

What day is it?



One phrase most have likely not heard lately: I wish it would cool off. Nope. While many welcome cold nights and winter's white, the 2014 polar vortex has taken its toll causing closures, cancellations and inconveniences throughout the Mid-Shore region.

Snowfall and frigid temperatures caused back-to-back cancellations of the quarterly Behavioral Health Services Network meeting resulting in the postponement until 10 a.m. Wednesday, April 23 at the Talbot County Department of Social Services. Two events scheduled for the annual Point In Time count of homeless individuals were moved back from Jan. 29 to Wednesday, Feb. 5. The events are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Delmarva Community Action Center at 1000 Goodwill Avenue in Cambridge and the Seventh Day Adventist Church at 401 Aldersgate Drive in Denton.

Jeanine Beasley, special grants administrator who oversees the annual count, said she hopes for a good turnout this week as the count helps determine the number of those in need of service and adequate funding for programs. Although canceled once, the Transition to Independence Program training did occur last week when the trainer combined two-days worth of instruction to some 18 people in attendance at Channel Marker, Inc. in Easton.

Defeating stigma, an ongoing effort

Since its inception in 2002, the Defeating Stigma Coalition has worked to improve public perception of mental illness both to benefit those with a diagnosis and to allay fears that often prevent people from seeking the help they need.

Outreach efforts have included numerous events such as a discussion with Pete Earley, a journalist who detailed his experience with the mental health system in the book "Crazy: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness."

Subsequent efforts included various forms of outreach with many of the founding organizations such as Crossroads Community, Inc.;

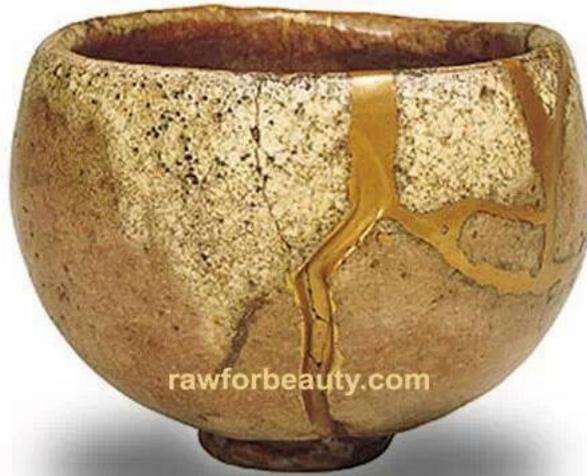
Mid-Shore Mental Health Systems, Inc.; For All Seasons; and the Mental Health Association in Talbot County launching initiatives. For All Seasons holds an annual gala to raise awareness and funds as well as its "The Many Faces of Victims" exhibition in which survivors of sexual assault and abuse expressed themselves through art.

Crossroads Community, Inc. remains a steady supporter of the Coalition, offering expertise and assistance with all endeavors including the annual observation of World Suicide Prevention Day—this year Wednesday, Sept. 10—in which candlelight vigils are held in each of the five counties of the Mid-Shore. MHA in Talbot County has launched a monthly television show to discuss various aspects of Behavioral Health, and Affiliated Santé Group's Eastern Shore Mobile Crisis invited MSMHS to partner in a weekly radio

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When the Japanese mend broken objects, they aggrandize the damage by filling the cracks with gold. They believe that when something's suffered damage and has a history it becomes more beautiful. -Barbara Bloom



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New Report Tracks the Behavioral Health of America

The “National Behavioral Health Barometer” (Barometer) provides data about key indicators of behavioral health problems including rates of serious mental illness, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, underage drinking, and the percentages of those who seek treatment for these disorders. The Barometer shows these data at the national level, and for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The Barometer indicates that the behavioral health of our Nation is improving in some areas. For example, the rate of prescription pain reliever abuse has fallen for both children ages 12–17 and adults ages 18–25 from 2007 to 2011 (9.2 percent to 8.7 percent and 12.0 percent to 9.8 percent, respectively).

“The Barometer is a dynamic new tool providing important insight into the ‘real world’ implications of behavioral health issues in communities across our Nation,” said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde, J.D. “Unlike many behavioral health reports, its focus is not only on what is going wrong in terms of behavioral health, but what is improving and how communities might build on that progress.”

