

The BHC Bulletin

ISSUE 16
DECEMBER
2015

Note from our CEO:

Mary Ann Daniels

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is now into its fifth consecutive month of a budget impasse. While our state government employees and many state agencies continue to be paid, county and private human services providers who work to support the most vulnerable people in their communities are left to wonder if their own agencies and departments will be able to stay afloat to do the work they are passionate about doing.

I could write about the frustrations our system currently faces, but there is enough bad news readily accessible by the moment to fill several newsletters, if we chose to print it. Time, instead, seems better spent taking a moment to express gratitude—to MCBHC staff and board members, who remain committed to serving those who need their support. To our community service providers and partners, who are doing their very best to keep their doors open and their services intact. To our county government officials, for their understanding of and commitment to their community's most fragile citizens.

To everyone who participates in making a difference so that someone else can have a better day: Thank you.

We wish everyone the happiest of holidays.

BHC Central Intake: 724-662-2230

Crisis: 724-662-9292

Our Mission:

The Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission is a non-profit organization that assists individuals and families experiencing substance abuse, or mental illness, or developmental challenges through the administration, coordination, and delivery of a service system committed to promoting recovery and improving the quality of life of those served.



Holiday Stress & Children

During the holidays, there are lots of fun activities and events going on, both at home and at school. And while that can be a good thing, the reality is



that all that hustle and bustle means schedules are often out of whack, bedtimes get pushed back, and routines are disrupted. As a result, it's inevitable that kids may feel some degree of holiday stress. To minimize anxiety in children during the holidays:

Set up conditions for good behavior. Avoid taking children to places such as the mall or holiday gatherings when they are hungry or tired. It's hard even for grown-ups to deal with noise and lots of stimulation when they're not feeling their best; kids get hungry more often and become tired more easily, and may understandably have a tough time being on their best behavior and are more likely to experience holiday stress when they're exhausted or hungry.

Remember the importance of routines. The holidays can throw a big wrench into household routines, and that can play a role in anxiety in children. To minimize holiday stress in your kids, try to get routines back on track once an event or party is over. For instance, if a school holiday concert or a church gathering goes past your child's bed

time, try to stick to quiet, calm activities the next day and get your child to bed on time the next night. Discuss holiday plans well in advance, and let kids participate in decisions to the extent possible. Kids need some degree of predictability. Prolonged uncertainty, constantly changing plans or last-minute decisions can all increase stress

Avoid over scheduling. As tempting as it may be to accept every invitation from friends and family, try to limit your holiday parties and activities so that you and your children are not overwhelmed. A couple of events a week may be fine, but having an obligation every day can lead to holiday stress and anxiety in children. Give kids some "downtime." Don't expect them to be "on" all the time. Leave room for some quiet activities, like listening to music, walking in the woods or reading a book.

Remind your children -- and yourself -- what the holidays are really all about.

Information gathered by Melissa Hollen from aboutparenting



SAFETY TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND THIS HOLIDAY SEASON:

Balloons

Children can choke or suffocate on deflated or broken balloons. Keep deflated balloons away from children younger than eight years old. Discard broken balloons immediately.

Small balls and other toys with small parts

For children younger than age three, avoid toys with small parts, which can cause choking.

Scooters and other riding toys

Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast, and falls could be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be worn properly at all times and they should be sized to fit.

Magnets

High-powered magnet sets are dangerous and should be kept away from children. Whether marketed for children or adults, building and play sets with small magnets should also be kept away from small children.

ONCE GIFTS ARE OPEN:

- Immediately discard plastic wrapping or other toy packaging before the wrapping and packaging become dangerous play things.
- Keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings.
- Battery charging should be supervised by adults. Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to young children. Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers. Some chargers lack any mechanism to prevent overcharging.

Source: <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Newsroom/News-Releases/2014/>

Responsible Holidays Make for Happy Holidays

The holidays provide the opportunity for family and friends to celebrate the season. Many people incorporate alcohol into their parties, celebrations, and festivities. If you host a party for the holidays and plan to serve alcohol, you take responsibility for the alcohol consumption of your guests. To ensure that all your guests have a good time and that everyone travels home safely, here are some ideas that can help keep your party on track.

