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The Mental Health Association in New York State is encouraged about legislation that passed that would include mental health education as part of the health education curriculum in middle schools and high schools across the state. Advocates are waiting for Gov. Andrew Cuomo to sign the bill. Other legislation to offer Mental Health First Aid training to teachers is pending.

Study examines role of untreated SMI in family homicides

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Editor’s note:
Mental Health Weekly will not publish a July 4 issue. Your next MHW will be July 11. We wish our subscribers a happy holiday.

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Mental health community mobilizes support in aftermath of Orlando tragedy

In the weeks following the Orlando tragedy in which 49 people were killed and dozens more were injured, local and national members of the mental health community continue to provide support to address the grief, trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder of victims, family members and the community at large.

The Florida Department of Children and Families is directing $500,000 in funding to local providers for crisis counseling services, according to a press release from Gov. Rick Scott's office. Other donations have poured in to lend support, say observers.

Paul Gionfriddo, president and CEO of Mental Health America, said MHA affiliates in Orlando and others around the country are helping the community deal with the traumatic aftermath of the tragedy. “It’s becoming all too standardized for our community to have to mobilize,” given the number of tragedies that have occurred in recent years, he said.

There are significant mental health needs for survivors, families and the community, he said. Traumatic experiences can linger for weeks, months, even years, he noted.

Landmark mental health education bill poised to become law in New York state

Although New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has yet to sign into law legislation that would require mental health education to be taught as part of a health education curriculum in middle schools and high schools across the state, mental health advocates are nonetheless elated about the impact such a bill could have on ending stigma and increasing understanding about mental health issues.

The New York State Senate passed the Mental Health Education (S.6046) bill on June 15, sponsored by Senator Carl Marcellino, a week following passage of A.3887-B in the New York State Assembly, sponsored by Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan.

“We look at this as landmark legislation,” Glenn Liebman, CEO of the Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS), told MHW. According to the legislation, “when you teach classes in health you have to talk about mental health,” he said. “This is a really significant part of the prevention agenda to help educate youth about mental health education in schools.”

Some schools in New York state
Immediate response

Members of the American Counseling Association (ACA) provided counseling services within 24 hours of the attack, said Kristin Page, Ph.D., LMHC, NCC, member of the ACA and the Florida state counseling director for Webster University. Volunteers formed a network to offer services to the LGBT community, to churches, community centers, businesses and first responder locations, Page said. At one point, she noted about 650 therapists were volunteering their services. “It’s just phenomenal to me as a therapist in this community,” Page told MHW.

Page added, “What we’re seeing is some of it being in the line of what we expect after a crisis: anger, guilt and [comments like] ‘Why me?’ and ‘How could I have helped someone who was next to me?’

Counselors are also observing a number of concerns related to safety, said Page. These concerns are from people who were not at the event, she said. “After the Orlando attack, there’s been an outpouring of support from the counseling community as a whole,” she said.

The week following the attack morphed into aftercare, she said. Counselors provided crisis, trauma and grief counseling, she noted. “We’re seeing community members from the Pulse [nightclub] being released from the hospital,” she said. “We’re doing work with first responders like stress de-briefing.”

As they go into the next few weeks, the plan is to organize aftercare services at community behavioral health centers, offices where counseling services are provided and private practices, she noted. Employers in the area are asking counselors to come in and work with their employees, Page said. PTSD is not just affecting those who were at the Pulse nightclub that night, she said. “We know that those services need to be in place for many years,” she said.

The ACA has a lot of support for the LGBTQ community, said Page. The ACA recently pulled its annual conference out of Tennessee in response to a new law that would allow counselors to deny services based on their strongly held beliefs, she said. “That went against the ACA code of ethics,” she said. The conference will

‘It’s just phenomenal to me as a therapist in this community.’

Kristin Page, Ph.D., LMHC, NCC
Study examines role of untreated SMI in family homicides

A new report released June 20 by the Treatment Advocacy Center (TAC) examines the role of individuals with serious mental illness in family homicides. TAC researchers, who are calling this the first report to examine this issue, are urging federal lawmakers to implement evidence-based programs aimed at this population.

The report, “Raising Cain: The Role of Serious Mental Illness in Family Homicides,” acknowledges that while most individuals with serious mental illness are not dangerous, a small number of them, most of whom are not being treated, may become dangerous to themselves or to others. Some of these individuals may assault or even kill family members, the report stated. This problem has received insufficient attention, researchers said.

