

The Exchange

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

Summer 2004

Message From the Director



SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OLDER ADULTS - THE HIDDEN EPIDEMIC

As the baby boomer generation matures, researchers estimate that the number of older adults (ages 50 and over) needing substance abuse treatment will triple by the year 2020 from 1.7 million in 2001 to 4.4 million (National Household Survey on Drug Abuse).

Substance abuse in older adults is often very difficult for health care professionals to diagnose. Robert M. Awalt, a psychologist at the University of California – San Francisco Treatment Research Center, reports “many times alcoholism is mistaken by health care professionals and family members for conditions associated with aging”. Additionally, physicians misdiagnose alcoholism as depression. According to a 1998 report produced by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) “older problem drinkers typically begin abusing alcohol and medications following the death of a spouse, a divorce, retirement or some other major life change”. As a result physicians may often miss alcoholism or problem drinking and only diagnose depression.

The report also cites studies showing the following:

- “15% of male alcoholics report that their first symptoms of alcoholism occurred between ages 60 and 69; and
- 14% report that their first symptoms occurred between the ages of 70 and 79.

For women, the percentages are even higher; with

- 24% reporting their first signs of alcoholism between ages 60 and 69 and,
- 28% reporting that their first signs occurred between ages 70 and 79”.

Physical changes in our bodies do not allow older adults to continue drinking the same amounts of alcohol consumed safely in earlier years; this lower tolerance for alcohol also makes the body more vulnerable to the effects of prescribed medications. According to a brochure published by Hazelden, entitled **How to Talk to an Older Person Who Has a Problem with Alcohol or Medications**, “drinking two or three beers at age 65 can have the same effect as ten or twelve beers at age 20”.

SAMHSA reports “people ages 65 and older consume more prescribed and over the counter medications than any other age group in the United States”. Because seniors are abusing their own prescriptions, and not “street drugs” it adds to the difficulty physicians have of correctly diagnosing addiction. Carol Colleran, national director of older-adult services with Hanley-Hazelden, a treatment center in West Palm Beach, Fla. finds that the most common addiction in older adults is benzodiazepines, e.g.; tranquilizers such as Valium and Xanax.

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Some signs and symptoms of alcohol and/or drug abuse you may observe in older adults include the following:

- Drinks in a solitary, hidden way
- Makes a ritual of having drinks before, with, or after dinner, and becomes annoyed when this ritual is disturbed
- Always has bottles of tranquilizers on hand and takes them at the slightest sign of disturbance
- Complains of constant sleeplessness, loss of appetite or chronic health complaints that seem to have no physical cause
- Drinks in spite of warning labels on prescription drugs
- Has unexplained burns or bruises

Late onset addiction can be prevented through planning and education. Ms. Collern recommends that individuals consider emotional planning along with financial planning for retirement, "We need to plan for ways to retain our sense of belonging and being needed by others. An emotional retirement plan could go along ways toward preventing alcoholism and drug addiction among the elderly."

If you suspect substance abuse in an older adult please consider speaking with a professional such as a drug and alcohol counselor, social worker specializing in older adults or your minister. Help \$ available. According to the non-profit agency, Hazelden, "A key factor in the recovery of older people is the concern and involvement of family and friends". Additionally, Hazelden research indicates that once older adults access drug and alcohol treatment services they have the "highest rate of recovery of any age-group".

For additional information on where to get help in Chester County, please contact The Coad Group at 610-363- 6164 or toll free, 24 hours/7 days per week, at 1-866-286-3767.

For a full list of possible signs and symptoms of alcohol and/or medications abuse, please refer to the Hazelden publication entitled "How to Talk to an Older Person Who Has a Problem with Alcohol or Medications". This publication along with " Older Adults Can Overcome Addiction to Alcohol, Medications", may be obtained free of charge from the following web site: www.hazelden.org

Kim P. Bowman

Director, Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services



In View

In View is a regular column in this newsletter. Each issue features a program or an issue that is covered in depth. Ideas are welcome!

