



The Cutting Edge

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN NJ

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Carolyn Beauchamp, President and CEO

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Super Storm Sandy Intensifies Need for Affordable Housing in NJ

Many low and middle-income renters in New Jersey struggled to afford housing even before Super Storm Sandy. The Storm has triggered an even greater need for rental units while also causing a reduction in the supply. According to an article from njspotlight.com, "...while the state is planning to spend nearly \$1 billion in hurricane relief on low- and moderate-income residents, housing advocates say that will do little to address the long-term problem." [Click here to read the article.](#)

Sandy CDBG Dollars Support Special Needs Housing

MHANJ joined with 44 statewide partners in applauding the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Action (NJCA) Plan to distribute the Community Development Block Grant dollars for Super Storm

Addressing Unmet Mental Health Needs in NJ -- A Message from Carolyn Beauchamp, President and CEO of MHANJ

Mental illness has been in the news recently but for many of the wrong reasons. These recent horrific tragedies have played into peoples' fears that continue to equate mental illness and violence. However, these crises provide us with an opportunity to have the real discussion of how to provide the accountable, accessible and relevant services necessary for people to access care, recover and move forward.



We recommend that the state begins to address these needs by devoting resources saved by the closure of Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital to mental health programs in the community.

The MHANJ believes that we must continue to move our public mental health system, through Wellness and Recovery, to an expanded community-based system of care, reducing reliance on institutional settings. In the community, we still have unacceptably long waiting lists of three to nine months for clinical appointments. Special needs housing is still inadequate to meet the needs for community integration. And we must have a vision that many people who are survivors of mental illness living in the community are capable and ready to work. The MHANJ is committed to helping those individuals prepare for jobs, and keep those jobs. We work with One-Stops and hold training programs for consumers toward these goals. Many have found jobs and success when given needed training and support.

With the closure of Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital the state saved \$44M. To date, less than \$12M has been directed to community services. We ask that a commitment be made for the remainder of the \$44M to be used to fund mental health initiatives. We believe that our New Jersey statute should be honored (CHAPTER 258, 1997 Community Mental Health and Developmental Disability Services Investment Act) which requires reinvestment in mental health community services when a facility has been downsized or closed.

Sandy. The Plan includes targeting specific dollars for the most vulnerable survivors and the homeless. It earmarks \$104.5M to be utilized to provide zero and low-interest loans of up to \$120,000 per unit to create new permanent housing units, with a significant portion of these dollars to be used to assist in the development of new permanent supported housing for persons with special needs. The inclusion of specific funding for supported housing services is a very positive step meeting the needs of the community. A series of recommendations were submitted to NJDCA that would expand the state's commitment by utilizing the successfully Special Needs Housing Trust Fund model and creating a growing pool of capital dollars over the next three years. [Click here to read the full recommendations.](#)

Save the Date!

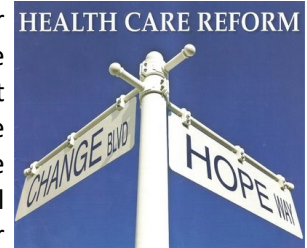


Tuesday,
June 18, 2013

Would you like to help MHANJ continue its advocacy initiatives?

Affordable Care Act to Enable Marked Increase in Coverage for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues

According to an ASPE (Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation) Research Brief, "The Affordable Care Act will provide one of the largest expansions of mental health and substance use disorder coverage in a generation." In 2014 the new law will include a mandate for new small group and individual market plans to cover specified behavioral health services "at parity with medical and surgical benefits." Further, the Brief estimates that the "Total individuals who will benefit from federal parity protections as a result of the Affordable Care Act will be 62.5M." [Click here to review the ASPE Brief.](#)



Preparing for Health Exchange

New Jersey is one of at least 26 states that plans to use the Federal government's health insurance marketplace as opposed to running its own in the state. Marketplaces may be considered one-stop-shops via website for individuals and small businesses to purchase health insurance starting on or before October 1. According to Kaiser Health News It should make little difference to the general public whether the marketplace is run by the state or federal government. [Click here to read more.](#)

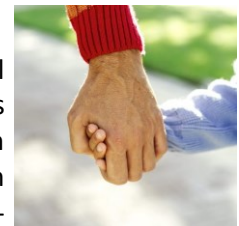


Stigma Remains a Major Barrier


Although many may recognize that there is discrimination against people with serious mental health challenges, reservations still surface about working with them or having their children in contact. Results from the Kaiser Family Foundation poll indicated that 76% of Americans feel that those with mental illness are discriminated against. Further, many thought that those with mental illness suffer more discrimination than those with HIV or Aids, blacks, people who have physical disabilities or women. Immigrants was the only segment thought to experience more discrimination than those with mental illness. [Click here to read about more results from the poll.](#)

Perspectives on Medicating our Children

New information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates an increase in the diagnoses of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in school aged children. According to a nytimes.com article this raises concerns about potential over-diagnosis of ADHD and potential over-use of treatment medications which have the potential to lead to addiction. Some view the increase in diagnosis and treatment as a plus, "...evidence that the disorder





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is being better recognized and accepted..." Others view it as alarming, pointing out that "...millions of children may be taking medication merely to calm behavior or to do better in school." Concerns are intensified with anticipated changes in the criteria for ADHD diagnosis planned for release soon that are expected to precipitate further increase in the number who qualify. [Click here to read the article.](#)



**Mental Health
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www.mhanj.org

Learn more about

[MHANJ's Government Affairs](#) efforts.

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