“This is an area that has not been talked about,” E. Fuller Torrey, founder and board member of TAC and the study’s lead author, told MHW. “It’s been swept under the rug. Families don’t talk about it because they are embarrassed.” Other studies have focused on parents killing children and vice versa; the new study represents the first to examine the role of serious mental illness in all family homicides, he said.

People with mental illness have ended up homeless, in jails and in ERs, as a result of deinstitutionalization following discharge from psychiatric institutions, said Torrey. “It’s important to put this in a larger perspective, knowing what we know about the failures of treating people with serious mental illness,” he said.

Torrey pointed to a 1991 survey of 1,401 National Alliance on Mental Illness families, of which two-thirds reported having a family member diagnosed with schizophrenia and one-third a family member with bipolar disorder or major depression. Eleven percent of the families reported that their family member with mental illness had physically harmed a family member or another person in the past year, he said.

Methodology

The study pointed to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) National Vital Statistics System, which reported that 16,121 individuals died by homicide in 2013. In 6,681 of these cases, law enforcement identified the relationships between the victims and the offenders to the FBI in Supplemental...
According to the study, failure to take prescribed psychiatric medication plays a major role in family homicides. In the vast majority of cases in which such information is available, the offender was noted to be not taking medication. For example, a study of family violence found “compliance with medication” to be the most important variable that discriminated violent from non-violent relatives with mental illness, researchers noted.

**Recommendations**

According to the report, TAC is releasing the following recommendations:

2. Ensure that the prescribed antipsychotic medication is actually taken.
3. Use assisted outpatient treatment.
4. Reform the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.
5. Focus on the individuals with the most risk factors.
6. Improve data collection and research.

The underutilization of clozapine (Clozaril/FazaClo), an antipsychotic medication, approved by the Food and Drug Administration is “striking,” said Torrey. “The long-acting injectable is underutilized,” he said.

Torrey said he is pleased that Rep. Tim Murphy’s mental health reform legislation, which passed by a bipartisan unanimous vote out of the House Energy and Commerce Committee June 15, authorizes funding for the assisted outpatient treatment program. The legislation also helps individuals with serious mental illness by amending HIPAA so that their families can get the information they need, said Torrey.

“If you provide treatment, you can prevent the vast majorities of homicides,” Torrey said. “In most cases, there had been warnings. A person with an untreated mental illness may have threatened [the family member] or may have had previous episodes of violence.” •


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already teach mental health as part of their health and wellness curriculum, Liebman said. “We don’t have specific numbers, but some do a very good job of teaching about mental health in schools,” he noted, adding that many other schools do not teach about it at all.

Despite the fact that over 20 percent of students are directly impacted by mental health issues (not to mention all the students and school personnel that are indirectly impacted by mental health issues), students can go through middle school and high school and never learn about depression or anxiety and the importance of suicide prevention, according to a MHANYS press release.

Meanwhile, New York state schools will be mandated to teach mental health education by the school year commencing in September 2017, Liebman said. “We haven’t seen anything like this in other states,” he added. “There are burgeoning models [in other states] driven by curriculum, rather than by legislation,” Liebman said. It’s primarily left up to the schools to determine how to incorporate mental health education, he said.

**Another ‘landmark’ win**

This is the second year that New York’s mental health advocacy community has made significant legislative progress. Last November, the governor signed into law the New York state Mental Health Tax Check Off law, the first in the nation that creates a voluntary mental health public awareness tax checkoff to end discrimination against mental illness (see MHW, Dec. 7, 2015). The
Collaboration allows social workers to become case managers

A newly announced collaboration between the Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) to address the growing demand for health care case managers will allow more social workers the opportunity to earn the commission’s esteemed certified case manager (CCM) credential, said officials.

CCMC and NASW officials say this collaboration creates new opportunities for bachelor degree-level social workers (and those with advanced degrees) to play an active role in hospitals, health plans, clinics and other health care settings.

Under the agreement, social workers who qualify for the NASW case manager credential will pre-qualify to take the CCMC certification exam for the same fee. The NASW will provide an additional discount for its members.

The workforce gap and the need for case managers has grown, Patrice Sminkey, CEO of the CCMC, told MHW. “We have millions of new people in the health care system,” including older people and people with chronic conditions, she said. “We have an aging workforce,” she said. “Case managers are hitting retirement age and clinicians are not coming into the field quickly enough.”

