

The Exchange

Spring
2005

A Publication of the
Chester County
Department of
Drug and Alcohol
Services

Kim P. Bowman

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Message from the Director *Is My Drinking Risky?*

National Alcohol Screening Day, held every April, and sponsored by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) is part of an ongoing campaign to address alcohol abuse and dependence in the United States. Last year over 203,000 individuals attended National Alcohol Screening Day events either in their community, college campus or primary care facility. An estimated 126,680 people were screened for alcohol abuse or dependence.

According to the NIAAA, approximately fourteen million American adults suffer from alcohol abuse or alcoholism and more than 100,000 people die from alcohol-related diseases and injuries each year. These national statistics are echoed here in Chester County. Generally, 60% of our treatment admissions are for alcohol problems.

How do I know if my drinking is a problem? As reported by Join Together “researchers use the term “alcohol problems” to refer to any type of condition caused by drinking which harms the drinker directly, jeopardizes the drinker’s well-being, or places them at risk. Depending on the circumstances, alcohol problems can result from even moderate drinking, for example when driving, during pregnancy or when taking certain medicines. Alcohol problems exist on a continuum of severity ranging from occasional binge drinking to alcohol abuse or dependence”. Alcohol problems of lesser severity can often progress to alcohol abuse and alcoholism if untreated.

What is alcohol abuse? Alcohol abuse is typically characterized by significant impairment of performance at school and/or on the job, neglect of responsibilities, e.g. childcare or other household responsibilities. Individuals will continue to drink despite the fact that their drinking causes them recurrent and significant social, interpersonal, health or legal problems.

What is alcohol dependence? Alcohol dependence (alcoholism) is defined as a chronic and progressive disease that includes increased tolerance to alcohol, withdrawal syndrome (mild to severe; e.g. anxiety, depression, “jumpiness” to convulsions, hallucinations, blackouts, etc.) when alcohol is removed and, as defined above for alcohol dependence, continued drinking despite severe negative consequences.

Director’s Message Continued on page two

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April 7th
National Alcohol Screening Day

Where can I go for help? If you are concerned about your own drinking habits or the drinking habits of someone you love, help is available. Free, confidential self-tests may be found on www.alcoholscreening.org. This web site, a project of the Boston University School of Public Health features a free, anonymous alcohol-screening questionnaire for adults or adolescents over the age of 14 that will help determine if your drinking patterns are safe, risky or harmful. Personalized results are generated from an easy to take 12-question survey. This web site also features answers to frequently asked questions regarding alcohol and health, links to support services and a database of 11,000 local treatment programs throughout the United States.

This issue of The Exchange features another well-known, self-administered alcohol screening test known as the CAGE (see below). Your primary care physician may also be able to screen for alcohol problems. Additionally, free alcohol screenings will be conducted by trained professionals on April 7, 2005 in the lobby of the Government Services Center, 610 Westtown Road, West Chester PA from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please contact Jamie Johnson at 610-344-5630 for details.

For more information regarding drug and alcohol issues, please contact our toll free, confidential, 24 hours/7 days a week Alcohol and Other Drug Information Line at 1-866-286-3767.

Kim P. Bowman

Director, Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services

IN VIEW

THE CAGE

A SELF-ADMINISTERED ALCOHOL SCREENING TOOL FOR ADULTS

The CAGE, developed in conjunction with the US Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, consists of four questions that ask about lifetime use of alcohol. It is designed to detect alcohol abuse and dependence:

- 1.) Have you felt you should **cut down** or stop drinking?
- 2.) Have people **annoyed** you by criticizing your drinking?
- 3.) Have you ever felt bad or **guilty** about your drinking?
- 4.) Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover (**eye-opener**)?

SCORING:

EACH "YES" RESPONSE EARNS ONE POINT. ONE POINT INDICATES A POSSIBLE PROBLEM. TWO POINTS INDICATES A PROBABLE PROBLEM.

**If you score one or more points.....Read on. Help is available.
For a list of Outpatient Clinics in Chester County, see Page 4.**

Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome

Information reprinted in part from the American Academy of Family Physicians www.familydoctor.org and www.alcoholism.com

What is alcohol withdrawal syndrome?

