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4105 Derry Street
Harrisburg, PA 17111
1-800-887-6422
717-564-4930
Fax 717-564-4708
www.pmhca.org

Governor Proposes 'Bare Bones' Budget; Four Departments to be Merged

Governor Tom Wolf delivered his proposed 2017-18 state budget on February 7, submitting a restrained spending program with no increases in the personal income tax or the sales tax. Republicans appeared to receive the budget with less resistance than last year.

The big news for the human service community is the Governor's plan to combine the Departments of Health, Human Services, Aging, and Drug and Alcohol Programs into one Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The consolidation is intended to improve services and save money - more than \$90 million in 2017-18. DHHS would be headed by one secretary with ten deputy secretaries including Medical Assistance Programs, Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Services, Aging and Adult Community Living, and Developmental Programs. [See this month's Vision editorial for additional information.]

There is no increase for community mental health services in the Governor's budget. The House of Representatives approved a budget on April 4 that proposed cuts to many human services programs including a cut to mental health services. This budget did include the proposed consolidation. It is likely that the Senate will make other changes and it is hard to predict final figures or when the budget will be passed.

The Governor's budget would provide funding under the Community/Hospital Integration Project Program (CHIPPs) for 30 people to return to community from Wernersville State Hospital. OMHSAS will close the civil section at Norristown State Hospital (NSH Civil) and use person-centered and recovery-oriented service plans to discharge individuals who can safely move to community-based services. NSH Civil currently serves 122 individuals from Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. Some of these people still have court orders from previous stays in the forensic unit. Work with the courts and counties has been initiated to determine services available for those who can move back to their communities. At least 60 NSH Civil beds will be retained as step-down beds for individuals transferred out of the forensic unit. Stakeholder meetings in the Norristown service area are being planned.

The House has passed a budget bill that contains cuts to mental health and other vital services. This bill is now being considered by the Senate. PMHCA is working collaboratively with other organizations and individuals to advocate for adequate funding for behavioral health services, and will provide updates as the budget progresses.

Now is the time to let your Senators know that funds for mental health are important to you! ●

VISION

is a publication of

Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association (PMHCA)

4105 Derry Street • Harrisburg, PA 17111
1-800-887-6422 • 717-564-4930
Fax 717-564-4708
www.pmhca.org

Our Mission — PMHCA is a statewide membership organization representative of the individual and collective expression of people who have recovered or are recovering from mental illness. Our purpose is to promote and support recovery through advocacy and education to eliminate stigma and discrimination.

While *Vision* is the official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association, it may contain articles and opinions from outside sources. These materials do not necessarily represent the views of PMHCA, its officers, and Board of Directors. Medical information is of a general nature and does not constitute professional advice.

Additional information about many *Vision* articles is available at our website at www.pmhca.org. If you do not have Internet access, contact the PMHCA office for assistance.

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Design and Printing



Health Care Coverage under ACA Safe for Now

After several weeks of heated discussions, but little real debate, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) pulled the so-called American Health Care Act (AHCA) from House consideration on March 24. Among its many objectionable provisions, the AHCA would have eliminated the 10 essential benefits required under the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare or ACA), including behavioral health services.

The Trump Administration and Republicans in Congress met with strong opposition in their efforts to repeal and replace the ACA with the AHCA. Thousands of constituents spoke in support of the ACA during Congressional town hall meetings in February and March, and some House and Senate members turned off their phones rather than answer the flood of calls opposing cuts to health benefits.

The AHCA received a heavy blow on March 14 when the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office released its analysis of the bill. Families USA, a national healthcare advocacy organization, summarized the CBO study:

- 24 million people will lose health insurance over the next 10 years, 14 million alone in 2018.
- The bill effectively ends Medicaid expansion, and caps the Medicaid program by cutting federal Medicaid funds by \$880 billion dollars over the next 10 years, or 25% of total expenditures.
- AHCA will result in fewer services with higher deductibles – reducing the number of plan choices that people will have in the marketplace.
- Premiums and out-of-pocket costs of coverage would increase drastically for lower-income people and older adults.

