

Mental Health Connections



Summer 2004

MHA & ProHealth Care Partner to Educate Community During Mental Health Month

In honor of National Mental Health Month, Mental Health Association in Waukesha County, Inc. (MHA) partnered with ProHealth Care Behavioral Medicine Center by offering a set of four wallet-size fact cards on the topics of mental health and stigma. The fact cards have been distributed free of charge to the community.

The purpose of the partnership is to promote the importance of mental health and reduce stigma associated with mental illness. The goal is that all individuals achieve full potential and contribute to a healthy community free of prejudice.

The cards cover the following topics: Stigma, Stress and Anxiety, Mental Health and the Older Adult, and Mental Illness. More than 15,000 cards have been distributed throughout the community to various locations including: Carroll College, ARCh, ProHealth Care Clinics, Up Connection, Waukesha County Department of Senior Services, Waukesha County Public Health Department, Waukesha County Health & Human Services, and Waukesha County Mental Health Center. The cards were also distributed to all public libraries in Waukesha County.

To obtain a set of the wallet-size fact cards, please call 2-1-1/First Call For Help (FCFH) at 2-1-1 or 262.547.3388.

27th Annual Golf Outing: AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS!

The 27th Annual MHA Golf Outing raised over \$50,000. The Golf Outing took place on June 14, 2004, following months of intense planning, dedication and hard work on the part of the MHA Golf Committee. The event was held at Merrill Hills Country Club in Waukesha. After a brief delay for tee-off due to a thunderstorm, the golfers walked the beautiful course.

This event would not be possible without all the support received. Thank you to all the golfers who participated. A special thanks to our major sponsors:

Gold Sponsor
Rogers Memorial Hospital

Silver Sponsors:
GE Healthcare Technologies
R&R Insurance
ProHealth Care
Cornerstone Counseling

Bronze Sponsors:
Aurora Behavioral Health
Aurora Pharmacy
Brookside Chevrolet
Potawatomi Bingo & Casino
McAvoy Family Dentistry

Many other sponsors from the Waukesha County community generously donated money and in-kind auction items for the Silent Auction. The Golf Outing revenue will help support our free services.

The MHA staff extends our gratitude to the dozens of volunteers who tirelessly planned this year's golf outing. The event would not have reached the level of success without their dedication.

To find out more about MHA's Annual Golf Outing, please call 262-547-0769.

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A Letter from the 2004 Board President

Dear MHA Supporters:

It is an honor for me to be the first board president elected to the new two year term. I believe that this is a change that will help me, and future board presidents, be more effective.

It is a pleasure for me to work with a very dedicated Board of Directors, an outstanding Executive Director, Lisa McLean, and an excellent group of staff and volunteers that are committed to the mission of MHA.

June 11, 2004 marked the two year anniversary of 2-1-1 in Waukesha County. 2-1-1 enhances the accessibility of community resources and services to our residents. 2-1-1 has been a challenge for us, but with a great effort from our staff and a new telephone system it has become a very worthwhile, useful and efficient program. Call volume increased by 14% in 2003, and by 21% in the first quarter of 2004.

This year we are striving to implement a 1-800 SUICIDE line that will complement the 2-1-1 Program. In addition, we will be working on reorganizing Teen Peer Educators. The board and staff will also combine for a strategic planning session to help plan the future direction of MHA.

This is a very exciting time for MHA. Thank you for your interest in and continued support of your Mental Health Association in Waukesha County.

*David Hart
2004 MHA Board President*

MHA Welcomes New Staff

The Help Center is proud to announce the return of **Gail Alder** as a volunteer. Gail brings 23 years of experience in social work. Gail received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Welfare from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee and her Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her sensitivity along with her professionalism makes her a great volunteer for the Help Center.

Diana Thielson has joined the MHA team as Finance Associate. Diana attended Alverno College for 6 years while working and raising a family and received her degree in Business & Management with a minor in Professional Communication. Diana has already proven to be a hard worker with a contagious positive attitude and sense of humor!

MHA is glad to welcome **Nicole Schoenemann** as the Community Prevention Education Coordinator. Nicole earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in Marketing Communications with a minor in Sociology. In the short time Nicole has been at MHA, she has already contributed great ideas and showcased her many skills.

Since January, **Tracy Smail** has served as a part-time phone counselor. She recently accepted the position of Associate Coordinator of 211/FCFH. Tracy attended Carroll College and earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Religious Studies. Tracy brings many skills to her new position which will help her succeed. We are pleased to have her as part of our team serving the Waukesha County community.

Wisconsin Governmental Updates

In Wisconsin, three bills which affect individuals with mental illness have been considered during this past legislative session. The most recent legislation is the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). TABOR was planned to amend the state constitution with the intention to change the way Wisconsin collects and spends funds for services.