Alcohol withdrawal syndrome is a set of symptoms that people have when they suddenly stop drinking after using alcohol for a long period of time. Some people have mild shakiness and sweats. Some people hallucinate (hear and see things that don't exist). The worst form of withdrawal is called "DTs" (delirium tremens). DTs can be very serious if not treated by a doctor.

Withdrawal symptoms rarely occur in people who only drink once in a while. Symptoms usually occur in people who have been drinking heavily for weeks or months and then suddenly stop drinking. People who have gone through withdrawal before are more likely to have withdrawal symptoms each time they quit drinking.

Withdrawal from alcohol and/or other drugs can be FATAL

If you think you are in trouble due to withdrawal syndrome/symptoms, go to the nearest emergency room at your local hospital or you may call our toll free, 24 hours/7 days a week Alcohol and Drug Information Line at 1-866-286-3767.

Withdrawal Symptoms

Mild to Moderate Psychological Symptoms

- ◆ Feeling of jumpiness or nervousness
- ◆ Feeling of shakiness
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Irritability or easily excited
- ◆ Emotional volatility, rapid emotional changes
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Difficulty with thinking clearly
- ◆ Bad Dreams

Moderate Physical Symptoms

- ◆ Headache – general, pulsating
- ◆ Sweating, especially the palms of the hands or the face
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Vomiting
- ◆ Loss of appetite
- ◆ Insomnia, sleeping difficulty
- ◆ Paleness
- ◆ Rapid heart rate (palpitations)
- ◆ Eyes, pupils different size (enlarged, dilated pupils)
- ◆ Skin, clammy
- ◆ Abnormal movements (tremor of the hands, involuntary abnormal movement of the eyelids)

Severe Symptoms

- ◆ A state of confusion and hallucinations (visual) – known as delirium tremens
- ◆ Agitation
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Convulsions

Help is Available

The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services contracts with both hospital and non-hospital based treatment programs for individuals experiencing withdrawal symptoms from alcohol and other drugs. A trained clinician, from any of our six (6) outpatient clinics, will work with you to determine the most appropriate level of care or you may want to see your physician. Please call our toll free, confidential, 24 hours/7 days a week Alcohol and Other Drug Information Line at 1-866-286-3767 for a list of outpatient clinics in Chester County or see Page 4 of this issue.

Getting Help for Alcohol and Other Drug Problems in Chester County

If you think you might have a drug or alcohol problem you can:

- ☎ Call Chester County's toll free, confidential, 24 hours/7 days a week Alcohol and Other Drug Information Line at 1-866-286-3767,
- ☎ Call the 800 number listed on the back of your insurance card to identify a drug and alcohol treatment program, within your provider network, to obtain an assessment, or
- ☎ Call one of the outpatient providers listed below:

Kennett Square

Northwestern Human Services 610-444-0555

West Chester

Gaudenzia, Inc. 610-429-1414

Phoenixville

Northwestern Human Services 610-933-0400

Oxford

Northwestern Human Services 610-444-0555

Coatesville

Riverside Care 610-383-9600

Exton

Center for Addictive Diseases 610-648-1130

ACT 106

Pennsylvania's Substance Abuse Insurance Law

Listed below are the minimum components of every group insurance policy as set by Pennsylvania's Act 106:

- Up to 7 days for detoxification per year/28 days per lifetime
- 30 days in-patient rehabilitation per year/90 days lifetime
- 30 units of outpatient per year/120 units per lifetime
- Insurance companies cannot deny drug and alcohol treatment, covered under the law, if it prescribed by a physician or licensed psychologist

Know Your Rights! Contact PRO-ACT if you or a loved one are not getting the addiction treatment you may be entitled to through your insurance company: Call 1-800-221-6333. A client advocate will answer your questions and help walk you through the process. This is a free service supported in part by the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services.

Mark Your Calendar

NATIONAL OBSERVANCES:

April 2005 — National Alcohol Awareness Month: www.ncadd.org

April 7, 2005 – National Alcohol Screening Day: www.NationalAlcoholScreeningDay.org

Free, confidential and anonymous self-test for alcohol problems may be found on www.alcoholscreening.org. Additionally, free alcohol screenings will be conducted by trained professionals on April 7, 2005 in the lobby of the Government Services Center, 610 Westtown Road, West Chester PA from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please contact Jamie Johnson at 610-344-5630 for additional information.

