



**National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging
Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2008**

Deborah DiGilio, Chair of the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging and Director of the American Psychological Association Office on Aging called the meeting to order and reviewed the proposed agenda. There were 40 persons in attendance.

Consideration of Request for Membership

NCMHA received requests for membership from the Illinois Coalition on Mental Health and Aging and the Mental Health Association of Connecticut. The Illinois Coalition was established in 2001. They have a statewide board and are affiliated with regional coalitions. Activities include an annual Mental Health and Aging Conference in partnership with the Illinois Department on Aging and Department of Human Services, local trainings, and advocacy for increased funding for mental health and aging services. The Mental Health Association of Connecticut has formed a network of mental health providers, aging adult providers, individuals and policy makers in an effort to create a comprehensive services coalition to serve Connecticut's older adult population. Members unanimously voted to grant membership to both groups and welcomed its newest members.

Recognition of Contributions

Willard Mays, NCMHA Executive Board Member recognized the contributions of Larry Dupree and Larry Rickards to NCMHA. Larry Dupree has worked extensively in the field of older adult mental health and substance abuse treatment. He is the founder/co-chair of the Florida Coalition for Optimal Mental Health and Aging. He retired from the University of South Florida at the end of last year. As the recipient of the American Society on Aging 2007 Mental Health and Aging Network Award, he was recognized for his lasting impact on older adult mental health. He has graciously volunteered as the webmaster of the NCMHA website since its inception. Larry Rickards, PhD was the first chair of NCMHA. He has more than 40 years of experience working with older adults and with individuals experiencing homelessness and co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders. At the end of last year, he retired as Chief of the Homeless Programs Branch of the Center for Mental Health Services. We are grateful for the contributions each of them has made to NCMHA over the years.

State and Local Coalitions Update

Bob Rawlings, State and Local Coalition Representative to the NCMHA Executive Board, provided the update. The Oklahoma Mental Health and Aging Coalition has conducted over 20 depression screenings in conjunction with the Mental Health Association. The Kentucky Mental

Health and Aging Coalition is providing seed money to its regional coalitions to support their activities. The Pennsylvania Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition just received a \$50,000 grant from the Department of Mental Health to continue its efforts. It was noted that plans are being made to secure a couple incoming phone lines for our meetings so that distant state and local coalitions can participate in the NCMHA meetings on a rotating basis.

2008 National Council on Aging/ American Society of Aging's Aging in America Conference

Willard Mays and Anita Rosen, NCMHA Executive Board Members, discussed the NCOA/ASA Conference to be held March 26-30, 2008 in Washington, D.C. It will begin with *Capitol Hill Day*, where participants will have the opportunity to meet legislators. The Mental Health and Aging Network (MHAN) events will include the NCMHA cosponsored Mental Health and Aging Coalitions Track, *Aging in America: Mental Health and Aging Coalitions Make a Difference!* The three track programs are: "National Perspectives, Policy and Current issues in Mental Health and Aging;" "How to Organize Advocacy for Older Adults with Mental or Substance Use Disorders;" and, "Mental Health and Aging Coalitions: Building Effective Strategies." There will also be a MHAN Leadership Council Meeting, a peer network meeting, and a MHAN evening reception. Dennis Romero of SAMHSA will present on evidence based mental health programs. For more conference information: <http://www.agingconference.org/asav2/conf/jc/jc08/index.cfm>

Education and Outreach Efforts to Medicare Beneficiaries with Mental Illness

Two staff members of the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) presented to the Coalition. Janet Miller is a Health Insurance Specialist in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Division of Partner Relations, Office of External Affairs in the National Office in Baltimore. She is responsible for the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). She was joined by Maureen Kerrigan, SHIP Partnership Manager in the Northeast Regional Office in Boston.

Janet began her remarks by noting that her presentation would not be conducted from a regulatory perspective, but rather from an educative one. The mission of her Office is to work with organizations in a comprehensive way to get information to the end users. The increased focus on mental illness arose from interest on the Hill. CMS representatives working with older adults and individuals with disabilities, and the Office of Medicare Ombudsman (established under the Medicare Modernization Act) reported a need for guidance in working with those having mental health disorders. Similar feedback was received from the SHIPs, their regional offices, and callers to the 1-800-Medicare number. As one mechanism to address this issue, the CMS Central Office has established national level contacts with NAMI and NASPD. They have also improved the CMS website, conduct open door forums on key issues, and have issued specific communications on this topic.

The Office runs technical assistance programs for their 115 SHIPs and others. The SHIPs direct one-on-one counseling to Medicare beneficiaries. The SHIPs began during the Part C Managed Care days to help beneficiaries with their questions. They became extremely important in the wake of Part D, when program options for recipients exploded. Mental health benefits and drugs was one key issue they needed to address. They did a road show for SHIPs and developed their SHIP-TAP (Technical Assistance Program) and Toolkit, *Medicare Benefit Counseling for People with Mental Illness: A Guide for SHIP Directors*. The Guide includes tip sheets on sensitivity and awareness that are useful for many audiences. The SHIP counselors have also received training on mental health assessment with assistance from MHA and NAMI.

