

ACMHAI/IPHA to Host Policy Forum and Legislative Reception

In the midst of this state and national economic crisis, with a looming state budget deficit and inadequate funding for basic human services, it is more important than ever to advocate for mental health/public health policy and funding that address the needs of our communities. Plan to attend our second annual joint policy forum to discuss national and state issues in preparation for garnering support from legislators. There will be time to meet with your legislators at the Capitol after the forum and to talk with them during the evening reception.

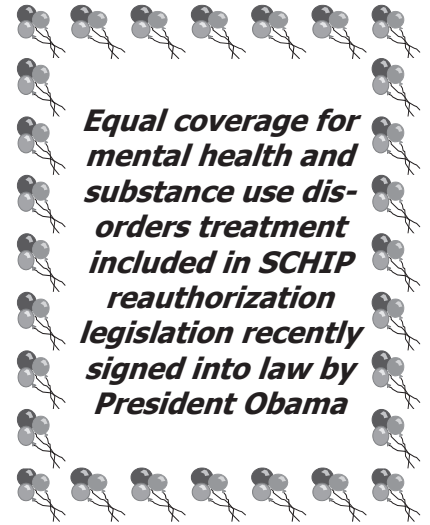
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 **ACMHAI/IPHA Policy Forum**

1:30—3:30 PM
Springfield Hilton
Rendezvous Room

Capitol Visits
3:30—5:30 PM

Legislative Reception
6:00—8:00 PM
Springfield Hilton
30th Floor

Please join us! RSVP by emailing acmhai@shout.net or call 217-369-5168. For the convenience of ACMHAI members, we will hold our quarterly meeting on the same day, 10:30 AM—1:30 PM.



***Equal coverage for
mental health and
substance use dis-
orders treatment
included in SCHIP
reauthorization
legislation recently
signed into law by
President Obama***

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From the President... CHANGES...

As we wrapped up 2008 and proceed into 2009, I was reminded of the pop song from the 70's that started out "cha...cha...cha...changes". The theme of candidate Obama was "Change – Yes, We Can". It proved to be the winning theme of this presidential election. Here in Illinois it became plain, with the turmoil in Springfield, that there will be some changes in our state capital in 2009. Some leadership has already changed; more is likely. Pundits say that the only constant is change, and today seems to be a good example of the old adage.

For those of us involved in human services here in Illinois, hopes are running high that the current wave of changes will be for the better, despite harsh economic

times. With an Illinois favorite son in the White House, expectations are high that the residents of Illinois will reap the benefits of additional federal funding for much needed services. The new leadership in the Illinois legislature seems committed to beginning relationships anew both with the executive branch and their fellow legislators across the aisle. Everyone is hopeful that these changes will mean positive results for the residents of Illinois.

The challenges facing Illinois are great. We are "51st and Failing" when it comes to state funding for community-based human services like mental health and developmental disabilities. Substance abuse services are not far ahead. It is becoming increasingly obvious that Illinois is in need of additional resources, not just for

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**ACMHAI Best Practices Training
Champaign Hawthorn
Friday, April 24, 8:30—12:00**

Join us to learn about innovative programs that are being implemented in Illinois communities:

*Mental Health First Aid
Co-occurring Disorders Treatment
Primary/Mental Health Integrative Care*

Call or email ACMHAI to RSVP for this free training!

(From the President, cont'd from p. 1)

human services, but education, transportation, infrastructure and the other areas where we lag behind other states. Illinois residents deserve better than they are receiving.

I urge our state executives and legislative leaders to do whatever they need to do in order to increase resources for needed services. Illinois residents are anxious for change. Illinois residents are tired and embarrassed with being "51st and Failing". These tough times will need difficult decisions to be made by our leaders, who need the political will to adequately fund human services in Illinois. Let's CHANGE Illinois for the better in 2009.

—Jerry J. Murphy
President

**Solutions for Illinois Mental Health Authorities
Update**

Last May several mental health boards met in Bloomington after the Quarterly ACMHAI meeting to discuss the future of the local funds initiative (LFI). At that time the company that owned the software license no longer wished to continue to support the project in the same manner and new arrangements were necessary to establish a long term mechanism for billing. Individually, several boards were already billing and receiving federal financial participation (FFP) match for Medicaid billings that were being submitted to the Illinois Health and Family Services (HFS). In order to continue this process, Solutions for Illinois Mental Health Authorities was formed as a consortium of five local mental health authorities: McHenry County Mental Health Board, Madison County MHB, Macon County Mental Health Board, Proviso Township Mental Health Commission and St. Clair County Mental Health Board. Solutions became a 501 c 3, not for profit corporation during the summer of 2008 and contracted for the rights to the Median software license. Alex Campbell was retained as a consultant to assist with the transition. Since that time several other mental health authorities, through the assistance of Solutions have been able to initiate the billing process and receive FFP dollars. If you are interested in this program, please call me at (618) 277-6022 or the ACMHAI office. — Dana Rosenzweig, President, Solutions



ST. CLAIR COUNTY MHB

Reclaiming Futures of Youth

Four out of five youth involved in the juvenile justice system have substance abuse issues. As presiding Juvenile Judge in St. Clair County, Honorable Walter Brandon has seen evidence of this in juvenile court. He has called upon the St. Clair County Youth Coalition to look at how the community can reclaim the futures of youth who are abusing drugs and alcohol. In response, the St. Clair County Mental Health Board, and Chestnut Health Systems submitted a grant on behalf of the St. Clair County Youth Coalition to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The grant proposes to develop a more coordinated system that identifies, and is responsive in providing treatments and supports for these youth and families.