April 14, 2005 – Kick Butts Day: www.kickbuttsday.org

May 8-14, 2005 — Alcohol and Other Drug Related Birth Defects Prevention Week: www.ncadd.org

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

For a listing of upcoming alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention trainings and conferences, please contact The Coad Group at 610-363-6164 or via email: LLarson@coadgroup.com for detailed information.

For a list of upcoming trainings/conferences for drug and alcohol professionals please email LHarrison@chesco.org.



Family Corner

Local Author Pens Novel About Growing Up with an Alcoholic Stepfather

I Almost Love You Eddie Clegg

By Audra Supplee

Asa Marie Phillips is a 13-year-old girl who tries to gain popularity in middle school while also beginning to develop a father/daughter relationship with her alcoholic stepfather, Eddie Clegg. Through a touch of humor and determination, Asa tackles this and other problems facing middle school students in today's world.

Although the novel is not a "how-to manual" for children growing up under similar circumstances, young readers living in a family with alcoholism will recognize that they are not alone. The book encourages and supports families' attendance at programs such as Al-Anon and Alateen. The author, Audra Supplee, an adult child of an alcoholic, understands the disappointments and chaos connected with a parent's alcoholism.

Ms. Supplee lives in West Chester, PA with her husband, numerous juggling props, a drum set, an electric guitar, keyboards, and a bird puppet named Bing. She also performs at senior centers as a blue-haired clown named Bloozy Blue. *I Almost Love You, Eddie Clegg* is her first novel for Peachtree Publishers.

For more information about the book and the author please visit Ms. Supplee's web site at www.AudraSupplee.com

For assistance in locating Al-Anon or Alateen meetings in Chester County, please call our toll free, confidential, 24 hours/7 days a week Alcohol and Other Drug Information Line at 1-866-286-3767 or contact: Al-Anon/Alateen at 610-696-4216, or www.al-anon-alateen.org

News you can use

Is someone you care about having problems with alcohol or other drugs?

If you want help and information, here is a program just for you:

PRO-ACT Family Education Program

Offered on Alternating Months

Wednesday Evenings, 7-9 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m.— 4 p.m. (lunch included)

Phone 1-800-221-6337 to register

Free of Charge

Post Prom Parties

Many Chester County high schools will be hosting post prom parties this spring. If you would like to volunteer your time and talents or make a donation please contact The Coad Group/Community Prevention Department@ 610-363-6164 or 1-800-917-1117 for details on how you can help.

Mailing List Update

We are in the process of updating our mailing list. Please contact us if:

- a.) Address information is incorrect.
- b.) You no longer wish to be included in the mailing.
- c.) You wish to receive multiple copies for your organization.

We can be reached via e-mail wbeck@coadgroup.com or call 610-363-6164 and ask to speak with the Community Prevention Staff.

Thank You



The Exchange is sponsored by: The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, P.O. Box 2747, 601 Westtown Road Suite 325, West Chester, PA 19380-0990.

For more information or to be on the mailing list for this newsletter, contact the Community Prevention staff at: The Coad Group, 930 East Lancaster Avenue Exton, PA 19341. 610.363.6164 or 1.800.917.1117

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The Department of Health and Chester County Commissioners specifically disclaim responsibility for any analyses, interpretations, or conclusions herein.

The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, P.O. Box 2747, 601 Westtown Road Suite 325, West Chester, PA 19380-0990

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For More Information...

Join Together (617) 437-1500

www.jointogether.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse

www.nida.nih.gov or clubdrugs.org

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health

www.cdc.gov/tobacco

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information

1-800-729-6686 www.health.org

Partnership for a Drug-Free America

(212) 922-1560 www.drugfreeamerica.org

PA Dept. of Health, Research & Info. Clearinghouse www.padohric.org

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters.

(800) 344-2666 or (800) 356-9996.

www.al-anon.alateen.org

The Coad Group

www.coadgroup.com

You can view or print this newsletter by visiting Chester County's Website: www.chesco.org and following the links for Human Services to Drug & Alcohol Services.