

**THE VISN 5 MIRECC UPDATE**

An Electronic Publication of the VA Capitol Healthcare Network (VISN 5) Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center

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**FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK**

*Alan S. Bellack, Ph.D. ABPP, Director, VISN 5 MIRECC*

I am pleased to be able to introduce the second issue of the UPDATE with some exciting information about the progress on our suite. Construction has been completed and we are neat, clean, and green (our new carpet). The hall looks a little naked without any wall hangings and our furniture is not due in until later this month, but we would be delighted to entertain visitors.

I am also delighted to announce that we have ordered a world class videoconferencing and presentation system for our conference room, along with roll-about units for MIRECC offices in Martinsburg and Washington. A unit is already on order (courtesy of Dennis Smith ) for the new mental health building at Perry Point. These parallel systems will substantially enhance our ability to interact with MIRECC investigators at each site and for us to do staff training and telepsychiatry consults. Among the most exciting technological features of the Baltimore system is videostreaming: the capacity to download conferences and presentations onto an internet page. Anyone with the web address and access to the internet can then view the presentation on their own computer at their leisure. For example, if we in Baltimore conduct an in-service for nursing staff on the day shift of the new treatment refractory unit at Perry Point and stream the presentation, evening and weekend staff can watch it at the nurses' station or in any office at their convenience. Similarly, if we do an education program for family members, we can load it on a web page for easy dissemination among an unlimited number of families within the VISN, as well as throughout the VA System. Kudos to Paul Ruskin, M. D., the Director of our Education Core, who is the futurist on the MIRECC. He convinces us of the need to have cutting edge technology in order to maximize our ability to achieve our mission.

**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

*Richard W. Goldberg, Ph.D Assistant Director, VINS 5 MIRECC Ecuation Core*

The overarching mission of the VISN 5 MIRECC is to improve quality of care available to veterans living with schizophrenia and their families through research, education and enhanced clinical programming. One important way to improve care is to enhance the treatment relationship between consumer and provider. Creating contexts of care that emphasize dignity, trust, communication, family involvement and collaborative decision making can go a long way in empowering consumers and providers alike to play a fuller role in addressing the breadth of consumer needs. Toward that end, we believe it is important for providers and administrators to learn as much as they can about the vibrant and varied programs and services designed to empower consumers of mental health services. Listed below are several state and national organizations dedicated to such issues as consumer education, mutual support, and advocacy. While the list is by no means exhaustive, we hope it provides you with useful information and new referral sources for your patients and their families.

Please also note we offer the list as a resource and that inclusion of an organization in this list does not necessarily mean we agree with or endorse the full agenda of that particular organization

## **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **National Mental Health Association**

1021 Prince Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2971  
Phone: 703/684-7722 or 800/969-NMHA  
<http://www.nmha.org>

The National Mental Health Association is dedicated to promoting mental health, preventing mental disorders and achieving victory over mental illnesses through advocacy, education, research and service.

### **The National Empowerment Center, Inc.**

599 Canal Street  
Lawrence, MA 01840  
Phone: 800/769-3728 or 800/POWER2U  
<http://www.power2u.org>

The mission of the National Empowerment Center, Inc. is to carry a message of recovery, empowerment, hope and healing to people who have been diagnosed with mental illness. This is a consumer/survivor run organization that provides updated lists of consumer-run organizations and advocacy groups in all 50 states. They also have a toll-free information and referral line. The organization conducts research, develops educational materials, provides training and conference planning assistance, and works closely with policy makers at both the federal and state level.

### **The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN)**

P.O. Box 42490  
Washington, DC 20015  
Phone: 800/789-2647  
e-mail: [ken@mentalhealth.org](mailto:ken@mentalhealth.org)  
<http://www.mentalhealth.org>

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN) provides information about mental health via their toll-free telephone number, and through their website, and through more than 200 publications. CMHS developed KEN for users of mental health services and their families, the general public, policy makers, providers, and the media. KEN staff can quickly direct callers to Federal, State, and local organizations dedicated to treating and preventing mental illness.