Maureen continued the presentation by describing efforts in the Northeast Regional Office in which her office resides. It is made up of six northeast states. This region's SHIPs are run out of Department of Elder Affairs' state offices. They are staffed primarily by volunteers with some paid staff. They do counseling and presentations. Part D opened CMS' eyes about having to work with external organizations collaboratively. They want to keep the network they established alive now that Part D is up and running. They are now facing multiple issues including confidentiality concerns; how do they share information with SHIPs about working with individual Medicare recipients that they know have mental health disorders? They have developed fact sheets on six common mental health disorders. They also now have new leadership in the Office of External Affairs, two individuals with advocacy background, which is very positive. They used to have two monthly conference calls and hope to resume them under this new leadership.

Currently one big task is to promote the low income subsidiary. Those eligible for "extra help" are hard to reach. SHIPs need to demonstrate that 5% of the individuals they work with qualify for the low income subsidy. One area for future action between our groups may be to reach these beneficiaries. They are looking for ongoing two-way communication with NCMHA. They can help provide information to NCMHA member organizations so they might assist their clients with Medicare benefits, and we can help provide guidance to SHIPs in their dealings with Medicare recipients with mental health disorders. NCMHA members should familiarize themselves with the CMS Partnership website, Building Partnerships to Better Serve Beneficiaries with Mental Illness at: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Partnerships/18_Mental.asp. This is where the SHIP-TAP manual can be found. NCMHA committed to ongoing communication and discussion with this CMS Office regarding potential collaborations.

Member Updates

American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry – Stephanie Reed reported on their efforts with the SAMHSA Reauthorization bill. AAGP also continues to urge Congress to fix weaknesses in the structure of the Medicare physician payment program and to advocate for mental health parity in the Medicare program. The Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2008 contained two programs of great interest to AAGP which will be funded at last year's amount, minus the across-the-board cuts. They are the SAMHSA Elderly Treatment and Outreach Program which will receive \$4.86 million, and the Title VII Geriatrics Education programs which will be funded at \$30.997 million in 2008. President Bush had proposed to eliminate both of the programs this year and in past years.

American Bar Association – Ellen Klem reported that at a joint press conference at the U.S. Capitol on December 13, 2007, Sen. Gordon Smith of the Senate Aging Committee, AARP, and the ABA released a new report, *Guarding the Guardians: Promising Practices for Court Monitoring*. The report by Naomi Karp, of the AARP Public Policy Institute, and Erica Wood, of the ABA Commission, offers help to courts around the country to ensure that the vulnerable adults under their jurisdiction receive appropriate care and financial management by their guardians. View the full report online at: http://www.aarp.org/research/legal/guardianships/2007_21_guardians.html. Ellen Klem also mentioned the recent publication of *Volunteer Guardianship Monitoring Programs: A Win-Win Solution*. This report is a study of volunteer guardianship monitoring projects initiated by AARP in 1990. The study aims to determine the extent to which the AARP volunteer guardianship monitoring projects are still functioning, and to examine their experiences and effectiveness in the 10 years since AARP discontinued support.

American Mental Health Counselors Association – Beth Powell reported that licensed mental health counselors are being employed by the VA to provide services. They are continuing to

work to secure approval for counselors as independent mental health providers under Medicare. This provision was included as a provision in the House's version of the CHAMP bill.

American Psychological Association –Diane Elmore reported on the APA Government Relations Office's efforts to advocate for the enactment of Title II of the Positive Aging as part of the SAMHSA reauthorization. This would support integration of mental health services into primary care. David Powers reported on the ABA/APA Assessment of Capacity in Older Adults Project Working Group that is currently developing a handbook for psychologists on this topic. It will be the third in a series that includes handbooks for lawyers (2005) and judges (2006). The Lawyer's Handbook has received over 30,000 hits on the APA Office on Aging website. The judicial book consistently receives approximately 1,500 online "hits" per month. Both are available at: <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/>.

American Society on Aging – Anita Rosen provided information on the NCOA/ASA Conference to be held on March 26-30, 2008 in Washington, D.C. For more information visit: <http://www.agingconference.org/asav2/conf/jc/jc08/index.cfm>

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law – Bob Bernstein provided an update on efforts related to two lawsuits initiated regarding a San Francisco nursing home. The first relates to the pre-admission screening and resident review requirement (PASSR) often happening months after admission. The second relates to Olmstead claims. The result has been an agreement to create new housing and community services for older adults and people with disabilities in San Francisco. While agreeing to subsidize 500 units of accessible housing over the next five years, the city still plans to rebuild the deteriorating Laguna Honda facility with as many as 780 skilled nursing beds. Rather than providing long-term custodial care to older adults and people with mental or physical disabilities, it is expected to emphasize short-term rehabilitative treatment due to this new availability of housing and services in the community.