Extensive analysis of the Republican proposal and its demise are available on the Families USA website at <http://familiesusa.org/>

Thanks should be given to all members of Congress who voiced opposition to the AHCA's proposed loss of coverage and services for people with behavioral health needs. The ACA is still under fire, and as *Vision* goes to press, Congressional Republicans are discussing new proposals to repeal and replace the ACA. PMHCA will keep members updated on future developments affecting health care and coverage. ●

May is Mental Health Month – Watch for activities and events in your area!

Proposed Department of Health and Human Services

For the Editorial this month, I want to share excerpts from a recent letter that PMHCA sent to Department of Human Services Secretary Ted Dallas. The letter was in response to the Governor’s proposal to consolidate the Departments of Health, Drug and Alcohol Programs, Aging, and Human Services into a Department of Health and Human Services. More specifically, we emphasized that mental health must be treated equally in both the planning and operation of the new department and its services.

Dear Secretary Dallas,

PMHCA supports the concepts of combining departments into one larger Department of Health and Human Services. We appreciated the Secretaries’ enthusiasm for the change as expressed at the budget briefing. We have a number of issues, however, that I share with you in hopes of building a better, more effective health and human service system in Pennsylvania.

We are concerned about the fact that mental health and programs supporting people of all ages with mental illness were not mentioned... The lack of discussion on the topic could be construed as giving mental health services and people with serious mental illness a lower standing in Pennsylvania’s array of health and human services... Neglecting to discuss mental health services and people with serious mental illness implies that continuing such services is not a priority for the departments or even for the Governor. If community mental health services are not in the departments’ list of priorities, the legislature will certainly not see a need to fully fund them...

As you move forward, we urge all department heads to assure that plans include people with mental illness, including children and youth... [For example], the coming



PMHCA office: Art by Vicki Darring

together (again) of OMHSAS and the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs presents an excellent opportunity to collaboratively address the concurrent needs of people with both mental illness and substance use disorder... How does this new department plan to help these individuals?... The combined departments should be able to work cooperatively on issues and to reach more people in need.

I closed the letter by emphasizing our intention to work with the departments to assure that consumers’ voices would be heard during the consolidation and beyond. Secretary Dallas plans to set up a meeting with PMHCA, and we will keep you informed about our ongoing discussions. ●

— Lynn

For additional information, visit <https://www.governor.pa.gov/governor-wolf-announces-plan-to-create-department-of-health-and-human-services/>.

“ The great gift of life is the ability to appreciate what is there because we have ceased to demand what is not. ”

— Miriam Pollard, *Acceptance, passage into hope*

OMHSAS Deputy Secretary Dennis Marion 1954-2017

PMHCA was saddened to learn that Dennis Marion of Carlisle passed away unexpectedly March 29, 2017 at Holy Spirit Hospital, Camp Hill. Marion had served as Deputy Secretary for the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services since 2013.



Marion's entire career had been in the human service and government fields. Prior to becoming Deputy Secretary, he served in various positions in Cumberland County for 31 years, including Director of the Drug & Alcohol Commission, Director of the Office of Mental Health/Mental Retardation, Director of the Board of Elections, and as County Administrator and Chief County Clerk. Marion is survived by his wife Camille (Cardoni) Marion and his daughter Anna Marion.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Samaritan Fellowship, 99 Mooreland Ave., Carlisle, PA 17013 and to St. Patrick Catholic Church, 152 E. Pomfret St., Carlisle, PA 17013.

Until a successor is chosen, Dr. Dale Adair, Chief Medical Officer at OMHSAS, is serving as the acting Deputy Secretary. ●

Mental Health Planning Council Looking for New Members

The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) is recruiting members for the state's Mental Health Planning Council committees. The Council's committees, subcommittees, and related workgroups provide advice to OMHSAS on a broad range of issues. The committees strive for geographic and cultural diversity, and help ensure that the Commonwealth's public mental health and substance abuse system focuses on facilitating recovery, building resilience, and assuring wellness.

