



Pennsylvania Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition
Opening Doors for Older Pennsylvanians

News You Can Use...

January 2016

Programs Expand Schizophrenic Patients' Role in Their Own Care

A new emphasis on treating patients with schizophrenia as partners in their own treatment plans shows improvement in patients' wellness and their willingness to continue to receive care. One student stated, "The first psychiatrist I saw, he was leading the conversation, telling me what to do." In a more collaborative environment, where they discussed her goals and wishes for treatment, she said, "I felt like I was in control." One team of a therapist and psychiatrist helped another patient by allowing him to decide if he was comfortable taking certain medications, and at what doses. This allowed him to remain comfortable in his treatment, rather than refuse medication altogether because of previous negative experiences. To read more about the benefits of patient collaboration, click here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/29/health/programs-expand-schizophrenic-patients-role-in-their-own-care.html>.

In-Home Sensors Help Slash Hospitalizations 50%

According to STAT, a pilot study shows that older adults utilizing in-home monitoring systems have decreased their hospitalization rate by 50%. The monitors track information such as sleep and movement throughout the house. When the monitors are triggered, such as when Violette Roberts stayed up all night knitting, a care manager calls to check in and make sure the person isn't injured or in danger. While some feel that the monitors are an invasion of privacy, Roberts recounted one incident prior to the monitors where she had fallen and it had taken hours for her to reach a phone to call for help. The monitors aim to prevent situations like this from happening in the future. While the initial study is promising, a larger study with a wider variety of users is needed to confirm the results. For more information, please visit

<http://homehealthcarenews.com/2016/01/in-home-sensors-help-slash-hospitalizations-50/>.



Hospitals Required to Keep Caregivers in the Loop

When patients are discharged from the hospital, some caregivers say they are not given enough information to care for them at home, citing complicated medical documents or lack of instruction on how to correctly administer care. A new California law will require hospital staff to communicate with caregivers during hospitalization and discharge, and ensure they have clear instructions on follow-up care. The patient must identify their caregiver to the hospital and can still request that certain information is not shared. While policies like these are greatly beneficial to the patient, who will receive higher quality care at home, increased communication with caregivers is also beneficial to hospitals, which are under pressure to decrease the number of patients who are readmitted after being released. 18 states currently have similar laws in place, and many individual hospitals have their own policies to ensure adequate treatment at home. To read more, please visit <http://khn.org/news/hospitals-required-to-keep-caregivers-in-the-loop/>.

Administration Releases Final Report for 2015 Conference on Aging

At the sixth White House Conference on Aging, “the Administration announced a number of new public actions and initiatives across the government and across the country to help ensure Americans have increased opportunity and ability to retire with dignity; that older adults enjoy the fullest physical, mental, and social well-being; that older adults can maximize their independence and ability to age in place; and that elder abuse and financial exploitation is more fully recognized as a serious public health challenge and addressed accordingly and effectively.” The full report is now available. To read more about the 2015 Conference and its goals, please visit <http://www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/blog/post/administration-releases-final-report-for-2015-conference-on-aging.aspx>.

To read the final report, click here:

<http://www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/2015-WHCOA-Final-Report.pdf>.

Don't Sign Away Your Rights In Long-Term Care

Arbitration clauses in long-term care agreement documents are used to resolve disputes while limiting the cost to the provider, but some families say they were not aware of what they were signing. Jeff LeMaire, whose father died in a nursing home after four months of repeated hospitalizations, says that by signing the arbitration agreement he, “didn't understand... that he was giving up his right to go to court if something bad happened.” The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is reevaluating how arbitration clauses are presented to families. The agreement would have to be presented in plain language, while making it clear that signing is voluntary and will not prevent the



patient from being admitted or treated by the facility. Some states want the arbitration agreements to be banned completely, saying they do not serve their intended purpose in these cases. However, the facilities maintain that the agreements protect them from a biased court system. For the full article, please visit <http://www.nextavenue.org/dont-sign-away-your-rights-in-long-term-care/>.

Next Steps to Better Nutrition Program

“The Next Steps to Better Nutrition pilot program was developed by the National Council on Aging and the American Heart Association to teach older adults how they can afford, purchase, and cook more nutritious foods. In a series of 6 hour-long classes, participants learn about the relationship between nutrition and chronic disease, and discover how they can take concrete action steps to improve their diet and keep their heart healthy.” Topics include stretching a budget to afford healthy food, making healthy food choices, and adapting comfort foods for health. These educational materials are free to download. For more information and to access the materials, please visit <https://www.ncoa.org/economic-security/benefits/food-and-nutrition/next-steps-to-better-nutrition-program/>.

The Importance of Being Prepared for a Natural Disaster

Natural disasters disproportionately affect older adults due to chronic health conditions, dementia, and mobility issues, which many emergency preparation materials do not address. Older adults also seem disproportionately affected by psychological trauma after a disaster. To better prepare for natural disasters, new recommendations include keeping identification and medical records in waterproof files where they can easily be reached while evacuating, or storing copies in a safe deposit box or online. Signing up for weather and safety alerts and having a strong network helps ensure the individual will hear about the danger in time and have a way to reach a safe location. To read more, click here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/09/your-money/the-importance-of-being-prepared-for-a-natural-disaster.html>.

Vitamin D Increases Risk Of Falls In Older Adults

A new study shows that high doses of vitamin D, administered to strengthen bones and joints and thought to prevent cognitive decline, increases the risk of falls in older adults. Participants taking high doses of vitamin D had a significantly higher rate of falls than those taking a lower dosage. However, the higher doses did help those who were deficient in vitamin D to reach the level required to maintain bone density. While further research is needed, the study suggests that older adults with a history of falls may experience more harm than benefit from high dosage amounts. To read more about this study, please visit <http://www.medicaldaily.com/vitamin-d-increases-risk-falls-older-adults-and-does-little-prevent-functional-367830>.



Coalition News

Upcoming In-Person Trainings from the Coalition

- A Simulation of Hearing Distressing Voices
 - [Jefferson County 3/16/16](#)
 - [Cumberland County 4/27/16](#)
- Question, Persuade, Refer: Suicide Prevention
 - [Jefferson County 3/16/16](#)
 - [Cumberland County 4/27/16](#)
- Understanding Hoarding Behaviors: Assessment and Intervention
 - [Lackawanna County 4/6/16](#)
 - [Lancaster County 5/11/16](#)
 - [Clarion County 6/29/16](#)
 - [Dauphin County 9/28/16](#)
 - [Centre County 10/17/16](#)
 - [Westmoreland County 11/9/16](#)
- Issues of Substance Use and Medication Misuse in Older Adults
 - [Wayne County 3/9/16](#)
 - [Franklin County 3/23/16](#)
 - [Jefferson County 4/13/16](#)
 - [Somerset County 5/4/16](#)
 - [Montgomery County 6/1/16](#)
- ASIST Suicide Prevention Training
 - [Dauphin County 5/24-5/25/16](#)
 - [Monroe County 6/22-6/23/16](#)
- Free Webinars
 - [Medicare/Medicaid Basics for Mental Health Professionals 1/21/16](#)
 - [Understanding Difficult Behaviors in Older Adults 2/10/16](#)
 - [Trauma Informed Care 2/18/16](#)
 - [LGBT Older Adults: Unique Issues and Healthcare Needs 2/29/16](#)
 - [Trauma Informed Care 4/11/16](#)
- Technical Assistance Calls (Formerly GEC Calls)
 - [Click here for more information](#)



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) 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