Department of Veteran Affairs – William Van Stone introduced Bradley Karlin, who is a new VA representative to NCMHA. Bradley mentioned summarized their efforts related to integration of mental health into primary care (for more information on this, see the presentation of Ira Katz in NCMHA's September 2007 minutes).

Health Resources and Services Administration - Dan Merek reported on the Bureau of Health Professions' Geriatrics Program. The funding for these programs was reinstated at \$31.5 million in 2007. In 2008, it looks like funding will be a \$30.9 million. HRSA has a new four hour online course, *Unified Health Communication 101: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency, and Limited English Proficiency*. It is accessible at: www.hrsa.gov/healthliteracy/training.htm. Dan then described their new Patient Navigator, Outreach, and Chronic Disease Prevention program, a demonstration project to work with community health workers so that they can help their underserved clients with chronic diseases navigate the health care system. This is the first year it has been included in an Appropriations bill (for \$2.5 million). More information is at: <http://olpa.od.nih.gov/legislation/108/pendinglegislation/patnavigator.asp>, and <http://64.233.169.104/search?q=cache:u6tt8Vi5c78J:virtualmentor.ama-assn.org/2006/11/pdf/pfor2-0611.pdf+hrsa+patient+navigation+program&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=4&gl=us>

Maryland Coalition on Mental Health and Aging and Mental Health Association of Maryland- Kimberly Burton described their focus on providing training and education for professionals, legislators and the general public regarding mental health and aging; to improve mental health service delivery to older adults in the community, state hospitals and long term care settings; and

to promote geriatric mental health inclusion and enhanced coordination across all aging service networks. They have had 70 mental health training programs through which they trained 240 staff of assisted living facilities. In addition, they developed a video on Alzheimer's disease assessment for nursing home staff to help attain state mandated training requirements for those working in Maryland nursing homes. They are working with John's Hopkins Geriatric Education Center on these projects.

National Alliance for Caregiving – Gail Hunt stated that they are involved in efforts to quantify and publicize the out-of-pocket costs of caregiving, including time. They have conducted three new studies. The first is on working caregivers including those who leave the workforce to provide care for family members and others. The second is related to Hispanic caregivers and the barriers to services that they face. The third quantifies the health impact of caregiving on working caregivers. All Alliance reports can be found at: <http://www.caregiving.org/pubs/data.htm>.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging - Amy Gotwals highlighted a number of their efforts including those related to transportation and the “Home for the Holidays” campaign, which encourages individuals to have frank discussions with older relatives about financial, legal, health care and long term care issues while they are home for the holidays. Two other issues they are working on is the transition to digital TV in February 2009, which will have implications in terms of connectedness of the many older adults with non-digital TVs, and providing input to regulations related to the transfer of emphasis in long term care funding from institutional to the community-based settings.

National Association of Mental Health Planning and Advisory Councils (NAMHPAC) - Tiffany Pullen introduced herself as the new representative to NCHMA. She was interested in learning more about the efforts of NCMHA and its member groups and noted her organization's interest in the integration of mental health and aging care.

National Association of Social Workers - Chris Herman reported on a few of their major efforts: mental health care parity, an upcoming teleconference on depression, and their Aging Specialty Credentials which offer three distinct levels of credentialing for social workers who serve older adults. Jim Finley discussed the broken provider reimbursement system, the proposed cuts in Medicaid and how Congress is operating under a “zero-sum” philosophy – that is, nothing new will be added without something else being cut.

National Council on Aging – Alixe McNeil and Bob Tiller elaborated on *Capitol Hill Day* to be held in conjunction with the NCOA/ASA Conference. Advocacy issues will include strengthening Medicare, increasing funding for senior programs, long-term care, health promotion, and the workforce. See: <http://www.ncoa.org/content.cfm?sectionID=386>. Another NCOA program, The Center for Healthy Aging assists community-based organizations develop and implement evidence-based health promotion and chronic disease self-management programs. With funding from the Atlantic Philanthropies and other sources, they are working with 27 state aging and health departments to replicate these programs: <http://www.healthyagingprograms.org>. Information about the programs will provided at the Conference. Alixe also reminded members of *BenefitsCheckUp*, an online benefits screening service for seniors that includes over 1,550 public and private benefits programs in states and on the national level: <http://www.benefitcheckup.org>.

National Citizen's Coalition for Nursing Home Reform – Jessica Brill is representing NCCNHR on NCMHA. NCCNHR provides information and leadership on federal and state regulatory and

legislative policy development and models and strategies to improve care and life for residents of nursing homes and other long term care facilities.