Click here to [Get the National Behavioral Health Barometer»](#)

Our Mission

To continually improve the provision of mental health services for residents of Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties through effective coordination of services in collaboration with consumers, family members, providers and community leaders. We believe that the mental health system should assure quality, cost-effective services that meet the needs of our consumers. Consumers are the focus of MSMHS, and it is our goal through partnership with other agencies to develop a full array of easily accessible services for the consumer.

We strongly believe in the empowerment of individuals, consumers, and family members to help develop their fullest potential.

Our Vision

To develop a model rural mental health delivery system with a continuum of mental health services that are culturally diverse. These services assure consumer empowerment, have a community focus, are cost-effective for the system and are integrated to serve the community as a whole, private and public sector, regardless of cultural or ethnic background.



Increased demand for forensic mental health services

Eighteen people attended a Brown Bag Training at Mid-Shore Mental Health Systems, Inc. [MSMHS] recently to learn about, "Jail Mental Health." Bill Rhodes-LCPC, of Conmed Healthcare Management, Inc., led the one-hour class looking at challenges of providing mental health services to those in correctional facilities.

Rhodes says that jails and prisons have become the de facto mental institutions. Reports in 1983 indicated that 6.4 percent of all prisoners had a serious mental illness, but the Treatment Advocacy Center in Arlington, Va. now reports that at least 16 percent of inmates in jails and prisons have a serious mental illness. The conclusion: in less than three decades, the percentage of prisoners with severe mental illness has nearly tripled.

Consequently, organizations such as Conmed contract with correctional facilities statewide to better address the behavioral health needs of inmates. Jails and prisons were not created to be mental hospitals, are inappropriate for consumers, and staff is not recruited as psychiatric caretakers.

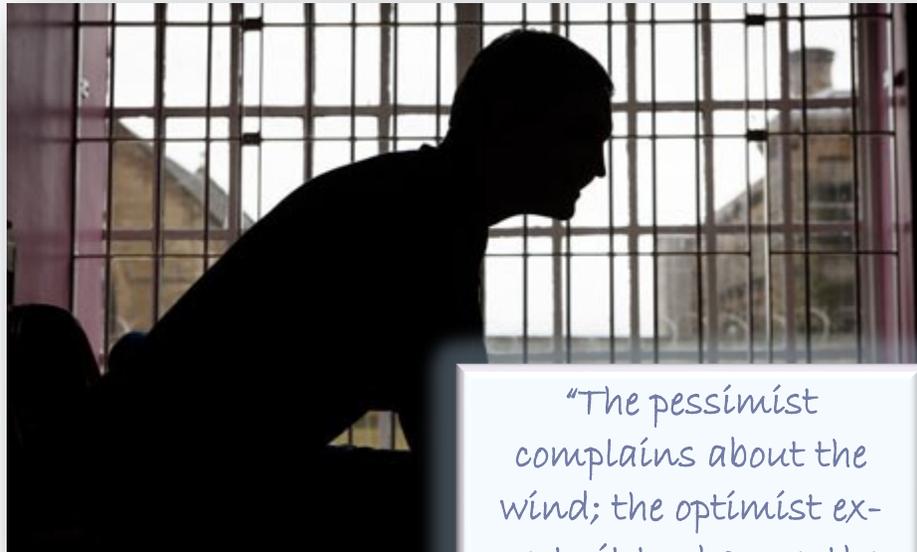
That said, Conmed—and organizations like it—employs licensed providers, trains correctional officers and uses telepsychiatry for inmates when a psychiatrist is not available to provide medication management. Hanover-based Conmed works with premise that personnel can provide the best care only when correctional staff is fully on board with and aware of medical and behavioral health treatment.

Rhodes spends much of his time completing inmate assessments and devising treatment plans. Prior to and after release, inmates with behavioral health needs can voluntarily participate in the Forensic Mental Health Program at MSMHS, which focuses on the intersection between the criminal justice and mental health systems.

This program works to evaluate and connect criminal defendants and probationers to the limited community mental health resources available on the Mid-Shore. The FMHP staff works closely with judges, masters, parole and probation agents and local detention centers to assist in cases where the defendant has mental health and/or substance use issues.

The staff provides mental health evaluations, jail diversion plans, referral and resource connection, mental health treatment monitoring, and advocacy. Case management services are provided for diversion and monitoring cases.

