Inside:

- MHA News at a Glance
- Suicide Prevention - Coalition and State Plans
- Support Groups

Learn how you can get involved!
(302) 654-6833
(800) 287-6423
www.mhainde.org
I hope you have been having a relaxing summer. Although a little early, I would like to briefly tell you about our fall activities.

We begin with our Third Suicide Prevention Conference sponsored by the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, the Division of Child Mental Health Services and the Mental Health Association in Delaware. Over the last few years, the Suicide Prevention Advisory Council has been working on a suicide prevention plan for the State. I am happy to say the plan is complete and will be presented on September 25th at the Suicide Prevention Conference. Then the real work begins — implementing the plan! We will be looking to you for help. We believe that if we work together we can begin to lower the suicide rate in Delaware. We believe that suicide is preventable given the proper tools and education. The plan is the roadmap to prevention efforts. We hope that you can join us on September 25 to learn more about it.

Fall will be busy for us with the National Depression Screening Day in Delaware on October 10th, followed by our 6th Annual E-Racing the Blues© 10k Run and 5k Run/Walk presented by AstraZeneca on October 26, and our 7th Annual People of Color Mental Health Conference on November 8th.

I hope you can join us at one or more of our events. Thank you for your continued support of MHA without which we would not be able to do what we do.

Jim

MHA News at a Glance!

Food, Wine & Art Fest

May 30th was a fun and festive evening of sipping wine, sampling hors d’oeuvres and bidding on auction items at MHA’s Food, Wine & Art Fest. The event, presented by F&N Spirits and Harry’s Savoy Grill, was a huge success. Over 100 people sampled dozens of wines and were treated to delicious refreshments. All art work and auction items were donated by local and regional artists and craftsmen.

Don’t miss next year’s event. Look for information soon about the Second Annual Fest to be held on March 26, 2009.

Depression Connection

On June 11, at the John H. Ammon Medical Education Center at Christiana Hospital, over 100 people attended The Depression Connection: Recognizing depression and its effects on other chronic diseases.

A distinguished panel from Christiana Care including Margaret Keenan, Ph.D., Director, Health Psychology, Cynthia Diefenbeck APN, Psy.D., the Center for Heart & Vascular Health, Scott Siegel, Ph.D., Helen F. Graham Cancer Center, and Dr. Michael Marcus, Department of Psychiatry, provided a wealth of information regarding the importance of recognizing and taking care of all aspects of chronic disease — including mental health.

An informative question and answer session followed the panel discussion. The program also featured a health expo with representation from American Diabetes Association, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, AIDS Delaware, Wellness Community and Multiple Sclerosis Society.

This free community Town Hall seminar was presented by MHA, Christiana Care, and The News Journal.

Heroes are Everywhere - Do you know one?

Heroes in the FightSM

The Heroes in the FightSM program recognizes and celebrates the “heroes” in Delaware who fight for better mental health every day by providing care and support to individuals with mental illness and their families. Six local individuals and one team will be recognized for their work and dedication. Nominate your “heroes” in Delaware today at www.heroesinthefight.org or www.mhainde.org, or call MHA offices at (302) 654-6833.

Deadline for nominations is September 2!

2008 Mental Health Association in Delaware

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Time to Face the Facts...

SUICIDE is the 11th leading cause of death among Delaware residents and out-numbers deaths by homicide. (2001-2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Suicide Rate</th>
<th>Homicide Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td>New Castle</td>
<td>11.2</td>
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<td>Kent</td>
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From 2001-2005 a total of 460 people died by suicide in Delaware, or approximately 92 every year. This means seven to eight Delawareans take their own life each month on average, equivalent to one suicide death approximately every four days.

Warning Signs of Suicide

**Observable signs of serious depression:**
Unrelenting low mood
Pessimism
Hopelessness
Desperation
Anxiety, psychic pain and inner tension
Withdrawal
Sleep problems

**Increased alcohol and/or other drug use**

**Recent impulsiveness and taking unnecessary risks**

**Threatening suicide or expressing a strong wish to die**

**Making a plan:**
Giving away prized possessions
Sudden or impulsive purchase of a firearm
Obtaining other means of killing oneself such as poisons or medications

**Unexpected rage or anger**

Risk Factors for Suicide

**Psychiatric Disorders**
At least 90 percent of people who kill themselves have a diagnosable and treatable psychiatric illnesses – such as major depression, bipolar depression, or some other depressive illness

**Past History of Attempted Suicide**
Between 20 and 50 percent of people who kill themselves had previously attempted suicide. Those who have made serious suicide attempts are at a much higher risk for actually taking their lives.

