



News You Can Use...

February 2015

February is American Heart Month

In the United States, one in four deaths are caused by heart disease, a term that includes heart attack, stroke, congenital heart defects, and other conditions. American Heart Month aims to increase awareness and inspire lifestyle changes to prevent heart disease. Small changes that can help prevent heart disease include reducing salt intake, increasing exercise, and monitoring cholesterol levels. Visit www.heart.org to access information on heart conditions and how to reduce risk, research and educational materials, and caregiver information.

For a toolkit with sample materials to help spread the word, please visit <http://healthfinder.gov/nho/PDFs/FebruaryNHOToolkit.pdf>.

Suicide Prevention: An Action Plan to Save Lives

"The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's Research Prioritization Task Force (RPTF) released *A Prioritized Research Agenda for Suicide Prevention: An Action Plan to Save Lives*, which outlines the research areas that show the most promise in helping to reduce the rates of suicide attempts and deaths in the next 5-10 years." The agenda focuses on six questions, each of which will be profiled in a webinar between January 29 and June 24. To view an outline of the sessions, please visit <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2015/webinar-series-suicide-prevention-an-action-plan-to-save-lives.shtml>.

To register for the next session, please visit <http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/events-and-training/webinars/>.

To view a pdf of the Action Plan, please visit <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/sites/actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/files/Agenda.pdf>.



End-of-Life Instructions Find No Place in Electronic Health Records

Digitization of medical records has been a national priority for several years, but these records do not include end-of-life wishes. This lack of information becomes an issue when patients are admitted to hospitals without end-of-life instructions, or who have advance directives where medical staff cannot access them, such as their home. There are further barriers to recording end-of-life wishes for patients, including lack of reimbursement for doctors who discuss advance directives with patients and discomfort of both doctor and patient when discussing death. While some individual health care providers and private companies are creating accessible files to include power of attorney, advance directives, and do not resuscitate orders, many people are not aware of these services and doctors may not know which sites their patients are registered with. Read the full article here: <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/01/end-of-life-instructions-ehr-114139.html>.

SAMHSA's New Report Tracks the Behavioral Health of America

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released a new report, the Behavioral Health Barometer, documenting behavioral health in America on both national and state levels. Data was also broken down by gender, age, ethnicity, insurance status, and poverty level where possible. The Barometer indicated improvement in behavioral health in several areas for 2013, including an increase in the percentage of people receiving treatment for substance abuse or serious mental illness. To read the full announcement, click here: <http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/201501261015>.

To download the national or state Behavioral Health Barometer, click here: <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/browse-report-document-type?tab=46>.

Mean Girls in the Retirement Home

Bullying is not only an issue in schools, but can occur at any point in a person's life, even in advanced age. According to a recent Cornell University study of nursing homes, "one in five residents was involved in at least one 'negative and aggressive encounter' with another resident during a four-week period." This article profiles one case of a 97-year-old's experiences with bullying in an independent living facility and her family's attempts to understand and improve the situation. To read the full article, please visit http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/18/opinion/sunday/mean-girls-in-the-retirement-home.html?_r=1.

Would you like to learn how to address bullying among older adults? Visit www.olderpa.org to see a list of our Senior Bullying Seminars across the state.



Many at Risk for Alcohol-Medication Interactions

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) created a study examining the use of alcohol and prescription drugs indicated on the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The study found that 78% of older adults who drink were also taking medications with known alcohol interactions. Adverse reactions to combining medications and alcohol can include, "nausea and vomiting, headaches, drowsiness, fainting, and loss of coordination... internal bleeding, heart problems, and difficulty breathing." The study concludes that patients should discuss their alcohol use with their doctor or pharmacist when taking any prescription medication so that they are aware of the possible health risks. For more information, click here:

<http://www.nih.gov/researchmatters/february2015/02092015medication.htm>.

Medicare Pays Doctors to Coordinate Seniors' Chronic Care

While two thirds of Medicare recipients have multiple chronic conditions, patients often have different specialists treating each condition. This can lead to dangerous combinations of medications or repeating tests, mistakes which can put the patient's health at risk and increase medical bills. Beginning in January of 2015, Medicare will pay primary care doctors to coordinate care in order to improve patients' overall health. In addition to developing a care plan and coordinating with specialists, the patients must have access to a 24-hour care team for after-hours concerns. View the full article at

http://news.yahoo.com/medicare-pays-doctors-coordinate-seniors-chronic-care-143943985.html?soc_src=copy.

Preventing Falls in Seniors an Ongoing Effort

Every year, one in three seniors will fall, sending millions to the hospital to treat lacerations, broken bones, or traumatic brain injuries. Although research has shown many ways to reduce falls, such as exercise, new glasses, grab bars, or changes in medication that may cause balance issues, researchers have been unable to come up with a reliable long-term solution. New research by the University of Maryland and John Hopkins University hope to more reliably prevent falls by interviewing current patients and assessing their living spaces. To view the full article, please visit

http://www.sunherald.com/2015/02/03/6052569_preventing-falls-in-seniors-an.html?rh=1.

PTSD Consultation Program Expansion

The PTSD Consultation Program was started in 2011 to support Veterans Affairs providers. This program has just been expanded to include providers outside of the VA who are treating veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The program provides training, consultation, recommendations, and other information for providers. For more information, click here: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/consult/>.



Coalition News

Upcoming In-Person Trainings from the Coalition

- 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](#)
 - [5/19/15 Allegheny 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