Applications are accepted throughout the year. Appointments and reappointments are made in May. Applications and additional information about the Council are available at www.parecovery.org. If you have questions about OMHSAS or the Council, contact Cristal Leeper at cleeper@pa.gov. ●

Mobile App Available to Manage Benefits

The Governor's Office of Transformation, Innovation, Management and Efficiency (GO-TIME) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) have launched a mobile app called myCOMPASS PA for Pennsylvanians who have applied for or receive assistance benefits. "The mobile app will allow individuals to make changes and monitor their benefits from... their own home," said DHS Secretary Ted Dallas.

myCOMPASS PA will allow individuals to upload photos of documents to their case files through a secure, safe environment. Other features allow users to

- View benefits details;
- View the processing status of their applications; and
- Update information such as address, phone number, email address, and voter registration.

The mobile application is now available for download from the Apple and Google Play app stores for use on smartphones. Before using the app functions, individuals must apply for benefits through DHS's COMPASS website or by visiting their local County Assistance Office. The PMHCA Health Insurance Navigator Consortium (1-855-274-5626) can provide free assistance with these applications.

DHS estimates that myCOMPASS PA will save an average of \$3.2 million per year by reducing mail processing time, manual information entry, call center calls, postage, and printing. During the two weeks after its launch in the Apple store, 4,669 users downloaded the app with 13,680 clients viewing the status of their benefits, 1,568 documents were uploaded, and the app received a 5-star rating.

For an informational video on the new app, go to YouTube and search for MyCOMPASS PA or visit <http://dhs.pa.gov/citizens/compassmobileapp/>. ●

“ A book is like a garden carried in the pocket. ”

— Chinese Proverb

PA Initiates Independent Certification of CPS

OMHSAS issued revised Peer Support Services (PSS) Standards in December 2016. After much discussion and a split decision among stakeholders, OMHSAS decided to move Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) certification under the Pennsylvania Certification Board (PCB), which would establish a code of ethics and a grievance and appeal process.

OMHSAS had not shared this policy change with stakeholders in advance of the March 2, 2017 Planning Council meeting except to send an initial Power Point that outlined their intent to pursue certification by April 1, 2017. PMHCA was concerned with the lack of stakeholder involvement in this policy change and emphasized that in 2011 regional CSP/stakeholder meetings and calls with providers and advocates were used to obtain extensive input on this issue.

The 2011 process determined that peer support specialists were not receptive to certification, largely due to the financial cost to peers. OMHSAS staff stated that the PCB and OMHSAS have established a grandparenting process to recognize current CPS credentials and that OMHSAS will pay for “grandparented” certifications, although the cost of credentialing was not detailed. As a result of the current discussion, additional opportunities for input have been scheduled.

According to OMHSAS, the U.S. Department of Labor has documented that “Weekly earnings of full time wage and salary workers with a certification or license were 34% higher than earnings for those who do not hold such credentials.” Lynn Keltz noted that, “It would be great if this could happen, but increased salaries would be the decision of providers and Medicaid in Pennsylvania, not OMHSAS.”

Additional stakeholder outreach is taking place as VISION goes to press, including a conference call hosted by PMHCA on April 25. Questions and concerns may be directed to Pat Madigan at PMHCA. ●

Speak Up for New Option for Home and Community Based Services

Everyone agrees that allowing people to receive services in their communities is more effective and less expensive than hospitalization. Unfortunately, Pennsylvania is not taking advantage of a provision in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that would allow it to provide some home and community based services to individuals, including those with serious mental illness, who are not currently eligible. The provision amended 1915(i) of the Social Security Act and allows states to provide Home and Community Based Services without a beneficiary having to need a nursing facility level of care. The amendment removes the barrier for people who have substantial needs for services and supports but do not meet the nursing facility clinical criteria.

The amendment also requires that service planning be developed through a person-centered planning process that addresses health and long-term services and support needs and that reflects an individual’s preferences and goals. If Pennsylvania adopts 1915(i), it could target services

for individuals with serious mental illness to increase community-based supports and decrease use of inpatient hospitalizations and long-term state hospitalizations.

