



Mental Health Matters

News and Events at the South Carolina Department of Mental Health

NOVEMBER 8, 2011 EDITION

16TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ADVANCING SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH HELD IN CHARLESTON

Melanie Ferretti, Office of Network Information Technology

Nearly 1,000 people attended the 16th Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health held in Charleston, South Carolina at the Charleston Area Convention Center on September 22-24, 2011. The Conference is the nation's premier school mental health conference and offers numerous opportunities to learn more about best practices in school mental health. This year's theme was "School Mental Health: Achieving Student Success through Family, School, and Community Partnerships."

In association with the 16th Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health, South Carolina Night was held on September 21, 2011, to allow those with a stake in student education and mental health to spend time networking, learn from each other, and share ideas on how to remove barriers to children's success in schools. The crowd was composed of South Carolina mental health professionals and educators, as well as 14 national experts from across the country. According to Dianne Flashnick, executive director of the Federation of Families of South Carolina, "Typically there are underlying reasons why a student is uncooperative or unsuccessful in school. We need to focus on identification, intervention, and prevention. Schools cannot do their work effectively without mental health professionals as their partners."

South Carolina Night was sponsored by the Center for School Mental Health (CSMH), the University of Maryland School of Medicine, University of South Carolina's College of Arts and Sciences and Department of Psychology, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's South Carolina Chapter. City of North Charleston Mayor R. Keith Summey, Councilperson Gary White, and SCDMH State Director John H. Magill each extended warm welcomes to the crowd and provided opening remarks.

State Director John H. Magill said, "The South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH) makes a tremendous commitment to children and adolescents. So much so, that one-third of our patients, about 30,000 statewide, are in our child, adolescent, and families

program, almost half of them are in our school-based programs." The mission of the school-based program is to identify and intervene at early points in emotional disturbances, and assist parents, teachers, and counselors in developing comprehensive strategies for resolving these disturbances. SCDMH currently provides school-based services in 397 schools.



Federation of Families-SC Executive Director Diane Flashnick, Elizabeth Freeman, American Institutes for Research, SCDMH State Director John H. Magill

Guest speaker Project Director Kevin Rhodes spoke about the Kershaw County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, a federal, four-year, \$5.7 million gang prevention grant, the result of a collaborative effort among hundreds of community leaders after a local teen was killed in a gang-related shooting in 2007. The initiative focuses on prevention, intervention, and counseling, and has provided funds to install digital cameras on county school buses. According to Rhodes, "a child who doesn't graduate high school costs their community between one and two million dollars over the course of their lifetime."

With funds from a federal grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, in partnership with USC, the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health (WCMH) was able to send 22 staff members to the conference. Lori Chappelle, director of Children’s Services at the WCMH, said, “Attending this conference helps staff members to connect with the larger school mental health community, it helps us work with all those people that touch each child’s life. Staff will leave this conference with pages of notes and enthusiasm they will bring back and share with those who were unable to attend.”



(L to R)Charleston/Dorchester MHC Executive Director Deborah Blalock and Berkeley CMHC Executive Director Debbie Calcote

School-based coordinators from the SCDMH Centers in Lexington, Greenville, Piedmont, Anderson-Oconee-Pickens, PeeDee, and Charleston each received one of six scholarships awarded to cover the cost of attending the conference. Steve Hope, school-based services supervisor and award recipient from Anderson-Oconee-Pickens said, “I was honored to be able to attend the national conference this year. What a massive production! There were so many informative sessions to choose from. It was humbling to see how much the School-based Services movement, outside of SC, has grown. I learned, and was reminded of, so much about our discipline. As a result of attending, my goal is to continue exploring options for interagency collaboration in the development and sustainability of school-based mental health programs.”

More than 150 sessions were offered on various topics concerning Community of Practice on School-Based Behavioral Health. SCDMH staff presented in five of the sessions. Melissa Craft, SCDMH director of School-Based Services, Dr. Monica McConnell, director of Child, Adolescent, and Families Division at Columbia Area Mental Health Center, Helen Pridgen of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention-SC, and Joan Dickinson, formerly of the Department of Education, were co-presenters for the breakout session titled “Suicide

Prevention Summer Institute – A South Carolina Collaborative Utilizing Best Practice Materials and Lifesaving Community.”