Do not overstock your bar. Estimate about one drink per person per hour. For the average 150 pound person, the liver metabolizes about one ounce of alcohol per hour. One drink= 12 oz beer, 5 oz glass of wine, 1.5 oz shot (at 80 proof). Have plenty of non-alcoholic drink choices available as well, such as water, flavored waters, juices, sport drinks, and sodas. All your guests should feel comfortable at your party.

Provide snacks. Serve foods that are high in protein, not high in salts. Salty foods may cause your guests to drink greater amounts of alcohol. Offering high protein foods to guests who choose to drink alcohol will allow the alcohol to be absorbed more slowly (hummus, chicken dip, cheese, bean dip).

Have a theme for your party. Direct the attention of the party to something other than alcohol. Some holiday party ideas include: an Ugly Christmas Sweater Party, a Christmas Cast-Off Gift Exchange (Your chance to ditch that pair of fuzzy duck slippers you got last year), a 12 Days of Christmas Appetizer Party, a Christmas Carol Karaoke, or a Holiday Movie Marathon Party. Alcohol is not the focus of the party if you offer other activities and events.

Designate a bartender. Having someone designated to serve the beverages can help prevent some guests from over indulging. The bartender serves one drink at a time and can recognize if someone is reaching their limit. A bartender may be able to provide slow service to anyone who returns to the bar frequently and can politely decline to serve more alcoholic drinks to anyone who seems drunk (gulping drinks, belligerent, stumbling, slurring words, spilling). The bartender may offer them non-alcoholic drinks and encourage the guest to eat.

Do not play drinking games at your party. Drinking games are dangerous and sets up the host or hostess to deal with intoxicated guests. No fun for anyone!

Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before your guests will be leaving. Serve coffee and tea at the end of the night, perhaps even breakfasts foods. This changes the mood and makes for a comfortable transition for your guests. Everyone has a chance to prepare to leave.

Make transportation plans for intoxicated guests. Call a taxi for guests who may have had too much to drink, or make arrangements for someone else to drive them home.

If you aren't hosting the party but are a guest, you should consider the following:

You can choose not to drink. Many people celebrate special occasions in a positive, healthy, meaningful way without drinking alcohol.

If you choose to drink, make sure you arrange for safe and reliable transportation home. Make this arrangement before you start your evening.

Eat something! Enjoy the food that is offered at the party. If you choose to drink, the alcohol will be absorbed more slowly if you have eaten.

Set a limit on how many drinks you will have and stick to it. Alcohol affects everybody differently based on weight, how much food you have in your stomach, and how much you are drinking. Be wise to your body and know your limits before you start drinking.

Enjoy a safe and happy holiday season.



The U.S. is in the midst of an epidemic of opiate addiction and overdose. Overdose deaths from prescription painkillers have quadrupled since 1999. Deaths from heroin have tripled in the last five years. Pennsylvania has a higher overdose rate than most states.



In Mercer County, Pennsylvania and around the country, opiate addiction affects men and women of all ages, races, and geographic locations.

Anyone can become addicted. Anyone.

Heroin and prescription painkillers (with brand names like Vicodin, Percocet, and Oxycotin) are both opiates. They affect the brain and body in very similar ways. Either one can lead to addiction and overdose.

The Commonwealth Prevention Alliance (CPA) along with the Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission realizes immediate action needs to be taken to prevent opiate abuse. We believe this website (PaStop.org), and its content, will provide you with increased awareness, education and information on how to seek help. This website is designed to educate parents, teachers, family members and other caregivers about the risks of prescription painkiller and heroin use, the relationship between prescription painkiller and heroin use, and what to do when you need help.

It is important to know that there are research-based approaches to preventing and treating opiate use.

Funded through a generous grant from the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), and together with our workgroup partners, we have developed free materials about opiate addiction for D&A professionals to download and distribute, as well as information and resources for anyone looking for HELP.

PA Stop is intended to educate Pennsylvanians about the risks of prescription painkiller and heroin use, the relationship between painkiller and heroin use, and what to do when you need help. We are working to prevent non-medical use of prescription painkillers and, in so doing, to break the connection between heroin and prescription painkillers. Together, we can stop opiate addiction before it starts.



Anyone Can Become Addicted. Anyone
STOP PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE BEFORE IT STARTS.
Learn More. PAStop.org

 Commonwealth Prevention Alliance
Stop Opiate Abuse Campaign



DESCRIPTION OF TOBACCO CESSATION SERVICES

Many types of cessation services are available to the community, health providers, schools, municipalities, and worksites. The NWPATCP will work with you to determine the type of program that best serves your needs. Services include:

General Education—Population

Topics include health hazards of tobacco use (including smokeless tobacco), second hand smoke, nicotine addiction, quitting tobacco, tobacco and pregnancy, and general Q&A. Power Point, handouts, and visual aids can be used.