Action needed: The state’s Department of Human Services has not acted on using the 1915(i) State Plan Option. PMHCA and the Pennsylvania Health Law Project are asking consumers to contact OMHSAS and Secretary Ted Dallas to urge them to work with the administration to implement the 1915(i) option. Tell them that serving people in their communities reduces Medicaid costs and leads to improved outcomes for those served. OMHSAS can be reached at sklucar@pa.gov or at OMHSAS, P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg PA 17105-2675.

[Information in this article was gathered through the Affordable Care Act grant to the Pennsylvania Health Law Project from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council.] ●

IT’S NICE TO BE LIKED – Please “like” PMHCA on Facebook. It’s a good way to keep up with the PMHCA family, our activities, and current issues. ●



DHS Gets Grant for Early Childhood Mental Health

Secretary Ted Dallas has announced that the Department of Human Services has received an Intensive Technical Assistance grant through the Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC). The grant will help the state to promote mental health and school readiness, and focuses on supporting children's social, emotional, and behavioral health and development.

The grant is a three-year technical assistance opportunity that uses the IECMHC toolkit for planning, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability efforts by helping the department to

- Implement effective models of IECMHC,
- Increase equality and reduce disparities,

- Set competency standards,
- Communicate key messages,
- Conduct research and evaluation, and
- Develop strategies for financing.

The IECMHC is an evidence-based approach that supports parents and other adults who work with young children in the place where the children learn, play, and grow. IECMHC helps to strengthen teacher-family relationships, identify children at risk for behavioral, developmental, or mental health difficulties, increase caregiver and provider skills, and help families access additional services when needed. For more information on the IECMHC, go to <https://www.samhsa.gov/iecmhc>. ●

ADVOCACY & RECOVERY

Recovery Works Summit 2017 – Back By Popular Demand

PMHCA and the Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations – Alliance (PRO-A) will again co-sponsor the Recovery Works Summit on September 13, 2017 at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel. Last's year's summit was an historic event and a major success in bringing together the mental health and drug and alcohol recovery communities. People in recovery, providers of behavioral health services, and policy makers collaborated on efforts to strengthen our voices, use our talents and experiences to expand employment opportunities, unite our voices on advocacy issues, and eliminate stigma and discrimination.

The 2017 Summit will focus on three topics designed to strengthen our collective voices and expand recovery:

- Exploration of opportunities and challenges for recovery workforce development and retention
- Advocacy within and between the recovery movements
- Working together to impact public policy that affects peer-based recovery support services and our recovery systems

The Summit will follow last year's format, including keynote speakers, panel discussions, workshops, a plenary session, and networking. The summit is funded through a SAMHSA Recovery and Resiliency grant awarded to the Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations - Alliance in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association. Visit the PMHCA website for registration information www.recoveryworkssummit.com and call us if printed information is needed. ●

Scholarships Available for Recovery Works Summit

Recovery Works Summit 2017

It's coming up fast, so don't wait to apply for a scholarship to the Recovery Works Summit!

PMHCA and Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance (PRO-A) are offering a limited number of scholarships to cover 2017 Recovery Works Summit registration fees, as well as hotel room and travel costs for people who live 50 miles or more from Harrisburg. Scholarships are available on a first come first served basis, and the deadline to apply is *Monday, July 31, 2017*. Applications are available by calling PMHCA and visiting <http://www.recoveryworkssummit.com>. ●

Children's SSI Threatened - Personal Stories and Action Needed

As part of its efforts to reduce human service spending, Congress is considering elimination of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for children. According to information from Disability Rights Pennsylvania, this cash assistance, with an average benefit of \$664 monthly, is narrowly limited to the most vulnerable children with disabilities: those who have marked and severe functional limitations who live in a household with low income and few assets. Parents often use the benefit to cover additional expenses associated with raising a child with disabilities, such as costs for exceptional child care needs, extra utility costs, time off from work to care for their child, safe and accessible housing, special diets, respite, and health care. In

Pennsylvania, close to 70,000 children are at-risk of losing their SSI, and 1.3 million children nationwide are in jeopardy.