- TABOR sets spending caps on education and all levels of government.
- TABOR severely limits the ability of state and local governments to respond to rapidly changing financial conditions.
- As a Constitutional amendment, TABOR cements all of the current financial challenges and inequities in place. This kind of rigid and fixed limitation on finances, which affects all of state and local government, does not belong in the Constitution.
- TABOR will increase inequities in the distribution of the state tax burden, further reducing taxes for businesses and the wealthy.

TABOR was introduced in spring and to the relief of many advocates across the state, was voted down. Attempts to reintroduce the bill may occur next year as the bill does have some strong support. If it is reintroduced in 2005, it is important for those who are concerned about mental health services to contact legislators and share their opinions of the bill.

Two other bills, Senate Bill 71 and 72, both concerned with parity in health insurance coverage for those with a mental health or alcohol or other substance abuse, were also introduced to the senate during the last session. SB 71 passed. However, no major impact will be felt as it only maintains current coverage of mental health treatment. SB 71 provides that costs for prescription drugs or diagnostic testing are not included in the financial limits on coverage for nervous or mental disorders and alcohol and other drug abuse problems.

SB 72, which has a more positive impact on the mental health community, was voted down. SB 72 increases:

- coverage amounts for inpatient hospital treatment from \$7,000 to \$16,800,
- outpatient treatment from \$2,000 to \$3,100, and
- transitional treatment from \$3,000 to \$4,600.

The amounts are increased to reflect the change in the cost of living for medical services since the enactment of the coverage amounts. This bill will hopefully be reintroduced in Spring 2005 and will need your support.

If you have any question about legislative affairs or who your legislators are and how to contact them, please call Laura Lutz at (262) 547-0769 ext. 103.



Waukesha Teens On Line

Waukesha Teens On Line collaborated with the City of Waukesha's Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department, Waukesha One 2 One Teen Center and School District of Waukesha for the summer music festival, "Starry, Starry Night". This festival provided Waukesha area teens a safe place to socialize with friends and listen to peers showcase musical talent.



Waukesha Teens On Line (WTOL) has experienced some exciting changes over the past few months. In March 2004, Katherine Colby began to oversee WTOL. In collaboration with Safe and Sound, youth volunteers have been working on promotional flyers to educate teenagers in the community about this youth resource. The website has undergone several changes including: overall design of website, updating pages such as teen issue of the month, and adding links to other youth serving agencies and resources in Waukesha County. YTD, the site has received more than 2,900 visitors. In an effort to assist with the technical aspects of the website WTOL is looking for an intern.

If you have not already viewed the WTOL website, here are some of the important features you are missing: information about Waukesha County schools and libraries, youth serving agencies, fun links, a calendar of events geared towards youth, the Youth Yellow Pages, college resources, teen issues and much more! The website can be accessed at: www.waukeshateens.org.

If you have any questions or would like more information on WTOL, please contact Katherine Colby at (262) 547-0769, ext. 107 or by email at kcolby@mhawauk.org.

Volunteer Opportunities at Mental Health Association in Waukesha County, Inc.

The staff of the Mental Health Association celebrates the opportunity of continuing to serve residents of our community with the help of caring volunteers in 2004. Thank you to the individuals who donated their time and energies to volunteer for the agency in 2003!

Mental Health Association currently has the following volunteer opportunities available:

Community Prevention Education:

- A clerical volunteer is needed to assist in updating Speakers Bureau data base of volunteers.
- WTOL is looking for a volunteer or intern to assist in the technical aspects of the website.
- Speaker Bureau volunteers: Masters-level professionals needed to volunteer to speak on mental health issues.

HELP Center

- Masters-level counselors are needed to assist in free short-term counseling services.

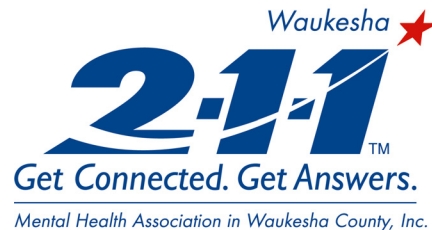
Administration

- Volunteer to assist with MHA business lines and light clerical duties.

Special Events

- Volunteers needed to bake cookies for the Great Cookie Sale.
- Volunteers to assist in packaging cookies on November 24, 2004
- Volunteers needed to sell cookies at the sale on November 26, 2004.

For more information call Laura Lutz at 547.0769 ext. 103



2003 was an exciting year for the 2-1-1/First Call for Help Program. The program received two accreditations, Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) and American Association of Suicidology (AAS). As noted in the Board President's letter, call volume on the 211/FCFH hotline continues to increase and in 2003, there was a total of 32,004 calls compared to 26,482 in 2002.