CENTER FOR ADDICTIVE DISEASES OUTPATIENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT SERVICES WITH SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS

Agency Overview

The Center for Addictive Diseases (CAD) has been providing drug and alcohol treatment services to area residents since 1970. Currently part of the Main Line Health System, the clinic is licensed by the PA Department of Health. CAD is part of the county funded treatment system and also accepts most major insurances, as well as Medicare and Medicaid. Hours are Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p. m. and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Partial Hospitalization program runs 4 days per week, with groups held Monday through Thursday, from 6 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Two, one half hour, individual sessions are included weekly for those participating in this program.

CAD treats adolescents beginning at age 13 through older adulthood offering specialized groups to the following populations: teens, women, Driving Under the Influence (DUI), relapse prevention and older adults.

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Center for Addictive Diseases—Services to Older Adults

CAD has been providing specialized services to the older adult population for approximately 18 years. Staff are experienced and trained in dealing with the particular needs of this population. Older adult groups are held weekly for individuals age 60 and above.

According to Eric Brown, LSW, Director of CAD, many of those participating in the older adult group enter treatment at the urging of family and friends or their primary care physician. Patients may be reluctant at first because they have been raised not to “air dirty laundry” in public. CAD counseling staff understands this and work to make drug and alcohol treatment a positive experience.

The older adult group covers many different topics particular to this population including: feelings of worthlessness that may accompany retirement, bereavement from the loss of a spouse or other loved one, loneliness and isolation. Issues relating to prescription medication use/abuse and its interaction with alcohol are also covered.

Staff are available to speak on the subject of substance use and abuse and the older adult to civic and community organizations including retirement homes and assisted living facilities.

For more information please contact The Center For Addictive Diseases at 610-648-1130.



Mark Your Calendar...

September 2004 - National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (www.health.org/recoverymonth)

September 19, 2004 – 3rd Annual Recovery Walks! Annual walk to celebrate recovery from alcohol and other drug addictions. When? 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Lloyd Hall @ Kelly & Waterworks Drives, Boathouse Row, Philadelphia, PA Enjoy musical entertainment, children’s activities and motivational speakers after the walk. All money raised through the walk will support community-based activities, events and peer-to-peer services that support recovery. Presented by PRO-ACT. For more information please contact 215-345-6644 or www.proact.org

September 25, 2004 – 2nd Annual Recovery Expo: “Learn More-Suffer Less”. Keynote Speaker: Vincent DiPasquale – United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, 181 Sharp Lane, Exton, PA 19341, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. For more information please contact Wendy Beck @ 610-363-6164 or www.umcr.org

Trainings for Drug and Alcohol Professionals

The Council on Chemical Abuse located in Reading, PA, in coordination with the PA Department of Health, is sponsoring the following trainings. Please phone 610-376-8660 for additional information or visit www.councilonchemicalabuse.org and click on education.

- HIV/AIDS Prevention Counseling August 4 & 5, 2004
- Confidentiality Training for Addiction Professionals August 19, 2004

Community Care Behavioral Health Organization is offering the following trainings in Chester County. For more information e-mail Virginia Suplee, LCSW at supleevd@ccbh.com

- Pennsylvania Client Placement Criteria (PCPC) August 5, 2004
- Confidentiality Training August 6, 2004

Gaudenzia, Inc. will offer the following trainings at the Nelson Center in West Chester, PA. For a complete list of trainings contact the Training Manager at 610-239-9600 ext. 252:

- Confidentiality Training September 16, 2004
- HIV/AIDS September 17, 2004
- Ethics October 7, 2004
- Introduction to Counseling October 14, 2004
- Relapse Prevention October 20, 2004

Bits and Pieces

PA Sees Abuse of “Narco-Pops”

Pennsylvania Attorney General Jerry Pappert has warned that a narcotic pain killer lollipop is being abused because of its ease of use and sweet taste, the Associated Press reported on April 28, 2004.

Actiq, dubbed the “perc-a-pop”, is designed to provide pain relief for young cancer patients. But Pappert said law enforcement officials are seeing a growing trend in illegal street sales of the drug.

Manufactured by Cephalon Inc., Actiq is a berry-flavored lozenge on a stick that contains the synthetic opioid fentanyl. The drug is absorbed when the user rubs the lozenge against the inside of the cheek.

(Reprinted, in part, from a May 3, 2004 Join Together Online publication: www.jointogether.org)

Communities that Care Corner.....

