



Pennsylvania Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition  
Opening Doors for Older Pennsylvanians

## News You Can Use...

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June 2016

### Register Today! Best Practices Forums

The forums will take place from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm on [June 20, 2016 in Greensburg, PA](#) and [June 22, 2016 in Media, PA](#). Registration is still open for both events!

The mental health and IDD populations are rapidly aging with their complicated physical changes and subsequent barriers to care. Older adults, themselves, are at risk of developing age-related psychiatric problems. Pennsylvania's county human service system has been struggling for years in attempts to serve these rapidly growing populations. In 2006, the Department of Public Welfare's Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the Pennsylvania Department of Aging required Memorandums of Understanding to encourage counties to collaborate their resources and better serve older individuals in both the mental health and aging systems. Many counties have developed collaborative approaches to serve the mental health, IDD, and aging populations, which have assisted in creating programs to bridge services. As budgets become more complex and services become limited, counties are once again struggling to serve these populations. The PA Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, will be presenting two, day-long programs (Forums) highlighting those counties who have developed cross-system approaches to serve older adults. Counties offering Mental Health and Aging Best Practice programs based on their original memorandums of understanding will be highlighted. Information on a variety of services and evidenced-based practices for older adults will be discussed.

### National Text Message Crisis Line

"Since its inception in 2013, Crisis Text Line has exchanged nearly 18 million text messages with people in crisis. The nonprofit leverages the privacy of text messaging, which has helped those struggling with addiction, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders, sexual abuse, and other crises. Crisis Text Line conducts its conversations exclusively by



text messages, enabling people in crisis situations to text a phone number and immediately connect with a counselor who is trained to help.” For the full article, click here: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/oliver-leung/the-first-and-only-nation\\_b\\_10118392.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/oliver-leung/the-first-and-only-nation_b_10118392.html). To learn more about the program, please visit: <http://www.crisistextline.org/>.

To use the Text Message Crisis Line, text START to 741741. The line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Do you prefer phone or online chat? The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

## **Preventing Medical Errors: What You Need to Know**

“According to a new study published in the British Medical Journal, medical errors now rank as the third leading cause of death in the U.S., with only heart disease and cancer accounting for more deaths. While [it’s possible] the latest study overestimates deaths related to errors, it’s clear that these mistakes – ranging from patients being given the wrong medication or dose to missed diagnoses – profoundly impact patient outcomes and mortality rates. These errors occur for reasons ranging from poor clinical judgment to inadequate communication between health providers. Besides putting patients in harm’s way, these mishaps contribute to rising health care costs. Patient safety and the elimination of medical errors are a top priority for physicians, and many health care institutions are putting in new protocols to avoid dangerous mistakes. However, as health care systems become larger and more complex and continuity of care seems to be more fragmented... the rate of medical errors may increase.” For four tips on how to protect yourself from medical errors, please visit: <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/patient-advice/articles/2016-06-02/preventing-medical-errors-what-you-need-to-know>.

## **How Recovering Long Term Memories May Be Possible**

“Most neuroscientists believe that memories are stored in the connections of brain cells called synapses. They believe that when the synapses are destroyed, as happens in Alzheimer’s, memories are lost forever. A research team from UCLA recently concluded that this may not be the case.” The experiment involved training snails to fear small electrical shocks, and then introducing a protein blocker to erase the memory of the shocks. However, the snails were still afraid of shocks after the protein blocker was introduced, leading researchers to believe long-term memory may be stored elsewhere. Another study found that mice could recover memories if certain neurons were activated with a protein. For the full article, please visit: <http://www.alzheimers.net/1-12-15-recovering-long-term-memories/>.



## PBHAC Needs Your Assistance!

It is 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. Without the generosity of community members like you, PBHAC would not be able to continue its mission in serving older adults with behavioral health needs.

During 2015, with the support of our wonderful friends and donors, PBHAC has been able to:

- Provide over 40 trainings on a variety of topics such as Alzheimer's and dementia, hearing distressing voices, suicide prevention, and senior bullying.
- Educate over 1,600 aging and behavioral health professionals, community members, and families on behavioral health and aging topics
- Advocate for the needs of older adults at over 60 meetings across Pennsylvania
- Serve 4,000 individuals our monthly newsletter of informative articles and resources

The number of Pennsylvanians over the age of 65 is expected to reach 2.4 million by 2020. Meanwhile, services are becoming increasingly restricted or difficult to access. PBHAC's programs for aging and mental health professionals help prepare staff to better serve older adults by providing education on their physical and behavioral health needs in addition to providing information for subjects such as Medicare/Medicaid, aging in place, and end-of-life planning.

You may contribute to our cause by clicking here: <http://olderpa.org/donate>. Your generosity will make a difference in the Commonwealth by allowing us to continue our work. Remember that every donation makes a difference, regardless of size.

Thank you for your support!

## You Gave, Now Save: A Guide to Benefits for Seniors

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A) and the National Council on Aging have created a pdf document to help older adults understand both public and private benefits programs they may be able to access. The document includes resources for health and prescriptions, food, housing and utilities, transportation, and legal benefits, plus an additional section for special populations who may access additional resources. Assistance may come in the form of a voucher, discount, or reduced fees for services, and may be a local, statewide, or federal program. To view the full document, click here: <https://www.ncoa.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-You-Gave-Now-Save-guide.pdf>.