**Genetic Predisposition**
Family history of suicide, suicide attempts, depression or other psychiatric illness.

**Neurotransmitters**
A clear relationship has been demonstrated between low concentrations of the serotonin metabolite 5-hydroxyindoleactic acid (5-HIAA) in cerebrospinal fluid and an increased incidence of attempted and completed suicide in psychiatric patients.

**Impulsivity**
Impulsive individuals are more apt to act on suicidal impulses.

**Demographics**
Sex: Males are three to five times more likely to commit suicide than females.

**Age:**
Elderly Caucasian males have the highest suicide rates.

www.AFSP.org
Suicide Prevention in Delaware – Awareness, Education, Resources

A person dies by suicide approximately every four days in the State of Delaware. Suicide is heartfelt. It is about the loss of precious human life and the people affected by its sadness. Everyone has a responsibility to do what is necessary to prevent the needless loss due to hopelessness and despair.

Delaware’s Suicide Prevention Coalition

To address suicide as a critical public health problem the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Nancy M. Maces, initiated the formation of the Delaware Suicide Prevention Coalition to develop a plan that would decrease the rate and number of suicides across the state. The Suicide Prevention Coalition, headed by the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSASH), and the Mental Health Association in Delaware (MHA) began efforts in 2005 and multiple state, private, and non-profit agencies were enlisted to participate in the effort. The Coalition developed a comprehensive statewide suicide prevention plan that creates a pathway for interventions and prevention strategies across the entire lifespan of all Delaware residents. Delaware’s Plan is modeled after known best practices and the established goals of the National Suicide Prevention Plan.

Coalition strives made to date include the:

- Collection of a comprehensive set of statistics and demographics for suicide in the State of Delaware to characterize the nature of suicide in the state.
- Placement of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Number (1-800-273-TALK) on the Delaware River and Bay Authority’s Digital Billboard on the Delaware Memorial Bridge.
- Hosting annual Suicide Prevention Conferences in the State of Delaware; and Identification and coordination of existing crisis services across the state.

The mission of the Suicide Prevention Coalition is to raise awareness that suicide is a preventable public health problem and to enable the behavioral and social changes necessary to reduce suicidal ideation and attempts. Delaware’s efforts for Suicide Prevention are thoughtful:

- To prevent suicidal behaviors by enhancing awareness and recognizing suicidal ideations and attempting suicides.
- To improve support of individuals, families and communities affected by suicide or suicidal behaviors.
- To improve accessibility, availability, and continuity of suicide prevention care.

The time has come to make prevention a priority. The time has come to make a difference. The message is clear. Suicide is a preventable public health problem and mental health is manageable. Having a coordinated suicide prevention program in the state of Delaware is vital to decreasing the suicide rate and number of annual deaths due to suicide.

Delaware’s Suicide Prevention Coalition

Member Organizations of the DE Suicide Prevention Coalition

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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<td>Contact Lifeline</td>
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<td>Delaware Attorney General’s Office</td>
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<td>Department of Justice</td>
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<td>Delaware National Guard</td>
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<td>Delaware River and Bay Authority</td>
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<td>Department of Correction</td>
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<td>Convictional Medical Services</td>
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<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>Department of Public Safety and Homeland Security</td>
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<td>Delaware State Police</td>
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<td>Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families</td>
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<td>Division of Developmental Disability Services</td>
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<td>Division of Health and Social Services</td>
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<td>Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health</td>
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<td>Division of Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Division of Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities</td>
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<td>Mental Health Association in Delaware</td>
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<td>Mid-Atlantic Behavioral Health</td>
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<td>NAMI- DE</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Directions Delaware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steps for STEM (Supporting Teen Return and Psychological Health)</td>
<td>Phone number</td>
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Any veteran or family member or friend who is concerned about a veteran and wants to review the services possible to get some help, they can call Kent Johnson, LCSW/CADC at cell phone # 302-275-5676.