Education is tailored to the population, and surveys can be administered to determine the behaviors and habits of the audience as well as motivation to participate in programs. Train the trainer programs are available so that organizations can provide the education themselves.

Tobacco Cessation and Reducing Tobacco Use

Group and individual counseling is available to assist those interested in quitting tobacco use. Counseling may take place in the community, at a worksite, via a telephone quit line, or via a cessation website.

Counseling includes assessing current tobacco use, education about the effects of tobacco, nicotine addiction, education about prescription and over-the-counter medications, and methods to stay tobacco free. In some cases, financial assistance for prescription and over-the-counter medications is provided.

Available resources include:

1-800-Quit-Now (1-800-784-8669) PA Free Quitline is a telephone based cessation service for ages 13 and older. Cigarette and smokeless tobacco use are addressed, as is tobacco use during pregnancy. Five sessions are scheduled however the participant is able to make unlimited calls in to the quitline. Available in multiple languages. Nicotine Replacement Products are available to qualified individuals as supplies permit.

<https://pa.quitlogix.org/> QuitLogix is an online component to the PA Free Quitline program listed above. QuitLogix connects those interested in quitting and in learning more about tobacco use not only to telephonic counseling via the Quitline, but also to a wide array of resources and tools to assist tobacco users during the quit process.

NWPA.quitnet.com QuitNet is an internet based cessation service for ages 13 and older, funded by the NWPATCP. Cigarette and smokeless tobacco use are addressed, as is tobacco use during pregnancy. Available in English and Spanish. Nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges are provided to qualified individuals as supplies permit.

www.determinedtoquit.com Determined to Quit is an internet based social support system for persons quitting tobacco and their families. This site provides information about tobacco use, list resources for quitting tobacco, and has a section where people can send text messages to family and friends that are quitting.

www.smokefree.gov Smokefree.Gov is a website sponsored by the federal government. It provides information about the hazards of tobacco use, information about quitting, and is a resource for the community and healthcare providers.

quitSTART App Free app for cell phones available for test supports, alerts and reminders. See **www.Smokefree.gov**

Local programs Community classes are offered in various locations on a minimum bi-annual basis. Assistance with prescription and over-the-counter cessation medications may be available for qualified individuals. Contact Katie Gassner at 724-662-1550 Ext. 147 or **Katie.Gassner@mcbhc.org** for upcoming class information.

Professional Training, Education, and Assessment

Skill Building and Education: For those interested in information and/or skill building regarding talking to patients/clients about quitting tobacco use, online and in-person resources are available. The NWPA TCP can educate health care providers (physicians, social workers, medical assistants, physician assistants, therapists...anyone who interacts with a client or patient) in the basics of screening for tobacco use and providing brief advice to quit. Education can be done in the office, at Grand Rounds, at staff meetings, or any other place effective for your organization.

Fax to Quit: This initiative provides healthcare providers and other professionals with a tool to refer patients, clients, employees, students, etc. directly to the PA Free Quitline (800-Quit-Now). To participate in this initiative, contact Katie Gassner at 724-662-1550 Ext. 147 or **Katie.Gassner@mcbhc.org** to receive a customized fax form for your practice/ organization.



Young Lungs At Play (YLAP) Young Lungs At Play is an initiative that seeks to illuminate children's exposure to secondhand smoke in outdoor areas where youth play. YLAP achieves this by inviting municipalities, school districts, business and organizations to adopt tobacco free policies in those areas. Participants receive assistance with policy development if needed and free 12 x 18 metal signs pictured above.

Tobacco Policy Development/Implementation: For those interested in establishing a tobacco free policy or strengthening an existing one, assistance is available. Receive free Toolkits, resources, and any and all assistance toward implementation. Contact Katie Gassner at 724-662-1550 Ext. 147 or **Katie.Gassner@mcbhc.org** for more information.

Tobacco Free Multi-Unit Housing (MUH): This initiative provides directors/managers of Multi-Unit housing facilities resources and assistance towards developing and implementing tobacco policies which serve to protect tenants from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Miscellaneous

Provision of pamphlets and other educational materials, as available and appropriate.
Various initiatives not listed that you would like to discuss.