To assist in their advocacy for this essential support, Disability Rights Pennsylvania is seeking stories from families whose children receive SSI. The DRP survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DRP-SSI-Survey>. Call 1-800-692-7443 for hard copies of the survey or additional information.

In addition to sharing your story, DRP also outlined additional action that can be taken to help protect SSI for children with disabilities:

1. Share the information above with others.

2. Contact your member of Congress to share your views on the importance of the SSI childhood disability program and essential supports from children with disabilities.

A list of the state's U.S. House of Representative members and the number of children who receive SSI in their districts is available at <https://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/51104/c/199/images/SSI%20Children%20by%20Congressional%20District.pdf>. For the state's two U.S. Senators Robert Casey and Pat Toomey, the 70,000 state-wide total figure can be used.

[Information from Disability Rights Pennsylvania] ●

Writings from Rosco

When Ronald "Rosco" Cole died in 2016, Vision honored him by printing one of his poems. We think it is time to share another in memory of our friend and colleague.

To Write a Poem

How to write a poem

It is as easy as (or contrary) to your being.

It could be as small as a flea or as large as an elephant.

That's a fact...I'm not 'lion'

C what's right in front of you or just a play on words

Thoughts are real, or just part of your imagination written so it's from your heart, or something that just starts...

Let it happen.

Get a thought and go with it.

Like I tell them, "Just hang on to the pen and let it do the work." ●

NENA SAYS ...



WON'T YOU
PLEASE
JOIN
PMHCA?

A Visit with the Northeast Region CSP

Since 1984, the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health has used the Community Support Program (CSP) Principles and the state CSP Advisory Committee to guide development of services and the system of care. The Northeast Region CSP serves 15 counties:

- Bradford
- Sullivan
- Tioga
- Wayne
- Luzerne
- Lackawanna
- Susquehanna
- Carbon
- Monroe
- Pike
- Wyoming
- Lehigh
- Northampton
- Berks
- Schuylkill

Lynn Houseknecht, the Advocacy/Community Services Specialist at The

Advocacy Alliance in Scranton, serves as the CSP’s technical advisor. She spoke with Vision about some of the CSP’s current activities:

Our CSP gives people from all of our counties – consumers, providers, and family members – a chance to meet, share info, and discuss issues. Because we serve such a wide area, we offer teleconferencing at our meetings so that everyone has a chance to participate. We also put out a quarterly newsletter, the Northeast Connection, that gives lots of info on current issues and upcoming events.

Our CSP sponsors several education forums during the year. Our June program this year will be on trauma-informed care. Each October we have a networking and education day where people can get together and learn about

issues such as mental health first aid or CPR training.

We provided seed grants to four county CSPs in 2016 to help them with their activities, and we also give \$100 outreach grants to support organizations with printing, events, PR, and other needs for their advocacy and education programs.

The Northeast Region CSP is a clearinghouse for information; we share local information and resources and we also carry our members’ issues to the state level through the Mental Health Planning Council.

Additional information about the Northeast Region CSP is available at http://theadvocacyalliance.org/Programs_and_Services/comm_mh_services.html#adult or you can email Lynn Houseknecht at lh@theadvocacyalliance.org. ●

Some Notes on Music Therapy

Music Therapy is a non-threatening approach to recovery that can be used with other types of therapy to assist clients’ progress and insight. Molly Warren, a Master’s-level music therapist (www.olivebranchtherapeuticservices.com), provided personal insights on music therapy in a recent blog (The Impact of Music Therapy) on the National Alliance on Mental Illness website. In the blog, she shares a story about the positive effect of songwriting for one of her clients:

Songwriting provides opportunities for expression in a positive and rewarding way. Anyone can create lyrics that reflect their own thoughts and experiences, and select instruments and sounds that best reflect the emotion behind the lyrics. This process can be very validating, and can aid in building self-worth. This intervention can also instill a sense of pride, as someone *listens* to their own creation.

