



News You Can Use...

March 2016

Social Work Month 2016 - Forging Solutions Out of Challenges

"Today, social work is one of the fastest growing professions in the United States, with more than 600,000 people employed in the field. Professional social workers tackle some of the toughest challenges facing our society. In every city and every community they develop solutions to make mental health and health care more available, to reduce poverty, to eliminate injustice and discrimination, and to protect vulnerable children and adults from harm." For more information on Social Work Month, please visit the National Association on Social Workers site at

<https://www.socialworkers.org/pressroom/swmonth/2016/default.asp>.

March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month

"Problem gambling—or gambling addiction—includes all gambling behavior patterns that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits. The essential features are increasing preoccupation with gambling, a need to bet more money more frequently, restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop, "chasing" losses, and loss of control manifested by continuation of the gambling behavior in spite of mounting, serious, negative consequences. In extreme cases, problem gambling can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide." To visit the National Problem Gambling website, please visit <http://www.ncpgambling.org/>.

For resources including infographics, template letters, fact sheets, and FAQs, please visit <http://www.ncpgambling.org/programs-resources/programs/awareness-month/>.

In addition, please also visit our friends at The Council on Compulsive Gambling of PA at <http://www.pacouncil.com/>.



Pennsylvania Tripled Number of Nursing Home Fines in 2015

After a lawsuit against 25 Golden LivingCenter facilities regarding allegations that residents were left uncared for, the PA Department of Health began to accept anonymous complaints. This decision resulted in an increase in reports and following disciplinary action. In 2015, at least 19 nursing homes' licenses were given provisional status and 32 fines were issued. While many praised the efforts towards ensuring older adults receive the care they need, some believe more action is needed, such as changes in Medicare and Medicaid enforcement processes. An independent review of the Department's current efforts is expected to be released later this year. For more information, please visit http://lancasteronline.com/news/local/pennsylvania-tripled-number-of-nursing-home-fines-in/article_0077c2ec-e241-11e5-9e15-5ff42b069079.html.

Does Poor Sleep Raise Risk for Alzheimer's Disease?

Many adults and older adults experience poorer sleep as they age, and Alzheimer's disease patients in particular often experience sleep issues. Researchers are now trying to determine if poor sleep leads to Alzheimer's, or if it is an early symptom of the disease. Mack Mackiewicz from the National Institute on Aging's Division of Neuroscience believes there is a "bidirectional relationship" between Alzheimer's and sleep. "Some recent studies suggest that poor sleep contributes to abnormal levels of beta-amyloid protein in the brain, which in turn leads to the amyloid plaques found in the Alzheimer's brain. These plaques might then affect sleep-related brain regions, further disrupting sleep." To read the full article, please visit <https://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/features/does-poor-sleep-raise-risk-alzheimers-disease>.

Free Webinar: Finding Mental Health Information

[Finding Mental Health Information](#) March 17, 2016 12:00-1:00 pm ET (online)

Are you a mental health professional who needs reliable no-cost patient education information? Are you a librarian who does literature searches for mental health clinical staff or researchers? Are you a family member looking for ways to support your loved one? Are you looking for tips for stress relief or cutting down on alcohol? In this one hour presentation, we will discuss ways to find mental health information in National Library of Medicine resources, including [MedlinePlus](#), the [Drug Information Portal](#), [PubMed Health](#) and [ClinicalTrials.gov](#).

No registration required. <https://webmeeting.nih.gov/nlmfocus/>

About NN/LM MAR: <http://nnlm.gov/mar/about/>

Contact Kate Flewelling (flewKate@pitt.edu) with questions.



What Alcohol Does to the Aging Brain

Alcohol-related dementia is caused by chronic alcohol use, but is underdiagnosed and not fully understood due to lack of study in the subject. This issue is becoming more common as the baby boomer population ages. "There is evidence that baby boomers drink more than the generations above and below them and have been slower to slack off on the drinking as they have aged." It is also difficult to determine how much alcohol is healthy or damaging, as individual bodies process alcohol differently and other health conditions or medications will affect these processes. Fortunately, unlike other dementias which only worsen over time, alcohol-related dementia can improve if the patient stops drinking. For more information, please visit

http://articles.philly.com/2016-03-06/news/71249993_1_baby-boomers-cognitive-problems-aging-brain.

Request for Proposals for Community HealthChoices

Recently, the departments of Human Services and Aging released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Community HealthChoices (CHC). CHC is Governor Wolf's plan to increase opportunities for older Pennsylvanians and individuals with physical disabilities to remain in their homes, while providing coordinated health care for more than 420,000 Pennsylvanians.