The CCMC board wanted to determine how best to make this an opportunity and optimize the situation, Sminkey added. Around 2010–2011, case managers numbered 20,000, she said. Today, more than 40,000 are board-certified case managers. “Our numbers have grown as a whole,” said Sminkey.

Sminkey added, “Equally important is how we were growing; health care is changing and evolving.” The question is “How can we not only increase board-certified case managers, but become more diversified?” she noted. “How can we as an organ-

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tional increase the total number of case managers?”

The CCMC board took a hard look at its mission and vision, she said. Collaborating with the NASW was a way of addressing the gaps and workforce needs, said Sminkey. “Social workers were always eligible for our certification exam, but the requirements were different three years ago,” she said. “The board changed the eligibility criteria and made it more inclusive.”

The skills of a social worker are transferable to those of a case worker, noted Sminkey. “We celebrate the community-based social worker as part of our base,” she said. The CCMC knew it had to include the responsibilities of their social workers as part of an interdisciplinary team, she noted. “We’re coming together as leaders from our two organizations,” she said. “We’re strengthening our fellow constituency.”

Sminkey noted that case managers come to the career from a variety of professional backgrounds. Most come from nursing and social work (including clinical social workers/therapists), but there are CCMs whose backgrounds are from other areas as well. Any health and human services career (with accompanying higher education credential) is preparation to become a board-certified case manager, she said.

Professionally, the move to collaborate offers social workers career advancement and professional development, noted Sminkey. “We have seen time and time again employer recognition and opportunities for hiring, and opportunities for advancement,” she said.

Similar work

“We think social workers are uniquely qualified to provide case management services,” Raffaele Vitelli, NASW director of professional and workforce development, told MHW. “The nature of the work is similar. We believe social workers have been doing case management for many years. It’s the core of their work.”

Vitelli noted that case managers do earn higher salaries than social workers. Certification as a case manager could help social workers receive higher pay, he said. “That is the hope,” said Vitelli. “Social workers are reimbursed at lower rates. We’re trying to change that and [advocate] for better rates.”

Vitelli added, “The idea is to help social workers get better recognition for their skills and their body of work.”

SAMHSA report finds 1 in 13 young adults considered suicide

Nationally, 2.6 million young adults (7.4 percent) had serious suicidal thoughts in the past year — roughly one out of every 15 people in the 18–25 age group, according to a new report released June 16 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The report, “State Estimates of Past Year Serious Thoughts of Suicide Among Young Adults,” is based on data from SAMHSA’s 2012–2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), which has information on suicidal thoughts and behavior at the state level. This issue of the NSDUH’s The CBHSQ (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality) Report uses data from the 2013 and 2014 NSDUHs to present state (as well as the District of Columbia) estimates of serious thoughts of suicide in the past year among young adults.

In 2013, suicide was the 10th-leading cause of death in the United States overall, with more than 41,000 deaths by suicide. Among people aged 15 to 24, suicide ranked even higher, as the second-leading cause of death.

The report notes that individuals who die from suicide represent a fraction of those who consider or attempt suicide. Research suggests that there are more attempted suicides than there are deaths from suicide. Out of every 31 adults who attempted suicide in the past 12 months in the United States, there was one death by suicide. In addition, people are likely to have thought about suicide before actually attempting suicide.

“Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among young adults, and it is preventable,” SAMHSA Principal Deputy Administrator Kana Enomoto said in a press release. “We need to reach out to young people with the message that help is at hand, and promote effective programs for saving lives by treating people at risk whenever and wherever they need it.”

According to the report, suicide is of particular concern for young adults because the percentage of adults having serious thoughts of suicide in 2014 was higher among young adults aged 18 to 25 than among adults aged 26 to 49 and adults aged 50 or older (7.5 percent vs. 4.0 and 2.7 percent, respectively).

State rankings

Among the 10 states with the highest rates of young adults with serious thoughts of suicide, five were in the West (Alaska, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Utah), four were in the Midwest (Indiana, Michigan,
Overall, the rate of serious suicidal thoughts among young adults remained relatively the same between 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 both nationally and within each of the states and the District of Columbia — with the exception of New Hampshire, where it increased from 8.4 percent in 2012–2013 to 10.3 percent in 2013–2014.

With state-level rates of serious thoughts of suicide among young adults reaching as high as one in 10, despite the absence of increases, suicide remains a public health issue that transcends geographical boundaries, according to the report. Behind the statistics on completed suicides are the troubling large numbers of Americans who think seriously about committing suicide every year and do not receive mental health treatment, researchers noted.