Services for Veterans

- The VA estimates that there are 22 suicides a day from America’s 25 million veterans. The Department of Veteran Affairs is moving to address this estimate with several new initiatives.
- The VA has partnered with the National Suicide Hotline (1-800-273-TALK) and offered a 24/7 cell phone service. This combined effort is aimed to reach up to 20 veterans a day.
- The VA has revived the call centers associated with the Suicide Prevention Coordinator at each VA Medical Center throughout the nation. These call centers are available for individual follow up and outreach. The Delaware V.A. Medical Center Suicide Coordinator is Kent Johnson, LCSW/CADC at cell phone # 302-275-5676.
- The VA Medical Centers have been authorized to expand mental health services and personnel. In Delaware, this has included the opening of both a Georgetown Outpatient Clinic and a Dover Outpatient Clinic in 2009.
- The VA Medical Centers have opened specialized units of care, case managers and other professionals to deal with running combat veterans from the OIF (Iraq) and OEF (Afghanistan). The purpose is to speed treatment and address any obstacles encountered.
- Using the VA system of computerized records, patients are being routinely screened for suicidal ideations and, in case of emergency suicides, are flagged for additional monitoring.

If you’re in an emotional crisis call 1-800-273-TALK from the USA.

- If you’re in an emotional crisis call 1-800-273-TALK.
Q&A with Jack Akester

By Pam George

In 1983 and 1990, Jack Akester suffered from periods of major depression. He saw a psychiatrist, took medication and continued on with his life in Pearl River, N.Y., where he was a clinical pharmacologist for Lederle. When Wyeth purchased Lederle in late 1994, Akester decided to retire. He and his wife, Sally, moved back to Delaware to restore the old Pike Creek home that she had inherited. “I realized it was giant fix-me-upper,” he recalls. The overwhelming task along with the life changes-triggered another episode. Along with seeing a doctor and taking medication, Akester attended one of the Mental Health Association’s support groups for people with clinical depression, bipolar disorder, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) or dysthymia, a milder yet more enduring form of depression typified by moods that are low but not extreme.

MHA also offers support groups for people with anxiety disorders, survivors of suicide, survivors of accidents and murders, and parents or caregivers of children with emotional difficulties.

Akester, now a member of the MHA board, has been in recovery for 10 years. He found the support group so beneficial that he became a facilitator, which required undergoing group leader training. A facilitator’s primary role is to lead and encourage interaction in a safe, confidential environment.

Q: How many people usually attend the depression support group?

A: As many as 12 to 13, but you can expect to see about seven or eight every week. You have a core group of about five who attend 90 percent of the time; another 10 or 12 who come every other week or whom you don’t see for a month. Six to eight is a nice size. With depression, you have good times and bad times. When some people are doing pretty good, you may not see them for a while. Other people who are doing OK come week in and week out. But when they’re not doing well, they stay home.

Q: Often when people with depression start feeling better, they go off their medication, which can lead to problems. But isn’t it true that people need patience when they start taking medication?

A: With most antidepressants, you don’t start taking them and say, “Oh boy, I’m starting feel better.” It can take weeks.

Q: But it takes more than medication?

A: Number one is medication. Number two is a therapist to get you thinking right—that’s extremely important. Number three is the support group, which supplements the therapist and the medication.

Q: What’s it like when you first go to a support group?

A: I always try to start meetings by saying this is just one small part of what you do to get in recovery from wherever you’re starting. Some people are way down; some people have been seeing a therapist awhile. I introduce the new person and then say the ground rules: everything is confidential — what you hear in the room you leave in the room.

Q: What’s the setup like?

A: We “circle the wagons” and put chairs in a circle and push tables against the back wall so you’re always having contact with someone. We go around the room, and the facilitator encourages someone to share. Then it’s back and forth. “Mary, how are you doing this week?” “Joe, last week you were having problems with such and such. How’s the work situation?” It gives everybody a chance to talk.

Q: What if you don’t want to talk at first?