In answer to continuing demand for forensic mental health services, CHANGES will incorporate a section of the newsletter devoted solely to this topic.



"The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails."
— William Arthur Ward



Calling on youth and caregivers

The University of Maryland School of Medicine and the Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental health seek focus group participants age 12 to 26 and caregivers of those age 12 to 26 to convey experiences, concerns and suggestion for improving the use of technology in behavioral health services.

Participants will receive a \$25 gift card and dinner. Groups meet from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 12 at Mid-Shore Mental Health Systems, Inc., at 28578 Marys Court, Suite 1 in Easton.

The information garnered will assist in determining how best to use electronic technology such as phone and computer applications to monitor substance use or mood or as teaching mechanisms to hone relaxation skills. If you or someone you know is interested in participating, contact the study coordinator, Jennifer Stevenson, at JStevens@psych.umaryland.edu or 410-706-3519.

True Delight

For a very good reason, I am filled with elation
 I am, after all, an important part of creation.
 Seems I am part of a crusade, and that's just the start,
 I am determined to succeed, and win back my own heart
 There is emotional damage that was done in my early years
 I believe, perhaps, my ancestors shed the same tears
 Nature or nurture is not in question
 The predicament is your presumptive impression
 It occurs to me there are things you don't see
 Seems you'd rather hide or detest the people like me
 Acceptance of me is something that must be completed
 Your haunted delusions have caused me to be mistreated
 There is an honest truth that must come to light
 Condemnation of me can bring no delight
 I have no authority over the world's demise
 That isn't secret nor a surprise
 It's the world prerogative to exploit evil
 Yet we could support to each other to hinder the peril
 And who would insult the mighty oak for not being a cherry tree
 Shouldn't the same go for you and for me?
 What would allow me to stand firm on foundation,
 Is for you to give love without contemplation
 Finally to bring us back here to the start
 I am on the way to loving me with all my heart.

—Audrey Larrimore, peer support specialist

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show, Caring Connections, that looks at all aspects of behavioral health and related community-based services.

This year, the Coalition is switching gears in hope of culling more information about stigma across the lifespan, which will be used both to develop and enhance strategies. To that end, Coalition members will attend Behavioral Health Services Network workgroups to inform plans.

Among the long term goals of the Coalition is to bring Michael Nye's Fine Line: Mental Health/Mental Illness to the region. Nye spent four years photographing and interviewing people with mental health diagnoses. Interviews accompany the black and white portraits, allowing viewers to listen to the person story, which often includes their take on family, confusion, pain, abuse, treatment and healing.

The exhibition usually runs six weeks and costs about \$8,000. Coalition members and MSMHS staff believe this exhibition would work as an educational tool for those unfamiliar with mental illness and has potential to enlighten many. Studies have shown that stigma, whether related to mental health, addiction, ethnicity, religion, disability, or sexual preference, is greatly reduced when people interact with one another.

Those interested in assisting in providing financial or in-kind support for this endeavor may contact kstevens@msmhs.org for information. Learn more about Fine Line at <http://www.michaelnye.org/fineline/index.html>.

Mid-Shore Mental Health Systems is located at 28578 Marys Court, Easton, MD 21601.

You are invited to join us in our work to improve services on the Eastern Shore by joining the BHSN workgroups.

Email kstevens@msmhs.org or call 410-770-4801 for information.



BHSN Calendar & Events—February 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5 Point in Time 9-2-Denton 9-2 Cambridge	6	7	8
9	10	11 Housing RT 1:30-3 Consumer Council 3-4	12	13 BHSN Integration 10:30-12 BHSN C & A 3-4	14	15
16	17 PRESIDENTS DAY MSMHS CLOSED	18 BHSN Long Term 11-12 BHSN Crisis 2:30-4	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Anonymous People 6:30—Avalon	27	28	

I always knew looking
back on my tears would
bring me laughter, but I
never knew looking back
on my laughter would
make me cry.
—Cat Stevens

Check it out

February 26: Reserve your free ticket now for the showing of “The Anonymous People,” at the Avalon Theatre in Easton. The film that features people in recovery who seek to diminish stigma associated with addiction. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; light refreshments will be served prior to the film, which begins at 7 p.m. Several people will be on hand for a discussion following the film. A film trailer may be viewed at <http://manyfaces1voice.org/>. Contact Sharon Dundon at 410-822-1000, ext. 5452.

