum%20Report.pdf>.

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging Launches New Website

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging's website is now at <http://www.aging.pa.gov/>. This new website aims to allow users to find information more easily, be more accessible from mobile devices, and offer enhanced search options. While the old link will remain active for two years and forward users to the new website, please make sure to update the website address on all current and future resource materials. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions for the new website, please email ra-aiwebsite@pa.gov.



Parity or Disparity: The State of Mental Health in America

Mental Health America has compiled a report from several resources on the mental health needs and resource accessibility in the United States. The goals of this report were, "to identify a common set of data indicators for mental health that would give us a more complete picture of mental health status in America," and "establish a baseline from which we could document the successes and failures of both federal and state initiatives aimed at improving mental health status" after the implementation of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Data was collected on prevalence of mental illness by state, insurance, access to care, and quality of access. The data includes an overall look of the country by state, plus breakdowns of data for children/youth and adults. The full report can be viewed at: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/sites/default/files/Parity%20or%20Disparity%20015%20Report.pdf>.

Boomer Generation Triggers 'Silver Tsunami' of Depression

As the Baby Boomer generation ages, their physical and mental health will require extra care. However, due to the size of this generation, extra resources are needed to meet everyone's needs. "By 2030, there will be as many as 14 million American seniors with mental health or substance abuse disorders, up from 5 million to 8 million today... Depressive disorders, along with dementia-related behavioral and psychiatric symptoms, are the most common maladies facing that group." Depression can be recurring from one's youth, or an older adult can experience depression for the first time after life changes such as death of a loved one, illness, or loss of ability. Despite these factors, depression is not a normal part of aging and must be considered a treatable condition. For more information on depression in this generation and how it can be addressed: https://www.dailyherald.com/article/20141213/entlife/141219598/?utm_source.

Combining Benzodiazepines with Other Substances Raises Risks

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released a report analyzing emergency room visits involving benzodiazepines, a class of drugs commonly used to treat anxiety or seizure conditions. The study showed that "32 percent of hospital emergency department visits involving benzodiazepines resulted in serious medical outcomes such as hospitalization (or in rare cases death)." The rate is even higher in cases involving opioids or alcohol. The report suggests further educating prescribers and patients on the risks of combining benzodiazepines with these substances. To read the summary and access a link to the full survey, please visit <http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/201412181000>.



Coalition News

Upcoming In-Person Trainings from the Coalition

- Free Webinars
 - [1/21/15 Traumatic Brain Injury and Neurodegenerative Disorders](#)
 - 1/29/15 Social Security Disability and Medicare: Helping Yourself and Others Navigate the Process
 - [2/4/15 Understanding Hoarding Behaviors in Older Adults](#)
 - [2/18/15 Psychiatric Issues of Dementia](#)
 - 2/26/15 Trauma Informed Care for Older Adults: Understanding Trauma and the Healing Process
- Aging, Mental Health, and Chronic Illness
 - [4/22/15 Westmoreland County](#)
 - [5/13/15 Lackawanna County](#)
 - [6/17/15 Clarion County](#)
 - [9/30/15 Dauphin County](#)
 - [10/28/15 Centre County](#)
 - [11/4/15 Montgomery County](#)
- Senior Bullying Seminar
 - [3/18/15 Centre County](#)
 - [4/29/15 Allegheny County](#)
 - [5/20/15 Crawford County](#)
 - [6/2/15 Lackawanna County](#)
- Mental Health First Aid
 - [4/28/15 Centre County](#)
- A Simulation of Hearing Distressing Voices
 - [3/4/15 Montgomery County](#)
 - [3/26/15 Warren County](#)
 - [4/21/15 Allegheny County](#)
 - [5/6/15 Blair County](#)
- Medicare/Medicaid Basics for Mental Health Professionals
 - [3/4/15 Montgomery County](#)
 - [3/26/15 Warren County](#)
 - [5/6/15 Blair County](#)



Did You Know? Customized Behavioral Health and Aging Training is Available

Below is a link to the training topics we currently offer through the Coalition. We can come to your site and offer the trainings, or we also have regular training opportunities available that you will receive notice about as a member of the Coalition.

<http://www.olderpa.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1080869>

Sponsorship Available

The Coalition provides training opportunities to more than 1000 participants each year. We now offer the opportunity to sponsor Coalition trainings, providing your organization access to individuals in the behavioral health and aging fields. Contact Rebecca May-Cole (Rebecca@olderpa.org) or 717-541-4219 ext. 106 for more information.

Donate Now!

Help support the work of the Coalition! Join us in improving the behavioral health of older Pennsylvanians by [donating](#) to PBHAC. Your [tax deductible donation](#) will help us meet our mission to promote wellness, enjoyment and engagement in life, including care, services and community support, that respect the behavioral health needs and values of older Pennsylvanians and their caregivers.

Previous copies of PBHAC's News You Can Use are available on the website at www.olderPA.org/newsletter