2004 has already been filled with many activities related to 2-1-1 at the local, state and national levels. February 11, 2004 was declared national 2-1-1 day. 2-1-1 Call Centers across the nation held various community awareness events in an effort to spread the word about 2-1-1. On this day individuals were encouraged to contact legislatures to gain support for the **Calling for 2-1-1 Act**. This proposed legislation will provide federal money to states starting or enhancing a 2-1-1 system. Even though National 2-1-1 day has passed you can still voice your opinion for 2-1-1. **A toll-free number has been set up by United Way of America to make it easy to contact Congress: 1-888-PASS211.**

Members of MHA staff serve on the 2-1-1 Wisconsin Board of Directors. The 2-1-1 Wisconsin Board has been chosen by the Public Service Commission to oversee the implementation of 2-1-1 statewide. It is anticipated that by year-end, 2-1-1 will be operational across the state for public use in the event of a bioterrorism or public health emergency. It is anticipated that soon 2-1-1 will be available throughout Wisconsin, as a 24-hours a day, 7 days a week comprehensive information and referral hotline for social service needs.



Together, we are...

...Building Hope for a Better Tomorrow

The Debilitating Effects of Stigma

What is Stigma?

Stigma is not just the use of the wrong word or action. Stigma is about disrespect, including the use of negative labels to identify a person living with mental illness. Stigma creates a barrier which discourages individuals and their families from getting the help they need due to the fear of being discriminated against. An estimated 50 million Americans experience a mental health disorder during any given year. Only one-fourth of these individuals actually seek mental health treatment services.¹

What is a mental illness?

According to National Mental Health Association a mental illness is a disease that causes mild to severe disturbances in thinking, perception and behavior. If these disturbances significantly impair a person's ability to cope with life's ordinary demands and routines, then he or she should immediately seek proper treatment with a mental health professional. With the proper care and treatment, a person can recover and resume normal activities.

Many mental illnesses are believed to have biological causes, just like cancer, diabetes and heart disease, but often mental disorders are caused by a person's environment and experiences.

Why does stigma still exist?

Unfortunately, the media is responsible for many of the **misconceptions** that persist about people with mental illness.

- Newspapers often stress a history of mental illness in backgrounds of people who commit crimes of violence.
- Television news programs frequently sensationalize crimes where persons with mental illnesses are involved.
- Comedians make fun of people with mental illnesses using their disabilities as a source of humor.
- National advertisers use stigmatizing images as promotional gimmicks to sell products.

Ironically, the media also offers our best hope for eradicating stigma because of its power to educate and influence public opinion.²

Words Can Be Poison³

Stigma discourages people from getting help. At any given time, one in four adults and one in five children experience a mental health problem. Early and appropriate services can be the best way to prevent an illness from getting worse. Many people don't seek such services because they don't want to be labeled as "mentally ill" or "crazy."

Stigma results in prejudice and discrimination. Many individuals try to prevent people who have mental illnesses from living in their neighborhood.

Stigma keeps people from getting good jobs and advancing in the workplace. Some employers are reluctant to hire people who have mental illnesses. Thanks to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), such discrimination is illegal; however, the act has not prevented this from occurring every day in America.

Stigma leads to fear, mistrust, and violence. Even though the vast majority of people who have mental illnesses are **no more violent than anyone else**, the average television viewer sees three people with mental illness each week—most of them are portrayed as violent. Such inaccurate portrayals lead people to fear those who have mental illness.

Stigma results in inadequate insurance coverage. Many insurance plans do not cover mental health services to the same degree as other illnesses. When mental illnesses are covered, coverage may be limited, inappropriate, or inadequate.³

How can you combat stigma?

- Share your experience with mental illness. Your story can convey to others that having a mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of.
- Help people with mental illness re-enter society. Support their efforts to obtain housing and jobs.
- Respond to false statements of images of people with mental illness. Many people have wrong and damaging ideas on the subject. Accurate facts and information may help change their ideas and actions.¹
- Write to your legislators. Ask them to support issues such as insurance parity, funding for research and increased budget for mental health services. The following web site will allow you to find your legislation districts: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/waml/>

What is MHA in Waukesha County, Inc. doing to combat stigma?

- Educating the community about stigma and how to combat it.
- Contacting local legislators and encouraging others to do the same.
- Connecting individuals to services through 211/FCFH and Advocacy Outreach Program.

¹Discrimination and Stigma. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2003.

²Stigma; Building Awareness and Understanding about Mental Illness. National Mental Health Association. 2000.

³Before You Label People, Look At Their Contents. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Center for Mental Health Services. 1996.



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MHA Staff

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Jeanne Parsons, *Programs Director*

Laura Lutz, *Coordinator of Community Outreach*

Nicole Schoenemann, *Community Prevention Education Coordinator*

Bob Walker, *Coordinator of Clinical Services*

Tracy Smail, *211/FCFH Associate Coordinator*

Katherine Colby, *Resource Development Specialist*

Tamyra Teed, *Technical Support Specialist*

Diana Thielsen, *Finance Associate*

Jenny Venné, *Administrative Associate*

Karen McCue, *Clerical Support*

Do you shop at Pick n' Save?

Mental Health Association in Waukesha County is part of Pick n' Save We Care Program. One percent of purchases made by individuals in the program go to the charity of their choice.

PLEASE CHOOSE US!

Our account code is:

#502500

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