Craft also co-presented with Cathy Blume during a session titled, “Lessons Learned in School Mental Health Programs: A Decade of Administering a Comprehensive System of State-Wide School Mental Health Programs in South Carolina (EBP).” Lori Chappelle, Samantha Pageot, and Eryn Bergeron of WCMH were co-presenters with Johnathan Fowler, Heather Lasky, and Leslie Taylor of the University of South Carolina, Department of Psychology, for the session titled, “Facilitating Collaborative Partnerships in School Mental Health Research.”

Kennard DuBose, SCDMH, co presented with Craig William, SC Department of Juvenile Justice, and Tamara Starnes, Charleston/Dorchester Mental Health Center, in the session titled, “South Carolina’s Use of the Sequential Intercept Model: Diversion and System Transition at the State Level and Charleston.”

Jim Garvey of the WCMH presented, “High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders Need Attention Too!”

The Conference on Advancing School Mental Health was supported by two lead organizations: the Center for School Mental Health (CSMH) Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and the IDEA Partnership funded by the Office of Special Education Programs. The conference was co-sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, South Carolina Chapter, the Federation of Families of South Carolina, the University of South Carolina’s College of Arts and Sciences, and the University of South Carolina’s Department of Psychology.

Next year’s conference will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah September 27-29, 2012.



Project Director Kevin Rhodes, Kershaw County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

RECOVERY ZONE: AIKEN-BARNWELL MHC & PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

Cindy Smith, Joe Stertz Jr., Wayne Moseley, and Tamara Smith, Aiken-Barnwell MHC

Aiken Barnwell Mental Health Center (ABMHC) is a premier provider of Peer Support Services in South Carolina. Our mission is: *“To empower consumers to make decisions and changes that helps them move forward in recovery and enhances quality of living.”*

ABMHC began hiring paraprofessionals as early as 2001, with the development of the “Welcome Home Program,” which utilized federal block grant funds. It was established to help people receiving mental health services returning from local and state psychiatric hospitals to return into the community and to maintain community living. The program proved to be very beneficial and helpful to our clients and demonstrated the importance of peers helping peers.

When the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services formally approved the Peer Support Service, it was an opportunity for ABMHC to establish one of the first Peer Support programs for the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH).

Peer Support’s purpose is to allow clients to learn how to make healthy decisions by connecting with others and to learn how to get better, and to provide clients with an opportunity to learn how to manage their illness and symptoms. Peer Support Services at ABMHC includes a drop-in-center also known as “The Recovery Zone,” which offers clients a safe place to come together to learn about mental illness and coping techniques, and develop friendships.

Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPSS) are self-identified clients of mental health services. The CPSS is special in that he or she utilizes his or her own experience to act as a role model and mentor for others. Each CPSS is required to complete a certified training program, as well as pass an examination before being able to provide services.

Preliminary SCDMH data (2010) suggest that clients utilizing at least 50 hours of peer support services during the year use about half the number of crisis services than clients who do not receive peer support. Further, these clients don’t need to see a doctor, nurse, or a mental health professional as often as those who don’t receive peer support services. In addition, they have fewer hospitalizations, and, if they do, have shorter stays. Aiken Barnwell Mental Health currently employs three Certified Peer Support Specialists: Cynthia Smith, Wayne Moseley, and Joe Stertz, Jr. All are self-identifying dually-diagnosed clients, who have a total of 16 years’ experience.



(LtoR) Joseph Stertz, Jr., Cynthia Smith, Wayne Moseley

“For close to eight years, I utilized the services of community mental health centers in North Carolina and Virginia. As a Certified Peer Support Specialist, I use my knowledge and experiences as a client of the community mental health system to help those who are new to recovery, those who may be scared and unknowledgeable, to access the services they need in order to live their lives in recovery.” – *Joe Stertz Jr., CPSS*

“Being a peer Support Specialist has changed my life. It has given value to my past and validated me as a human being. I go to work every day as a testimony to every client I come in contact with. I am somebody. I am Important and I do matter. I walked in to ABMHC ten years ago as a client and addict. Now as a CPSS, I support, encourage and role model recovery for others. What other job allows you the opportunity to share ‘the good, the bad, and the ugly’ to produce something lasting and beautiful?” – *Cindy Smith, CPSS*

“As a member of the Peer Support Team at Aiken Barnwell Mental Health Center and a current client of mental health services, I have seen many positive changes in my life and for others in recovery. As we self-identify, we are able to develop a bond and work diligently to earn the trust and respect of other clients. Clients understand that we have experienced many of the same problems they are currently facing and are able to use our experiences as a guide to improve their own lives. A CPSS offers clients hope, demonstrating that clients can have a more fulfilling and satisfying life without some of the limitations caused by illness.” – *Wayne Moseley, CPSS*

TEAM DMH SUPPORTS OUT OF THE DARKNESS WALK 2011

Tracy LaPointe, Office of Public Affairs

On Sunday, October 16, the South Carolina Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP-SC) held its annual Out of the Darkness Columbia walk at Riverfront Park. The event aims to raise funds for AFSP-SC suicide prevention efforts, increase awareness about depression and suicide, and provide support to survivors of suicide loss.



