



## News You Can Use...

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December 2015

### **Message from the New Executive Director**

For over 16 years the Pennsylvania Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition (PBHAC) has been achieving significant efforts to enhance the lives of older Pennsylvanians with behavioral health concerns. I am delighted to join such an organization in which mission and vision I truly believe in and partake in promoting wellness, recovery efforts, and improving the quality of life of this population. I am excited to accomplish more successes with PBHAC, focus on Best Practices, and break down the barriers which face older adults with behavioral health needs. Please contact me at [Deborah@olderpa.org](mailto:Deborah@olderpa.org) with any questions, concerns, comments, or just to introduce yourself as I settle into my new role. I look forward to meeting and working with you all.

Respectfully,

Deborah Allen

### **Nursing Homes Use Old-Fashioned Objects to Trigger Dementia Patients' Memories**

Sensory cues are often used in nursing homes and assisted living facilities to help people with Alzheimer's and dementia feel comfortable in their surroundings and retrieve memories. An Easton, PA facility has created entire rooms filled with items from the early- to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Research has shown that such settings help dementia sufferers recall more autobiographical memories than those in traditional, modern rooms. This can help improve mood and reduce agitation in some dementia patients. In addition, these objects can initiate conversations between family members. One resident's granddaughter states, "'I've learned more about her in the two months she's been here than [before]." To learn more, please visit

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nursing-homes-use-old-fashioned-objects-to-trigger-dementia-patients-memories\\_564deff7e4b00b7997f978fb](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nursing-homes-use-old-fashioned-objects-to-trigger-dementia-patients-memories_564deff7e4b00b7997f978fb).



## How One Man's Suicide Inspired Barbers to Join Forces and Help Guys with Depression

When Tom Chapman's close friend died from suicide, he developed a way to help break taboos and prevent others from making the same choice. The Lions Barber Collective and BarberTalk includes 30 international barbers who aim to prevent suicide and initiate conversations on mental health. "Clients already offload their thoughts and feelings without knowing it," Chapman says. "There is also that confidentiality between a barber and their client, we are friends yet often not in their social circles so people feel it is safe to share." While the barbers will not be counselors, they will learn to recognize warning signs, provide support, and direct clients to appropriate help. To read more about this initiative, click here: [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/11/25/barbertalk-suicide-prevention-group-helps-men-open-up\\_n\\_8611596.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/11/25/barbertalk-suicide-prevention-group-helps-men-open-up_n_8611596.html).

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

## Meeting Spotlights LGBT-Aging Research from HIV to Isolation

Despite a lack of data on LGBT older adults, mostly due to surveys omitting questions on sexuality or gender identity, researchers have begun to focus their efforts on this demographic. This is largely due to more LGBT older adults living out of the closet than in previous years. Topics that were recently presented at the Gerontological Society of America's (GSA) annual conference included social isolation, mental and physical health, and planning for end-of-life services. In addition, new initiatives such as the Caring and Aging with Pride project and the GSA's Rainbow Research Group aim to provide more research and long-term studies in order to provide more definitive data on health, identity, and needs of LGBT older adults. To read more, click here: <http://newamericamedia.org/2015/12/meeting-spotlights-lgbt-aging-research-from-hiv-to-isolation.php>.

## Halting Hypothermia: Cold Can Be Dangerous

Hypothermia is the condition of body temperature dropping too low, even by a few degrees. Half of those who die from hypothermia each year in the United States are age 65 or older. While hypothermia can happen to anyone, young children and older adults are more at risk for this condition, and medications can increase risk as well. Hypothermia doesn't just happen in cold months – it can happen in cool, wet weather, or even occur indoors when air conditioning is used. To avoid risk of hypothermia, dress warmly indoors and out, and keep home temperatures set at 68 degrees or higher. For more information on hypothermia risks, causes, and prevention, please visit <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/issue/dec2015/feature2>.



## **Aging Adults Fear Nursing Homes But Don't Discuss Alternatives**

A new survey shows that while many older adults say they'd prefer alternatives to nursing homes, most do not plan ahead for other options or communicate their wishes with family members. "Among the respondents, 69% indicate that out-of-control health care costs top their list of fears as they enter retirement, while 66% claim they would prefer to die before they would live in a nursing home. About 59% say they worry they'll become a burden to their families, but more than half haven't discussed these matters with loved ones or their financial advisors." In addition, about half of respondents said they would consider "Medicaid planning," a term coined for giving one's money to one's children in order to qualify for Medicaid-funded long-term care. The survey indicates that older adults need more information about financially preparing for the future, and that health care costs are a larger problem than previously thought. For the full article, please visit <http://seniorhousingnews.com/2015/12/09/aging-adults-fear-nursing-homes-but-dont-discuss-alternatives/>.

## **Talk Therapy, Antidepressants Offer Similar Results for Major Depression**

A review of 11 previous studies on depression treatments has concluded that cognitive behavioral therapy and antidepressants are equally effective in treating major depressive disorder, which affects an estimated 32 million Americans. Lead author Halle Amick specifies that when choosing treatments, several factors should be considered, such as the generally higher cost of CBT, side effects associated with medications, and the patient's preference and willingness to comply with the prescribed treatment. For more information, please visit <http://consumer.healthday.com/mental-health-information-25/antidepressants-news-723/talk-therapy-antidepressants-offer-similar-results-for-major-depression-study-705987.html>.

## **PA Makes First Moves to Help Older Adults Stay at Home**

While up to 95% of older adults surveyed said they'd prefer to live at home rather than move to a nursing home or other facility, many are forced to move due to lack of options. The Department of Human Services is revising the current Medicaid program, and plans to include improvements to help older adults age in place, such as incentives for care providers to offer in-home options and improving care while reducing costs. Secretary Ted Dallas states, "I don't know how long it'll take us to get there.... But one thing I'm pretty sure about is that we can do better than the 50 percent that we're doing right now and we can give people more of what they want." To learn more, click here: <http://www.witf.org/news/2015/12/pa-makes-first-moves-to-help-older-adults-on-medicaid-avoid-nursing-homes.php>.



# Coalition News

## Upcoming In-Person Trainings from the Coalition

- Mental Health First Aid – Older Adult Focus
  - [4/12/16 Warren County](#)
- Geriatric Resource Nurse/Older Adult Community Resource Specialist Training
  - [1/4/16 – 4/4/16 Webinar Series](#)

## 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 Deborah Allen ([Deborah@olderpa.org](mailto:Deborah@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.

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Previous copies of PBHAC's News You Can Use are available on the website at [www.olderPA.org/newsletter](http://www.olderPA.org/newsletter)

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