If you have any questions about services the NWPA TCP can provide, please contact Katie Gassner, Tobacco Programs Coordinator at 724-662-1550 Ext.147 or **Katie.Gassner@mcbhc.org**.

In 2014, the U.S. Surgeon General concluded that 480,000 Americans die each year from tobacco-caused death and disease.

Another 16 million are living with a tobacco-caused disease, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease and diabetes.

However, more than 51 million Americans have successfully quit smoking and former smokers now outnumber current smokers in the U.S.



Additional resources:

Local programs- Community classes are offered in various locations on a minimum bi-annual basis. Assistance with prescription and over-the-counter cessation medications may be available for qualified individuals. Contact Katie Gassner at 724-662-1550 Ext. 147 or Katie.Gassner@mcbhc.org for upcoming class information.

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www.Mylastdip.com **My Last Dip** is an internet based smokeless tobacco cessation website targeted to persons aged 14 – 25.

www.smokefree.gov **Smokefree.Gov** is a website sponsored by the federal government. It provides information about the hazards of tobacco use, information about quitting, and is a resource for the community and healthcare providers.

quitSTART App Free App for cell phones available for text supports, alerts and reminders. See www.smokefree.gov for more information.





**MERCER COUNTY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION, INC.**

8406 SHARON-MERCER ROAD, MERCER, PA 16138

Please contact us at: 724-662-1550

Or visit our website at:

www.mercercountybhc.org

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
and
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



**Welcome to
our New Hires:**

**Tara Collins
ID Supports
Coordinator**



**Jennifer Auchter
BHRS Monitor**





BHC BULLETIN EXTRA



Colleen DeJulia, MS, LPC started working with the Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission (MCBHC) on June 3, 2013 as a Complex Case Coordinator. She received her Bachelor and Master's Degree from Gannon University and her Certification in Applied Behavioral Analysis from Penn State. Prior to working for the MCBHC, Colleen worked for Sharon Regional Health System. She is married to husband Vince and they have two sons, Kellen age 11 and Carter age 10. Colleen likes to cook and crossfit in her spare time.

Information Technology (IT) Corner



Do you sometimes wish there was a way to take a picture of something on your computer screen either to reference while you move to something else or just thought it was cool to keep or send to someone? Well windows 7 and later has something called a snipping tool to do just that. Using your Windows "Search", enter snip or snipping and click on the Snipping tool. Click on "new" and the computer screen will change to a lighter color. Using your mouse click on one edge of what you want to take a picture of and drag the box to cover the entire area you want to capture. Let go of the click and you now have a snapshot in the snipping tool. Click New again to redo. It saves as a picture (jpg file) you can use, make notes on or send to someone using the snipping tool's tool bar icons.



Recipe Corner (Submitted by: Emily McDonald)

Bird's Nest Cookies/Thumbprint cookies.

The ingredients that you need:

One 8oz package of cream cheese (I use Philadelphia), softened
1 ½ sticks of butter (¾ cup), softened
1 cup of sugar
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
2 ¼ cups flour
½ tsp. baking soda
1 cup pecans, finely crushed
About 1 ¼ cup of preserves of your choice (my favorite is blackberry or raspberry, but for Christmas I have used strawberry and mint to be festive)

Step 1: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees

Step 2: Beat together butter, cream cheese, sugar and vanilla

Step 3: Add the flour and baking soda, then mix well and refrigerate for at least an hour

Step 4: When chilled enough, roll the dough into 1 inch balls, then roll those in the crushed pecans. Place them on a parchment lined pan about 2 inches apart. Take your thumb or forefinger and make an indent in the centers.

Step 5: Bake for about 10 minutes. Fill each cookie with about 1 tsp of preserves, then bake again for another 8 to 10 minutes or until the bottoms are a light golden brown. Let cool on wire rack and Enjoy!



Play it Safe

**— Shop Smart this
Holiday Season!**

Keep deflated balloons away from children younger than 8 years old. Discard broken balloons at once.

Avoid small balls and toys with small parts for children younger than age 3.

Get the right size helmets and safety gear for children using bikes, scooters, skateboards and skates. Ensure they are worn properly while riding or skating.

High powered magnet sets are dangerous and should be kept away from children under 14. Building & play sets with small magnets should also be kept away from small children.



NSN 13-3