When I worked at a residential treatment center, I was notified that a child refused to continue meeting with his usual therapist. Even though he was initially hesitant to meet with me, he soon became excited for our music therapy sessions.

I asked him to explain what it means to be a “shining star,” which is mentioned several times in the song “Carry On” by



FUN. I was expecting this 8-year-old to tell me something simple, like “it means you’re special.” But he surprised me when he stated, matter-of-factly: “It means that you are something others notice. It means you are something to look up to, and you are something that helps others navigate.”

And just like that: This lyric offered the opportunity to discuss self-worth, resilience, and strength. Music provided him with the structure and opportunity to process in an engaging way. Soon, his therapist began attending our sessions to help build a healthier therapeutic relationship. His family and teachers reported improved emotion regulation and social interaction skills. Check out the American Music Therapy Association to find a board certified or licensed music therapist near you.

If you have a story to share about how music has made a positive impact on your life, please share it with us for a future issue of Vision. Send your story to lynn@pmhca.org ●

EVENT CALENDAR

Additional trainings are listed on the PMHCA website. For more information, visit <http://www.pmhca.org/trainings/index.html>.

Certified Peer Specialists in Crisis Services

- Somerset: May 8 - 10
- Reading: May 22 - 24

Trainings are free.

The training is designed to prepare CPS's to work in crisis services (telephone, mobile, walk-in, and residential). Topics include the Mental Health Procedures Act, roles and responsibilities of a CPS in crisis services, de-escalation, and suicide assessment and prevention.

Email questions to info@papsc.org. For more information or to register: <http://papeersupportcoalition.org/education/continuing-education/>. ●

Orientation to Medicaid Funded Peer Support Documentation Training

- Franklin/Fulton: May 5

Trainings are free.

Participants learn about documentation and how to write a Strength Based Assessment, Individual Service Plan, and Progress Notes. CPS's and CPS Supervisors are strongly encouraged to attend.

Email questions to info@papsc.org.

For more information or to register: <http://papeersupportcoalition.org/education/continuing-education/>. ●

May is Mental Health Awareness Month OMHSAS Event: You Are Not Alone

May 3 • 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Strawberry Square, Harrisburg

The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, PA System of Care Partnership, PA Healthy Transitions Partnership, and Youth M.O.V.E. PA invite you to You Are Not Alone, featuring ways to connect through art, animals, service, sharing and more.

Activities include:

- 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Question, Persuade, Refer - Training for Suicide Prevention
- 12-1 p.m. Speakers and entertainment
- 12-1 p.m. Tai Chi class
- 1-2 p.m. Guided Meditation workshop ●

OMHSAS Service Area Plan (SAP) Meetings

May 9 • 1 - 4 p.m.

Wernersville State Hospital, 160 Main Street, Wernersville, PA - Building 37 Auditorium

RSVP by May 2 to Jane Seidel at 610-670-4111 or jaseidel@pa.gov.

May 22

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Norristown State Hospital, 1001 Sterigere Street, Norristown, PA

RSVP by May 8 to Helen Brennan at 610-313-1014 or hbrennan@pa.gov. ●

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Certified Peer Specialists and Certified Recovery Specialists participated in a Forensic Peer Support Training in Beaver County, March 27-29. The training was co-sponsored by PMHCA and the Mental Health Association in Beaver County. Trainers (front row) were Fred Nardei, Liz Woodley and Katrin Schall.

EVENT CALENDAR

Additional trainings are listed on the PMHCA website. For more information, visit <http://www.pmhca.org/trainings/index.html>.

PA CARES 2017 Training Summit

May 10

Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle

Registration is free

Training on promoting wellness within the lives of service members, veterans and their families. Targeted audience includes community mental health and substance-abuse staff, social workers, professional counselors, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, clergy/pastoral or spiritual practitioners, and the staff of PA Veteran Centers.