Have you heard ? Communities That Care (CTC), a community building and planning model, is coming together countywide. Representatives of our six Communities That Care sites and countywide serving agencies are meeting quarterly to network, share resources, educate ourselves and find ways to collaborate all in an effort to strengthen youth and families by addressing adolescent problem behavioral issues. Check out our website @ www.caringcommunitiesconsortium.org to learn more or if you are interested in getting involved call the Community Prevention Department at The Coad Group 610-363-6164. Or use the toll free number to reach the Coad Group 1-800-917-1117.

100% Smoke Free Dining Guide



*Chester County
Smoke-Free
Dining.*

In the fall of 2003, the Chester County Health Department (CCHD) and the Chester County Tobacco-Free Coalition conducted a countywide survey of 668 licensed eating establishments to identify those that offered 100% smoke-free dining to their customers. Over 220 establishments responded and are included in the 2004 Chester County Smoke-Free Dining Guide.

To obtain a copy of the Guide or find out more information on the various tobacco prevention and cessation initiatives funded through the Health Department please telephone 610-344-5209. To view a copy of the Guide on line visit:<http://www.chesco.org/health/smokefree.html>

ReferWeb is Now Available On-Line

ReferWeb is an innovative, web-based information and referral application that allows the public to search for provider agencies and health and human services on their own. This new method of information and referral significantly increases customer accessibility and customization.

Here's how it works:

ReferWeb is accessible on any computer that has an internet connection. In your web browser address bar, type in the following: www.referweb.net/chesco. You can search for health and human services three ways: geographic location, category, keyword or phrase, and agency/program name.

It's that easy!

Family Corner

A regular feature of The Exchange...



Home Drug Tests Popular with Parents, Thwarted by Teens

While a growing number of websites are selling home drug-test kits to parents, some of the same sites are also selling products that help teens mask their drug use, USA Today reported March 1, 2004.

"It's a classic cat-and-mouse game," said Allen St. Pierre of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). "A drug test comes out, it's thwarted, then it's re-engineered, and it goes on and on."

The home drug-test kits range from drip-strip urine tests to hair analysis. The options to fool the drug tests include herbal cleaners and additives.

Sharon Levy, who specializes in childhood addiction at Children's Hospital in Boston, Mass., said products to beat drug tests "absolutely" work. Levy is against home testing because she says it could lead to a breakdown in the parent-child relationship and keep teens from going to their doctor, where they can get help for a drug addiction.

"The first thing you should do is talk to the child," said Levy. She said if a drug test is needed, the physician should do it. "I'm sure I can do a better job with it than a parent can do at home."

But Sue Roche, president of the drug-prevention group National Families in Action, said the home drug-test kits help frustrated parents. Often, said Roche, pediatricians won't test teens for drugs, or if they do, they keep the results from the parents.

If you suspect that your child is using drugs and/or drinking there are a variety of options available to parents in Chester County. We encourage parents to take action and ask for help/guidance from their physician, employee assistance program, school counselor or student assistance professional, faith leader, parent support groups and adolescent prevention or treatment professionals.

Parents can educate themselves on the signs and symptoms of substance abuse as well as a variety of other information on addiction issues by visiting reputable web sites such as www.TheAntiDrug.com, www.freevibe.com, www.jointogether.org or by contacting the National Clearing House for Alcohol and Drug Information for free pamphlets and brochures (1-800-788-2800).

For personal and confidential information on where to get help in Chester County, please contact The Coad Group at 610-363-6164 or toll free, 24 hours/7 days a week at 1-866-286-3767. The above article was reprinted from a March 5, 2004 Join Together Online publication (www.jointogether.org)

Video Review:

What Families Can Do To Prevent and Intervene with Alcohol and Drug Problems

This 60-minute video presents hopeful, helpful information about what you can do to help someone with a drug or alcohol problem. A panel of experts as well as a young person in recovery talks about planning a family intervention and where to go for treatment. Most family interventions are successful - 85% result in the affected family member getting treatment. There is also a discussion about addiction and recovery.

To view or borrow this video - contact the Community Prevention Department at The Coad Group: 610-363-6164 or 1-800-917-1117.

Chester County Department of
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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.

For More Information, Check Out These Resources



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. Clearing-
house**
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