National Depressive and Bipolar Disorder Alliance – Mildred Reynolds noted that she uses SAMHSA’s toolkit, *Promoting Older Adult Health Aging Network Partnerships to Address Medication, Alcohol and Mental Health Problems* as part of her mental health educational efforts at the continuing care community where she resides.

Northern Virginia Older Adults Mental Health Work Group - Anne Marie Hermann reminded the group that the Northern Virginia aging network and community services board received funding from the General Assembly for their regional effort to help older adults 65 years and older with mental health issues to “age in place.” The 1st phase is coming into being and will start in April. They have an Executive Director and a support team in place to provide community-based support to residents suffering with mental health issues. They are looking for additional funding.

Older Adult Consumer Mental Health Alliance - John Piacitelli reported that in June of last year, the remaining \$12,000 in OACMHA’s budget was transferred to Mental Health America. They in turn are working with the National Empowerment Association to bring together older adult mental health consumers from the states to be involved in MHA efforts. It had been difficult to maintain an independent older adult mental health consumer organization, and this was seen by some as a mechanism to achieve OACMHA’s mission by utilizing the resources and networks of a larger established organization that was interested in expanding its efforts targeting older adults.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - Lisa Park noted that they are a member of the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics. In addition to their work to include an indicator of suicide rates into the 2008 Chartbook, they are also working to include two outcome measures, stability in housing and employment. The Chartbook will be available in March at NCOA/ASA conference. Lisa then discussed progress on their National Registry on Evidenced-based Programs and Practices: <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>. They are also working with NCOA on dissemination and replication of these programs and practices. Larry Rickards, recently retired from SAMHSA, reiterated the need for national outcome measures related to homelessness.

Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN) USA - Brian Altman introduced Tisa Kirby who will be working at SPAN. He described the group’s continuing efforts on the Stop Senior Suicide Act and noted that the SAMHSA reauthorization includes a grants component from the Act. He also discussed efforts of suicide prevention counselors at the VA. He noted that SPAN Executive Director, Jerry Reid, just received his PhD; his dissertation was on older white male suicide.

Voice of Midlife & Older Women (OWL) - Ashley Carson is the Acting Director of OWL which has been successful in securing funding for new projects. The OWL website has been redesigned to reflect the variety of their efforts: <http://www.owl-national.org/Welcome.html>.

Viewing and Discussion of *do not go gently: the power of imagination in aging*

NCMHA was happy to welcome Gene Cohen, Director, Center on Aging, Health & Humanities at George Washington University. He was the first chief of the National Institute of Mental Health’s Center on Aging (the first federal center on mental health and aging established in any country). He then went on to serve as acting director of the National Institute on Aging and to coordinate Alzheimer’s disease programs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

He is past president of the Gerontological Society of America. He is also a Professor of behavioral sciences and psychiatry at the University.

As an introduction to the film, Gene spoke about the evolution of thinking about aging. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the image of aging was at low point. Decline was seen as unavoidable, destiny. Later in the 1970s, there came a new sense of social responsibility. NIA appointed its first director, Robert Butler in 1976. The Geriatric Education Centers were established at the VA. There was a problem-focus, i.e. how can we treat these potentially modifiable problems of older adults. Currently there is movement toward looking beyond problems to the potential and growth that can accompany age - "successful aging." However, unfortunately, the focus is still often on decline.

NCMHA members then opened their bags of popcorn and enjoyed the film, *do not go gently: the power of imagination in aging*. As noted in its promotional materials, the film illustrates the role of creativity and art in contributing to a long, happy, health and vibrant life. Narrated by Walter Cronkite, the film uncovers the science of lifelong creativity through interviews with Dr. Cohen, whose groundbreaking work provides a deeper understanding of the aging brain. The program also documents the importance of creative outlets to elders with Alzheimer's disease and other age-related disabilities. To order DVDs, see: <http://www.donotgogently.com/dvd.html>.

After the film, the discussion continued with a description of George Washington University's Creativity *and Aging Study*, which was funded in 2001 by the National Endowment for the Arts. It was a multisite national study with the aim of measuring the impact of professionally conducted community based cultural programs on the general health, mental health, and social activities of older persons (average age was 80). The programs had very positive outcomes, with individuals who participated in the arts program for one year having decreased medication usage and doctors visits. They calculated that the cost per program (spending of 8 cents/per day equaling a savings of \$1billion per year). The 2006 final report on the project is at: <http://www.nea.gov/resources/Accessibility/CnA-Rep4-30-06.pdf> . Dr. Cohen also briefly described two of his books on this topic, *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging* (2005) and *The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life* (2000).

Next Meeting Date

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m. The next NCMHA meeting will be held on Monday April 28th, 2008 from 9:30 am until 12:30 pm at the offices of the American Psychological Association in room 7296A/B.