Assessing recent state-level trends in past-year serious thoughts of suicide among young adults helps state public health authorities and suicide prevention specialists to better understand and effectively serve their communities, the report stated.


**Mental Health Weekly receives industry award**

We are pleased to announce that Mental Health Weekly has been honored by industry peers with the 2016 APEX Award of Publication Excellence in the category of Newsletters. The APEX Awards for Publication Excellence is an annual competition for publishers, editors, writers and designers who create print, Web, electronic and social media. A special thanks to managing editor Valerie A. Canady, contributing editor Gary Enos, copy editor James Sigman, and production editor Douglas Devaux.

**State News**

**Illinois county board to reduce number of people with MI in jail**

The McLean County Board in Illinois is moving ahead with its plan to reduce the number of people in jail with mental illness and to strengthen community services for them after their release, based on comments June 16 from Chairman John McIntyre at the first meeting of a new behavioral health council, The Pantagraph reported. McIntyre told the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council that the county is hopeful it will receive assistance from the federal Bureau of Justice with efforts to overhaul local mental health services. The county will continue on the next page...
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learn in late July if it will receive $215,000 in federal money to expand mental health training to first responders and improve collaboration among agencies that provide behavioral health services, said McIntyre. Additionally, the number of Critical Incident Team training sessions for police officers will go from two to six per year under the proposal. The new council that includes representatives of the areas of health, education, business and criminal justice was formed as part of the County Board’s Mental Health Action Plan approved in 2015.

Wisconsin Assembly task force targets students’ mental health

The Wisconsin Assembly’s Task Force on Urban Education, chaired by Rep. Jessie Rodriguez, has issued a dozen recommendations, including reviewing state funding for four-year-old kindergarten and other options for early childhood education, Wisconsin Watchdog reported June 16. But student mental health was a major area of concern. The task force is a follow-up to Assembly Speaker Robin Vos’ panel on rural education in a previous session of the legislature. Rodriguez and her colleagues focused on the six largest school districts in the state of Wisconsin, about 20 percent of the state’s total student population. “In all of the hearings that we had, all of the school districts addressed their need for more help with mental health,” Rodriguez said. The task force recommended expanding access to mental health care in the schools by seeking Medicaid reimbursement. The task force also recommended exploring ways to increase communications regarding a student’s mental health with doctors and other professionals. Rodriguez was unsure what legislation will result from the task force’s recommendations. “A lot of this is contingent on funding, so during the budget time we’ll look at ways that we could find funding for these recommendations,” Rodriguez said. “I’m hopeful that my colleagues will see that some of these things are needed and we need to invest in these areas.”

Coming up…


The American Association of People with Disabilities is hosting an event to recognize the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act July 7 in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-ada-celebration-tickets-24848682077.


The American Psychological Association is holding its 124th annual convention August 4–7 in Denver. For more information, visit www.apa.org/convention.

The New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services is hosting its 34th annual conference, “Advancing Whole Health & Healthy Communities: The Pathway to Population Health,” September 14–16 in Kerhonkson, N.Y. For more information, visit www.nyaprs.org.

In case you haven’t heard…

Fifteen years after drowning her five children in the bathtub of her suburban Houston home, Andrea Yates lives a reclusive life in a Texas mental health facility and frequently watches videos of her children laughing and playing, People magazine reported June 20. Yates, now 51, was convicted of the June 20, 2001, killings in a case that drew widespread media attention, both for the outrage and sadness over the children’s deaths and for Yates’ defense of severe postpartum psychosis. Years later, her conviction was overturned, and in 2006, Yates was found not guilty by reason of insanity and has since lived in mental hospitals. Yates is the only patient at Kerrville State Hospital, a 202-bed low-security facility, who is not allowed to go outside the grounds. She anonymously sells the aprons and cards she creates at the facility, giving the proceeds to the Yates Children Memorial Fund, founded by her defense attorney George Parnham and his wife, Mary, and dedicated to women’s mental health, particularly postpartum mental health.

Resources

SAMHSA and DOL release new parity resource

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the U.S. Department of Labor have produced a new resource to inform consumers about their rights under the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA). The new resource, “Know Your Rights: Parity for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Benefits,” provides an overview of the MHPAEA and lists some of the common limits placed on mental health and substance use disorder benefits and services. It also includes resources for additional information on parity. For more information, visit http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Know-Your-Rights-Parity-for-Mental-Health-and-Substance-Use-Disorder-Benefits/SMA16-497.