A: We have something we call a “pass.” If someone doesn’t have their thoughts together, they can say, “I pass.” There is no stigma attached to that.

Q: What do you talk about?

A: We talk about the group being a supplement to a therapist. We get to know each other. Within two or three weeks, a new person will know just about everyone.

Q: Are the groups co-ed?

A: Mine are about 50-50 men and women. [There are depression support groups just for women that meet on Thursdays in Wilmington and Newark.]

Q: How do you find a group?

A: You call the Mental Health Association and a staff member will have a facilitator in your area contact you.

MHA Support Groups

- Have you or someone you know ever experienced a depression or anxiety disorder?
- Perhaps you have tragically lost someone to suicide or a sudden death?
- Do you have a child who is experiencing a mental illness?

The Mental Health Association in Delaware (MHA) provides free and confidential support groups statewide in Delaware for individuals and families experiencing issues such as these.

The purpose of MHA’s support groups is to help people facilitate recovery from a mental illness or personal grief by providing an opportunity for members to share and discuss their experiences.

All MHA support group meetings are confidential and are conducted in an open and honest environment in which members can learn from one another. Often, as members begin to share their experiences and feelings, they begin to realize that they are not alone and that they have the power to resolve issues with the support of the group.

A typical support group meeting begins with brief introductions by its members followed by individual and group discussions of related concerns and experiences.

Most of MHA’s support groups are led by trained, peer volunteers, with the exception of the Survivor’s of Accidents and Murders and Parent Support Groups that are facilitated by mental health professionals.

MHA support groups are intended to supplement, not replace, professional mental health treatment.

MHA Peer-Led Support Group Facilitators

MHA Depression, Anxiety and Survivors of Suicide, are self help groups led by trained peer facilitators. Most MHA Support Group Facilitators are individuals who have experienced a mental health issue at one point in their lives, have possibly participated in a support group structure, and are interested in supporting others through the journey of recovery. Each MHA Support Group Facilitator goes through Group Leader Training sponsored by MHA to understand the many aspects and dynamics of leading self/help peer-led support groups.

The primary role of the MHA Support Group Facilitator is to lead and encourage group interaction by providing an opportunity for group members to share their mental health related experiences in a safe, supportive, and confidential environment.

If you are interested in learning more about the voluntary role of a MHA Support Group Facilitator, please call 302-654-6833, or 800-287-6425 in Kent and Sussex Counties.
MHA Support Group Description

All groups are confidential and there are no fees to attend.

Depression Support Groups are peer-led groups for individuals experiencing or who have experienced Clinical Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Seasonal Affective Disorder, or Dysthymia.

Anxiety Support Group is a peer-led group for individuals experiencing or who have experienced Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and specific phobias. The group uses a self-help book on anxiety disorders for discussion during each meeting.

Survivors of Suicide Groups are peer-led groups for individuals who have lost a loved-one or friend to suicide. These groups provide insight and comfort to those dealing with the trauma and tragedy of a loss to suicide.

Survivors of Accidents and Murders Groups are professionally run groups for family and friends of people whose deaths were sudden and/or violent. A monthly newsletter discussing coping with sudden and/or violent death is also provided. The Survivors of Accidents and Murders Support Groups are sponsored by MHA and are funded through the Delaware Criminal Justice Council.

Parent Support Groups are professionally run groups for parents and/or caregivers of a child with emotional difficulties. Services and resources available for family members and/or caregivers are provided. Stipends are available to help with childcare or transportation needs. The Parent Groups are sponsored by MHA and is funded through the Division of Child Mental Health Services.

Clip and save the Fall 2008 schedule

Mental Health Association in Delaware Support Groups Fall 2008

Please call to register. (302) 654-6833 in New Castle County, or in Kent or Sussex (800) 287-6423

To maintain the privacy of our members, MHA does not publish support group locations; locations are provided with registration. Support groups sponsored by MHA are not intended to replace professional mental health treatment.