CHC is a new initiative that will provide managed long-term services and supports (LTSS) to older individuals, persons with physical disabilities, and physical health coverage to Pennsylvanians who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

The goals of CHC are to:

- Enhance opportunities for community-based services;
- Strengthen health care and LTSS delivery systems;
- Allow for new innovations;
- Promote the health, safety, and well-being of enrolled participants; and
- Ensure transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency of the program.

Public input sessions were held in communities across the commonwealth, monthly Third Thursday informational webinars are held, subcommittees were created, and opportunities were consistently available for stakeholders to share with state leaders their suggestions and concerns. The purpose of each effort is to ensure that any current or future consumer of services, caregivers, and professional service providers, concerned about the implementation and development of this initiative could provide feedback.

To learn more about this, please visit

<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/communityhealthchoices/#.VudAho-cHIU>.



Funding Assistive Technology, PATF Provides Loans That Change Lives

For many people, assistive technology is more than just a useful device; it represents independence, freedom, and access to the community and activities they love. Unfortunately, many Pennsylvania residents do not have the necessary assistive devices they need because of a lack of coverage by medical insurance or other funding sources. The Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF) not only fills those funding gaps by providing no- and low-interest loans for AT, PATF also provides information and assistance in finding other funding resources, and financial education opportunities to help people better manage their finances.

Assistive technology covers a broad range of devices including such things as hearing aids, adapted vehicles, iPads and computers with specialized software, accessible home modifications, seat lift chairs and stair-lifts, and adaptive sports equipment. These are just a few examples of the devices PATF can help finance.

PATF's program offers lower interest rates than a traditional bank (current rate is 3.75%) with extended repayment plans. PATF also provides valuable information about other potential funding resources and consumer credit education. For devices and services costing between \$100 and \$1,500, PATF can offer a loan with a 0% interest rate.

Pennsylvanians of all ages, income levels and disabilities are eligible to apply. The borrower identifies the type of AT they need based on their own lifestyle and interests, and PATF helps them find funding, whether through a loan or another source. If the borrower chooses to apply, and is extended a loan, low monthly payments help make assistive technology more affordable.

If you are considering an assistive technology purchase and have the ability to repay a low-interest loan, call PATF for more information at 888-744-1938 (toll-free) or email www.patf.us.

What is Behavioral Health Connection?

Behavioral Health Connection is a joint initiative between the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) and the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS). Christine Adkins is our Program Director within the Pennsylvania Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition who ensures that behavioral health consumers have appropriate access to the APPRISE Network and other CMS Customer Service Programs. APPRISE is Pennsylvania's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

We assist mental health consumers and resolve cases pertaining to mental health treatment issues, especially medications. We have additional resources needed to



resolve needs for mental health consumers. We can act as an intermediary to CMS and Medical Assistance to resolve issues pertaining to behavioral health beneficiaries.

In addition, we provide all the many services provided by the statewide APPRISE program to the behavioral health population. These include assisting Medicare beneficiaries in making educated decisions about their Medicare choices by providing one to one counseling. Counselors are trained volunteers and staff. We have direct access to state and federal resources and can assist with Medicare appeals.

We can provide assistance for those with low income or having difficulty covering the costs of their behavioral health services by helping with enrollment in a variety of programs.

We conduct education and enrollment events in organizations across the state. These include trainings on Medicare and Medicaid for Behavioral Health Professionals and various behavioral health topics. We are funded by the Department of Aging through the APPRISE (SHIP) program. All services are free.

Coming Soon!

PA Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition will be offering The Virtual Dementia Tour, a scientifically proven method that builds sensitivity and awareness in individuals caring for those with dementia by temporarily altering participants' physical and sensory abilities. This evidenced-based program simulates changes associated with cognitive decline and offers hope by providing practical ways to create an environment that supports the disease and increases understanding. Program dates and locations will be announced by the end of March.



Coalition News

Upcoming In-Person Trainings from the Coalition

- Trauma Informed Care
 - [Adams County 4/18/16](#)
 - [Centre County 5/18/16](#)
- A Simulation of Hearing Distressing Voices
 - [Cumberland County 4/27/16](#)
- Question, Persuade, Refer: Suicide Prevention
 - [Adams County 4/18/16](#)
 - [Cumberland County 4/27/16](#)
 - [Centre County 5/18/16](#)
- 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
 - [Franklin County 3/23/16](#)
 - [Jefferson County 4/13/16](#)
 - [Montgomery County 6/1/16](#)
- ASIST Suicide Prevention Training
 - [Montgomery County 5/4-5/5/16](#)
 - [Dauphin County 5/24-5/25/16](#)
 - [Clearfield County 6/9-6/10/16](#)
 - [Monroe County 6/22-6/23/16](#)
- Free Webinars
 - [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