## Could Thinking Positively About Aging Be The Secret Of Health?

Ageism may not only be a harmful prejudice against others, it may also impact an individual's aging process. "In one study, Levy looked at people's attitudes about aging when they were in late middle age and then followed them over time. Some of these people thought of older people as weak or dependent. Others thought of them as experienced or wise. What she found was that the people who had a positive view of aging lived about 7 and half years longer than the people who saw aging in a negative light." Individuals who kept a sense of purpose and felt their life was meaningful were found to be less likely to suffer strokes, cognitive decline, or other disabilities. To read more, click here: <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/05/28/479751942/could-thinking-positively-about-aging-be-the-secret-of-health>.

## Drinking Across the Lifespan: Focus on Older Adults

While the prevalence of heavy drinking among older adults is difficult to determine due to varied research methods, up to 16% of older adults may engage in at-risk or problem drinking. The health implications are serious, as alcohol can exacerbate existing medical conditions, and interactions can occur with medications for chronic or aging-related diseases. Older adults who are most at risk for increased alcohol consumption are more likely to be, "affluent, highly educated, male, Caucasian, unmarried, less religious, and perceive themselves to be in excellent health." To combat heavy drinking in older adults, screening is essential to determine if a brief intervention is appropriate or if another response is needed. Brief interventions are short conversations addressing the amount of alcohol consumed with recommendations to reduce drinking, and can be administered by a primary care physician. They may or may not include follow-up conversations. In order to combat this issue, clinicians must be trained to recognize, assess, and intervene with their patient to achieve best results. For the full article, please visit: <http://www.arcr.niaaa.nih.gov/arcr/arcr381/article13.htm>.

## Important Messages from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and Department of Aging

In May, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Aging announced that Community HealthChoices (CHC) received 14 responses to their request for proposal (RFP). This program, "will use managed care organizations to coordinate physical health care and long-term services and supports (LTSS) for older persons, persons with physical disabilities, and Pennsylvanians who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid" and, "will allow the departments of Human Services and Aging to serve more Pennsylvanians in their communities and allow consumers to have an



active voice in the services they receive.” Responses were received by the following: Accenda, Aetna, AmeriHealth Caritas, Cedar Woods Care Management, Cigna-Health, Gateway Health Plan, Geisinger Health Plan, Health Partners Plus, Molina Healthcare, PA Health & Wellness, Trusted Health Plan, United Healthcare, UPMC for You, and WellCare.

On June 9, it was announced that the first phase of CHC would be delayed from January 1, 2017 to July 1, 2017. The extended timeline will allow the 420,000 Pennsylvanians who will benefit from the program additional time to understand the program adjustments and improvements to benefits. It will also allow time for outreach and education on the CDC program to ensure communication with as many caregivers and consumers as possible. All other established timelines will remain unaltered, including the implementation of the second and third phases.

To learn more about Community HealthChoices, please visit:

[http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/communityhealthchoices/index.htm#.V2P\\_hfkrLIW](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/communityhealthchoices/index.htm#.V2P_hfkrLIW).

## June is Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month

Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that causes problems with memory, cognition, and behaviors. Symptoms develop slowly and worsen over time. Alzheimer's is a fatal disease, accounting for 60-80% of all dementia cases. While Alzheimer's typically affects those 65 and older, about 5% of cases are "early onset," which can affect those in their 40s and 50s. Treatment is available to slow, but not halt, the progression of the disease.

For more information on Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, please visit:

<http://alz.org/abam/#goPurple>. To learn more and access Pennsylvania-specific resources, including support groups, education programs, professional training, and more, please visit <http://www.alz.org/pa/>.

The Longest Day is June 20! Spend a day pursuing your hobbies and passions to raise funds and awareness for the Alzheimer's Association. This event is held on June 20, the summer solstice and longest day of the year, to symbolize that every day can feel like the longest day for someone with Alzheimer's. For more information on how to participate, click here: [http://act.alz.org/site/TR?fr\\_id=8480&pg=entry](http://act.alz.org/site/TR?fr_id=8480&pg=entry).

## Behavioral Health Connection Program Director Staffing Change

Christine Adkins will be leaving her role as the BHC Program Director of PBHAC on June 21st. Christine has been with the Coalition since August 2015 and has done a fantastic job, all with enthusiasm and passion. Thank you, Christine, for being so dedicated to the Coalition and to the individuals we serve.



Tara Lynn Miller has been hired at Christine's replacement. She comes to us from Keystone Human Services where she was a faithful employee of six years. Tara holds a Bachelor of Science in Clinical/Counseling Psychology from Kutztown University, and is currently working toward her Master of Science in Psychological Science at Shippensburg University. She is finishing up work on her on her thesis and will be starting employment in her new role on July 18th. Welcome, Tara!

## **PBHAC is Hiring! Position Announcement: Training Coordinator**

The Training Coordinator performs a variety of administrative activities in support of the Coalition's training and staff development activities. Work includes functioning as the event coordinator for training sessions, conferences and Coalition meetings by preparing and disseminating training materials, contacting/confirming speaker arrangements, and contacting facilities to make arrangements for sessions and conferences. The position also functions as the Coalition's primary resource in assessing target groups' need for and interest in training, and in developing multi-year cycles of programs and presentations. For a detailed job description and qualifications/requirements please contact Executive Director, Deborah Allen, or forward your resume with your interest to [Deborah@olderpa.org](mailto:Deborah@olderpa.org).



# Coalition News

## Upcoming In-Person Trainings from the Coalition

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
  - [Dauphin County 6/29-6/30/16](#)
- Best Practices Forums
  - [Westmoreland County 6/20/16](#)
  - [Delaware County 6/22/16](#)
- Understanding Hoarding Behaviors: Assessment and Intervention
  - [Dauphin County 10/5/16](#)
  - [Centre County 10/17/16](#)
  - [Westmoreland County 11/9/16](#)

## 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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