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<tr>
<th>For help with ...</th>
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<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Newark (7-9 p.m.)</td>
<td>Wilmington (10 a.m.-12 p.m.)</td>
<td>Milford (1-2:30 p.m.)</td>
<td>Wilmington Women’s Depression (12:1-30 p.m. Thurs.)</td>
<td>Newark (6:30-8:00 p.m.)</td>
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<td>Dover (7-8:30 p.m.)</td>
<td>Claymont (12:1-30 p.m.)</td>
<td>Pike Creek (7-9 p.m.)</td>
<td>Newark Women’s Depression (7-9 p.m.)</td>
<td>Laurel (2nd &amp; 4th Weds.) (12:30-1:30 p.m.)</td>
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<td>Grief &amp; Healing</td>
<td>Wilmington (1st, 3rd &amp; 5th Mon.) (7-8:30 p.m.)</td>
<td>Millsboro (2nd Tuesday) (7:30-9 p.m.)</td>
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<td>Newark (1st Tues.) (7-9 p.m.)</td>
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<td>Parent Support</td>
<td>Wilmington (2nd Mon.) (7:30-9 p.m.)</td>
<td>Seafood (3rd Mon.) (5-6:30 p.m.)</td>
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MHA in DE Information and Referral Services

MHA’s information and referral service is designed to support individuals and families who need access to mental health services or for those who want to learn more about mental health and mental illness. MHA provides free of charge state and national resources and literature in English and in Spanish. This service is available by phone, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, 302-654-6833, or 800-287-6423. Statewide resources are also available on the MHA website at www.mhainde.org, or by email at info@mhainde.org.
MHA’s Fundamental Campaign

Fund a “mental”ly speaking, Mental Health Association in Delaware (MHA) is your source for complete mental health information. We provide the most recent, up to date information available about mental well being on all fronts. That would include support, education, and advocacy which of course is our mission.

We have been providing the fund a “mental” needs of many Delawareans as they relate to emotional well being for over 75 years. Support groups are offered throughout the State on a variety of topics including depression. MHA sponsors many educational programs and provides leadership in the advocacy area. The upcoming Suicide Prevention Conference you just read about is another way we continue educating Delawareans about mental well being.

Funding is a huge part of the provision of our fund a “mental” services. In order to continue offering these life saving programs, we must appeal to you to provide support. A direct donation sent to our office, a pledge through our website or a donor designation gift through your employer’s United Way campaign would be greatly appreciated. Remember that you can designate your contribution directly to MHA using our code of 0490. Our mailing address is 100 W. 10th Street, Suite 600 in Wilmington, DE 19801. Or you can visit our website at www.mhainde.org. All gifts are fully tax deductible to the extent of the law and no amount is too small.

ATTENTION MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES

Do you have a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan?
Do you need help paying for prescription drug costs including premiums, deductibles, coinsurances, and copayments?
Do you have a low income and limited resources?
If you answered “yes” to any of these questions you can apply for extra help from Social Security.

How do you apply for extra help?
Call ELDERinfo at 1-800-336-9500
You may also automatically qualify for extra help if you have Medicare AND full Medicaid, SSI, QMB, SLMB, or QI-1.

For more information call ELDERinfo at the Delaware Department of Insurance. 1-800-336-9500

Mark Your Calendars
Don’t miss these exciting events!

Remember September 2nd deadline for Heroes Nominations
www.heroesinthefight.org

National Depression Screening Day
Friday, October 10, 2008

National Depression Screening Day calls attention to the illness of depression. The screening program is designed to offer individuals the opportunity to be screened for depression, to educate about symptoms and effective treatments, and to connect those in need to the mental health care system in Delaware.

For sites in Delaware that will be conducting free depression screenings on October 10, visit www.mhainde.org or www.mentalhealthscreening.org.

The Mental Health Association in Delaware and the Attention Deficit Disorder Association present the

7th Annual People of Color Mental Health Conference
“Healthy Minds = Healthy Lives through Mind, Body, and Spirit”

Keynote Speaker: Gwen Scott-Jones, Psy.D
Presents:
“Understanding Mind, Body, and Spirit: A Vision for Future Mental Health Services”

Saturday, November 8, 2008, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Delaware Technical & Community College
333 Shively Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Tickets are $15 for the Public and $65 for professionals requiring continuing educational units
To register, call MHA (302) 654-6833