The project also proposes to develop a Juvenile Drug Court, Reentry Program for juveniles returning from the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and gender and cultural specific programs. The Coalition with Chestnut Health Systems as lead agency, was one of four sites selected to be awarded the Reclaiming Futures two year grant that will provide consultation by national experts, training in evidenced based practices, tools, and resources. Reclaiming Futures will provide a "blueprint and breakthrough approaches to organize, provide more treatment, better treatment, and beyond treatment." The St. Clair County project is led by a Change Team of five Fellows who are responsible for planning and implementation of the initiative. The Team participates in monthly conference calls with Fellows from nineteen previously funded sites throughout the Country to consult with and gain insights.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Terry Steczo

“How Low Can You Go ...”

Everyone knew that the state was in dire fiscal straits as a result of the withering economy, but few could have guessed the depth of that hole. One wag suggested recently that the trench was so deep it reached half-way to China. The effort at humor was lost on the Governor and members of the General Assembly who, in the next few months, are going to have to find a way to resolve the deficit and somehow get the state back onto solid footing.

Comptroller Dan Hynes in early February issued a warning that the state’s deficit for the current fiscal year could reach as high as *\$9 billion*, and possibly higher if higher levels of spending are approved during the current budget deliberations leading up to the new fiscal year that begins in July. The new deficit figure quoted by Hynes is more than *twice* the expectation. While a third of that deficit might be overcome if a federal stimulus program is approved, fixing the remaining \$6 billion hole is going to take great wisdom and courage ... the wisdom to provide a source of revenue that will provide money for state coffers without throwing the state economy into a further tailspin, and the courage to vote for it.

Because of the recent changeover the governor’s budget message, originally scheduled for February 18, has been postponed until March 18. It will also allow both Governor Quinn and legislative leaders additional time to get a true sense of the problem and discuss realistic and acceptable ways to overcome it.

Legislators and legislative observers are anxious to see how Governor Quinn will react to various plans to cure the fiscal crisis. Thus far he has nixed former Governor Blagojevich’s plan to raise funds by leasing the lottery, but the state’s more important question is, “what will he support?” In the past Governor Quinn has been an advocate of more progressive income taxation and expanding the sales tax base. Whether or not he will now take a leadership role to enact such “reforms”, and whether or not there would be adequate legislative support for such proposals is up in the air.

Finally a Capital Plan?

In addition to the state budget, there will also be a strong push to enact a state capital construction plan. With or without the assistance of federal stimulus funds the time may have come for the legislature to find a way to pay for much needed long and short term infrastructure needs.

The last large state capital construction plan occurred during the tenure of former Governor Ryan. Attempts to further those efforts during the six years of the Blagojevich administration were unsuccessful year after year mainly, according to sources in the legislature, because of lack of trust in the Governor. With a new administration and the possible carrot of federal dollars in place for “shovel ready” projects there will be a renewed effort to approve a capital construction plan very early in the session.



New Senate Leaders Selected

“Change” was the theme that dominated elective politics this past year and that theme was truly evidenced when the Illinois Senate caucuses organized and selected their leaders for the current General Assembly session.

Last August Senate President Emil Jones announced his retirement. Then, in October, Senate Minority Leader Frank Watson suffered a stroke and announced shortly after that he would be vacating his leadership position. So, for the first time anyone could recall, replacements would occupy both top party positions.

Shortly after the November elections both party caucuses convened and made their selections. Democrat John Cullerton (D-Chicago) was selected as the new Senate President and Senator Christine Radogno (R-Lemont) was selected by Republicans as Senate Minority Leader. Radogno’s selection also marks the first time in Illinois history that a woman has been selected as a party leader in either the House or Senate.

In the House, Speaker Michael J. Madigan (D-Chicago) and Minority Leader Tom Cross (R-Plainfield) were re-elected by their members and will continue in their respective posts.





ACMHAI ANNOUNCEMENTS



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 6-7	Piecing It All Together Children's Mental Health Conference	SIU, Edwardsville
March 9-11	NACBHDD Legislative and Policy Conference	Washington DC
March 25	ACMHAI Quarterly Meeting ACMHAI/IPHA Policy Forum and Legislative Reception	Springfield Hilton
April 24	ACMHAI Best Practices Training and Anti-Stigma Film at Ebertfest	Champaign
April 28-30	ACMHAI Behavioral Health Summit: <i>Advocacy Works!</i> IPHA Annual Meeting: <i>Public Health in Peril— The Call to Action</i>	Indian Lakes Resort, Bloomington

(Spotlight, continued from p. 2)

The Team has had the opportunity to participate in webinars on evidenced based practices to gain knowledge about drug and alcohol treatment and approaches that are demonstrating successful outcomes (i.e., ACC, A-CRA, TF-CBT, Matrix, Motivational Interviewing and Seven Challenges.) The Team will seek community involvement to assist in providing resources and supports "beyond treatment." These supports will include education, employment, mentoring, parenting, skill building, reintegration, and vocational services.

The Team will work to engage community, faith based, youth and parent representatives to partner in the effort. The St. Clair County Team is currently planning to implement universal screening at various contact points in the community, schools, truancy programs, court, and probation to identify youth who are abusing drugs and alcohol. The Team researched various screening instruments and has selected the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs-Short Screen (GAIN SS) instrument. Rapid cycle testing will be completed to test the instruments effectiveness in our community. Data collected on youth who were identified as using substances prior to the screen will be compared to this data to see if it produces expected results. If proven effective the Team will take steps to implement the screen community wide.

— *Debbie Humphrey, Program Director, St. Clair County MHB*

If you would like additional information about any of the articles, please call 217-369-5168 or email acmhai@shout.net.
Also check out the ACMHAI website, www.acmhai.org.

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