DMHers support the AFSP at its 2011 Columbia Walk.

The opening ceremony began with an invocation by John Brown, director of Adult Special Services at Columbia Area MHC and President of the AFSP-SC Chapter. SC Department of Mental Health State Director John H. Magill welcomed the crowd and introduced Meera Narasimhan, MD, Professor and Chair at the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science of the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, who discussed the importance of research in preventing suicide.

More than 500 attendees gathered for the Columbia event, which has, so far, raised over \$37,000 (the fundraising period does not end until December 31). Proceeds support numerous area and statewide AFSP programs and services, including More than Sad, a teen suicide prevention program provided to 86 school districts across our state; a Summer Institute in partnership with the SC Department of Education; sponsorship of the annual Survivors of Suicide Healing Conference; sponsorship of the Survivor Support Group Facilitator Training, and more. Former Board Chair Helen Pridgen, LMSW, has recently been hired by AFSP as South Carolina Area Director.

Five walks have been held across the state this year, in Bluffton, Spartanburg, Columbia, Myrtle Beach, and

Charleston, totaling more than 970 walkers and raising approximately \$88,000.

DMH was proud to have a Central Office team this year, with 19 members taking part. Special thanks to the following DMHers for giving their Sunday to support a worthy cause! Robert Bank, MD, Mark Binkley (and his faithful canine, Brad Pitt), Melissa Craft, Ann and Mike Dwyer, Melanie Ferretti, Tracy LaPointe and Aaron Soehl, State Director John H. Magill, Michele Murff, Chyrl and Grace Oenbrink, Sue Perry, Jennifer Rucker, Mallory Sharpe, Margo Stewart, and Leslie, Dorothy, and Susan Yarborough.

MAGILL HONORED FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Tracy LaPointe, Office of Public Affairs

Wednesday, October 12, at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine’s Dean’s Reception, SCDMH State Director John H. Magill received the Dean’s Distinguished Service Medal. Ten faculty and staff affiliated with the USC-SOM received this prestigious honor from Dean Richard Hoopman.

Magill, who has served as a clinical professor in the department of neuropsychiatry and behavioral science since 2006, was honored for his “unflagging support of the medical school and his efforts to strengthen the partnership between the USC and the S.C. Department of Mental Health.”

“He believes in the importance of education if the state is to continue to provide quality mental healthcare to its citizens both now and in the future,” Hoppmann said.



2011 Distinguished Service Award recipients; photo courtesy USC

The award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to students, patient care, the community, and the medical school, are given every other year.

2011 DAY LONG CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Sandy Hyre, MSN, RN, Administrative Director, ETR

Each year, the Department of Mental Health (SCDMH), in collaboration with the University of South Carolina School of Medicine-Palmetto Health Richland Continuing Medical Education Organization, hosts a Day-long Continuing Medical Education (CME) Conference titled “A Psychiatric Update.” This year’s program was Friday, September 16, in the Forum at the William S. Hall Psychiatric Institute in Columbia, and was also video conferenced to the mental health centers and facilities across the state. This year’s event was the 10th consecutive conference, with 189 staff in attendance in Columbia and 105 who participated via video conference for a grand total of 294 participants, the largest audience since the program was instituted. Videoconferencing has allowed staff who are unable to travel to Columbia to participate in this valuable learning experience.

A Planning Committee meets and determines the program’s agenda based on identified needs, which are identified through an annual Needs Assessment that is sent out to physician and clinical staff in SCDMH. Continuing Medical Education (CME), Nursing Contact Hours and Continuing Education (CEU) credits were awarded to participants.