Registration is limited to the first 100 applicants and must be completed by April 30 at http://www.ddap.pa.gov/SiteAssets/Lists/Announcements/NewForm/PaCaresProgram_May2017.pdf ●

First Annual NAMI Keystone PA Conference – Working Together to Build a Better Future!

May 12 (Full day) and 13 (½ day)

Best Western Premier Hotel and Conference Center, Harrisburg, PA

Registration: Individual – \$185; Professional – \$225

Conference will focus on connection, collaboration, and community to envision a better Pennsylvania for those affected by mental illness and their families. Individuals living with mental illness and family members; educators, students and other young adults; mental health professionals; local community leaders; and regional, county and state government leaders are all welcome.

Registration and additional information: <http://www.namiswa.org/namicon2017/> ●

CPS Training for Individuals who are Deaf and American Sign Language Users

May 15 - May 26 in Harrisburg

The Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services is seeking individuals who are deaf, use ASL, seeking employment, and want to take this training to learn how to share their experience in mental health recovery to help other individuals with mental health who have deaf needs.

The class is limited to 15 students.

Deadline for applying is April 28.

CPS Training requirements:

- Deaf and ASL user
- 18 years old or older
- Received or is receiving mental health services for serious mental illness
- Have a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma
- From 2015 through 2017:
 - o maintained at least 12 months of successful work or volunteer experience, or
 - o earned at least 24 credit hours of a college or post-secondary educational institution

If you do not meet the training requirements or if you have questions, contact Ginny Mastrine for assistance at vmastrine@pa.gov or 717.772.7926.

To complete a training application email PJ.Simonson@riinternational.com and ask for an application. The forms will be emailed to you to complete online. ●

Peer Support within the Criminal Justice System

Forensic Peer Support training will be held in Warren and Philadelphia in May. Stay tuned to the PMHCA website for additional upcoming trainings, including Trauma Informed Peer Support for those who have completed the Peer Support within the Criminal Justice System training. ●

Improve Your Vision

Let us know how you like *VISION* and how we can improve it. Send your comments, suggestions, and information to lynn@pmhca.org. ●



“ Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”

— Winston Churchill

Why I Belong to PMHCA

Bette Peoples goes back a long way with the consumer movement. She has been active with PMHCA for over 20 years and is a current PMHCA Board member. Closer to home, she was a founder and is now the Executive Director of Grapevine in Butler, PA. You can see a delightful mini-bio of Bette and her work at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdKFBbmsCYI>.

Bette believes in the power of advocacy and the consumer movement, and she sees PMHCA as a

significant asset for consumers: “PMHCA helps people to be a part of the struggle for recovery and the larger recovery movement. It gets us out of our own little counties, and keeps us on top of issues. It’s important to join PMHCA so we have a voice and a place at the table. We can’t afford not to work together for our common good.”

Thanks, Bette – for all you do. ●

“I keep my ideals because, in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.”

— Anne Frank

FROM THE HOME OFFICE

Glenn Koons Changed Lives - So Can You

When Glenn Koons died six years ago, he left a legacy of peer support, advocacy, and caring. The Glenn Koons Certified Peer Specialist Scholarship provides \$1,000 to a promising Pennsylvania candidate for CPS training – someone who demonstrates the traits shown by Glenn, such as the ability to engage others, share life experiences in recovery, provide leadership, and teach others these skills.

Don't let Glenn's spirit fade away – Help to continue Glenn's important work and uphold his legacy by supporting the Glenn Koons Scholarship. Join the hundreds of generous

donors who have made a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of people in mental health recovery. Donate online or by check made payable to Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association, 4105 Derry Street, Harrisburg, PA 17111, Attn: Glenn Koons Scholarship.

The Glenn Koons Scholarship was established in 2011 by the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association (PMHCA) and the Mental Health Association in Pennsylvania (MHAPA). You can read the inspiring stories of past scholarship recipients at the PMHCA website.

Note: The deadline for applying for the 2017 Glenn Koons Scholarship is May 15. Applications are available at <http://www.pmhca.org/about/KoonsScholarship.html>. For additional information, contact Samantha@pmhca.org or call 717-564-4930. ●



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