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Spring 2009

The Newsletter of Mental Health Association of Nassau County, Inc.

**Mental Health Needs in a Poor Economy**

by David Hymowitz, Associate Director

The economic environment has begun to have an impact on mental health services. We have seen programs merge and close, while others are consolidating services into single locations. As the private-for-profit world is impacted, there has been a decrease in donations and other sources of support. Agency portfolios have also been severely affected in their earnings.

**How do we continue to provide quality services, expand to meet new demands and more importantly, sustain our programs?**

It is our belief at MHA that stimulus at this time is not only about money but how are we to maintain services to those most impacted? We believe that the stimulus must be used to maintain and improve services, not just expand them.

**President Obama has introduced a stimulus package to jump start the economy. The recovery of people with mental illness. MHA Matters will look at some of the stimulus money for mental health services.**

Meeting Mental Health Needs in a Poor Economy

Mental Health Needs in a Poor Economy

Heath & Human Services Stimulus PLANT

by David Nemiroff, Executive Director

Earlier this year the President and Congress, with the approval of the Department of Health and Human Services, passed legislation to provide the United States with a large economic stimulus package. Unfortunately, New York State received little, if any stimulus money for mental health services. Nassau has experienced that calls to mental health hotlines have increased dramatically over the past few weeks. The mental health Institute of Mental Health estimates an additional 20.2% of adults age 18 and over—about one in four adults—suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder in any given year. When applied to the USA, the estimated adult population translates to 51.7 million adults. We can argue that during these challenging times this number is even greater. Despite economic downturns and increases in unemployment, it is not surprising that the government and policy makers have chosen to fail by not allocating a stimulus package to help the mental health needs of Long Islanders in these tough times. It is our goal that the Mental Health Association of Nassau County continue to provide you with information and tools that can be used now and the months to follow...

Meet with a poor economy what can each of us do to create changes in our systems and communities? How do we continue to provide quality services to those most impacted? It is our belief at MHA that stimulus at this time is not only about money but how do we to maintain services to those most impacted? We believe that the stimulus must be used to maintain and improve services, not just expand them.

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$15,000 Grant for Veterans Health Alliance of Long Island

by John Javis, Director of Special Projects

There are over 174,000 veterans who live on Long Island, and we are second only to San Diego in the percentage of veterans among our citizens. MHA expressed concern regarding veterans’ mental health. Naturally, a veteran completes a tour of duty, and while veterans are 11% of the general population, they were 26% of the homeless population. He also said, “In order to meet these needs, we plan to advocate with our elected officials for Veterans Outreach and Peer Support services, supportive housing for veterans and families of personnel on Active Duty or the Reserves who are deployed, as well as mobile case managers who could provide crisis intervention services, as well as serve our older veterans.”

The reminder of the grant will be used to fund workshops about veterans’ behavioral health issues for a wide range of audiences including mental health and substance abuse clinicians, veterans’ family members, and members of law enforcement.

John Javis, MHA Director of Special Projects, said, “We are grateful to the Long Island United University Fund for their earned matching grant to invest in the future health of our community.”
Stimulus Money on the Horizon

by Marcia Feuer, Director of Public Policy

New York State is scheduled to receive $24.6 billion in federal stimulus money over the next several years. A few important healthcare provisions include:

• $67 billion for health-related, high priority needs. This includes an estimated $9 billion for Medicaid health-care services for beneficiaries.

• A moratorium on retrospective rate reductions that target Medicaid rate-setting.

• $24.7 billion for federal subsidies to cover 60% of the cost of insurance plans for the unemployed

• $25 billion to help low-income workers who are struggling to pay their health insurance premiums, up to nine months of subsidies to cover 65% of the cost of health insurance.

• $1 billion for health IT is intended to reimburse physicians and hospitals who adopt “meaningful-use” electronic systems. The non-profit sector may be able to tap into this funding.

• A new prevention and wellness fund which will include community-based prevention and wellness strategies, totaling $5 billion.

The nationwide financial crisis has stimulated a dramatic shift in the delivery of mental health services. In Nassau County, late in 2008, a decision was made by the Nassau County Health Department, Nassau County Office of Mental Hygiene, and the City of Glen Cove to convert Dukeshire, Supported Employment services, along with other Behavioral Health Psychiatric Rehabilitation Treations, and CDT (Continuing Day Treatment) programs to a new Medicaid funded model called PROS (Personalized Recovery Oriented Services). A moratorium on any funding specifically allocated to Medicaid targeted case management, such as Dukeshire and CDT, may also qualify for the energy grants - profits may qualify for the energy grants.

The Qualify of Work Life Team has attempted to motivate staff by bringing activities that allow the various departments to interact together - to give a sense of trying to build the daily challenges of our roles less stressful. Activities such as wellness fair, discussions about others in the workplace, and picnics look to incorporate the agency that the agency looks to be focused on the importance of the people that give so much to the quality of work life of the people we serve.

Quality of Work Life is Important at MHA

by Vrinni Amato, QWL Coordinator

An increasing number of Nassau County residents are joining the number of Americans that are dealing with work-family balance during economic turmoil. According to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, 50 percent of American adults are reported struggling in their lives at the end of 2008. This represents an increase of more than 22 million Americans who reported struggling earlier in the year. During these difficult times, MHA of Nassau wants you to provide you with tools that can help you to better cope with the challenges that you may be facing. This May, in honor of Mental Health Month, our parent agency, Mental Health America of Greater LA. is seeking to bring a more diverse and educated community to National Mental Health Month. The team members focus their efforts on projects that have value and merit in both a long and short term aspect and that hopefully a reasonable opportunity to help with the knowledge that will help employees know that their efforts are valued in the workplace and to give back to the employees who give so much to the MHA.

Live Your Life Well Coping with Economic Stress

by MHA HLF Staff

The 10 tools:
1) Connect with others
2) Stay positive
3) Get physically active
4) Help others
5) Get enough sleep
6) Create joy and satisfaction
7) Eat well
8) Take care of your spiritual health
9) Deal better with hard times
10) Get professional help if you need it

For further information about these tips, other ways of coping or facts sheets on stress, depression and staying well when you have a mental health condition, send requests to help@mhanc.org.

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