This year’s key note speaker was Jamila Williams, M.D., MPH, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, Division of Occupational and Preventive Medicine, Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. This year’s topics included: “Attachment Theory and Family Therapy,” Kenneth Phelps, Ph.D., Couple and Family Therapist and Assistant Professor, USCSOM Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science; “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: An Overview,” Jamila Williams, M.D., MPH; “A Suicide Prevention Safety Plan,” Robert Breen, M.D., SCDMH Psychiatrist and Associate Professor, USCSOM Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science; “Adult Autistic Spectrum Disorder and the Legal System,” Donna Schwartz-Watts, M.D., SCDMH Psychiatrist and Clinical Professor, USCSOM Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science; and “Emergency Medicine,” Christian Neal, M.D., Psychiatrist and Assistant Professor, USCSOM Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science.

The event was a resounding success as evidenced by the open display of camaraderie among participants and comments such as: “this was a great conference,” “excellent speakers,” and “learned new information that will helpful in my practice.” In the very near future the Planning Committee will begin preparing for next year’s conference, which will be held on Friday, September 21, 2012.

SPOTLIGHT ON SANDY HYRE, MSN, RN

Sandy Hyre, MSN, RN, is the Administrative Director of the SCDMH Division of Evaluation, Training, and Research. In addition to designing and implementing employee on line learning modules, finding and sharing continuing education opportunities with staff, and overseeing data collection and distribution for SCDMH, she plans many events, most notably, the annual Day-long CME conference.

A Psychiatric Update provides professionals across the state an opportunity to get the latest updates on psychiatric research issues from leaders in various fields. It is a highly anticipated event, which grows every year. This year’s event was the most well-attended yet, with professionals attending in person and via videoconference.

As you can imagine, planning this event is no easy task. Sandy and her staff have a down-pat system for putting together the Daylong CME each year, which includes many very early mornings, and a great deal of planning, research, legwork, troubleshooting, and follow-up. I stopped by this year’s conference to see how Sandy makes it happen.

Sandy was busy, as usual, assisting attendees in finding breakouts, ensuring materials were replenished, and working with presenters to assure they had what they needed. You would hardly know that she’d arrived at the Forum at WSHPI before dawn on this particularly chilly day to set up, even bringing breakfast to the staff who helped set up for the day’s activities.

The event runs so smoothly that it seems effortless; you’d never guess that a copier malfunction had Sandy and staff working late the day before to ensure all materials were prepared as needed. Attendees continued to stream in as I watched Mary Few, Sandy’s administrative assistant, check them in and distribute materials; she has it down to a science.

It’s no wonder that this event is highly anticipated. In addition to the exceptional agenda, and events, and the flexibility of attending via videoconference, attendees CEUs are automatically entered into their Pathlore transcripts. Nothing is overlooked. I didn’t get a chance to talk to Sandy that morning; she was busy ensuring everything went off without a hitch, and making it look effortless in the process. I have no doubt that this event will continue to grow.

— Tracy LaPointe



McKinney House, My Home

Chappy the Jack Russell Terrier

As dictated to Nicole Kulick, Statewide Interpreter Coordinator, Deaf Services

I can't remember much about my childhood, but my earliest memory was at the vet's office; he was ready to euthanize me, because he thought no one would want to adopt me. They said I wasn't going to make a good pet; after all, what family would want a Deaf dog? (at least that's what they said)

Then, the vet thought to call the McKinney House, a residential care facility for the Deaf run by the Department of Mental Health, located in Mauldin, South Carolina. Opened in 1994, McKinney House helps clients develop independent living skills and

uses the psychosocial rehabilitation model.

Deaf Services Program Director Roger Williams told them, "You don't tell a room full of Deaf people you have to put a dog down because he's Deaf."

Thanks to Roger and the good folks at McKinney House, today I live a very busy and active life.

I have worked and lived there for the past 14 years, where I play an important part in the day-to-day life and therapy of the residents. I attend and help lead group five times a day. When a client is having a rough day, I am quick to recognize it and am willing to sit with them until they feel better. When a client can't sleep, I am happy to sit on the couch and allow them to pet me until they start to feel relaxed. I love taking walks, and help clients stay in shape by making sure they get some fresh air several times a day. The clients and staff have taught me a few tricks that I love to perform, especially if a treat is involved.

I am part of the welcoming committee, by always saying hello to visitors (and standing between their feet). We would love to have you come visit us at McKinney House – to meet our clients and show you our facility.

As for me? You won't be able to miss me, just look down – I'll be standing between your feet.

Chappy is a Jack Russell Terrier who has lived at McKinney House since 1997.

Mental Health Matters is a newsletter of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH). Produced by the Office of Public Affairs, it aims bring items of interest within the DMH system to the attention of Agency personnel, the Mental Health Commission, mental health advocates, and other stakeholders.