### **The National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse**

1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 1207  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Phone: 800/553-4539  
e-mail: [info@mhselfhelp.org](mailto:info@mhselfhelp.org)  
<http://www.mhselfhelp.org>

The clearinghouse is a consumer-run national technical assistance center and is funded in part by a federal grant from the Center for Mental Health Services. In addition to developing a national self-advocacy curriculum, the clearinghouse provides assistance in starting and running self-help groups. The clearinghouse also maintains an active library of materials related to mental health self-help. This organization is also involved in networking, coalition building and advocacy.

**The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)**

(on the internet <http://www.nami.org>)

NAMI is a grassroots, self-help support and advocacy organization of families and friends of people with serious mental illness, and those persons themselves. NAMI's mission is to improve the quality of life for those who suffer with mental illness through support, education, advocacy, and research. NAMI has over 203,000 members and approximately 1,200 affiliates in all 50 states.

**NAMI, Maryland**

711 W. 40th St Suite. 451  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
Phone: 410-467-7100  
e-mail: [amimd@aol.com](mailto:amimd@aol.com)

**NAMI, West Virginia**

P.O. Box 2706  
Charleston, WV 25330-2706  
Phone: 304-342-0497 or  
800-598-5653

**NAMI, D.C.**

422 Eighth Street, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003-2832  
Phone: 202-546-0646

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**STATE/DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS**

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**MARYLAND**

**On Our Own of Maryland, Inc.**

1521 South Edgewood Street, Suite C  
Baltimore, MD 21227  
Phone: 410/646-0262 or 800/704-0262  
General Information E-Mail: [onourown@frontiernet.net](mailto:onourown@frontiernet.net)  
Anti-Stigma E-Mail: [anti-stigma@usa.net](mailto:anti-stigma@usa.net)

On Our Own of Maryland, Inc., a statewide mental health consumer education and advocacy network, promotes equality in all aspects of society for people who receive mental health services and develops alternative, recovery-based mental health initiatives. Goals include fostering self-help programs and educating the public regarding the problems and needs of people involved in the mental health system. The organization sponsors various workshops, seminars, and conferences throughout the year.

**Black Mental Health Alliance, Inc.**

2901 Druid Park Drive, Suite A110  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215  
Phone: 410/225-7600

The Black Mental Health Alliance, Inc. provides training, education, consultation, public information, support groups, and resource referral regarding mental health and related issues. The organization lists concern for others, integrity, respect for diversity and empowerment as its guiding principles.

**Office of Consumer Affairs/Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration**

201 W. Preston Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Phone: 410/225-1381

State office with a wealth of information about statewide consumer organizations. Also active in addressing and advocating for mental health system issues.

**Depression and Related Affective Disorders Association (DRADA)**

Meyer 3-181  
600 North Wolfe Street  
Baltimore, MD 21287-7381  
Phone: 410/955-4647 or from Washington, D.C. 202/955-5800  
e-mail: [drada@jhmi.edu](mailto:drada@jhmi.edu)  
<http://wwwmed.jhu.edu/drada>

This consumer and professionally run organization aims to alleviate the suffering arising from depression and manic depression by assisting self-help groups, providing education and information, and lending support to research programs. The organization works in cooperation with the Department of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**NAMI, D.C.** (Listed Above)

**WEST VIRGINIA**

**NAMI, West Virginia** (Listed Above)

**West Virginia Mental Health Consumers Association**

1036 Quarrier 208A  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Phone: 800/598-7303 or 304/345-7312  
<http://www.contac.org/WVMHCA>

Available to answer questions about consumer activities in West Virginia.

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**VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

For information about a variety of services and a complete listing of Veteran Service Organizations and Veteran Service Officers, you may call the main number for the Department of Veterans Affairs at 1 (800) 827-1000. You may also contact your State Veterans Affairs office. The contact information for Maryland and West Virginia is listed below.

**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs**

Federal Building, Room 110  
31 Hopkins Plaza  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-962-4700

**West Virginia Department of Veterans Affairs**

1321 Plaza East  
Room 101  
Charleston, WV 25301-1400  
304-558-3661

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**VISN 5 MIRECC PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS UPDATE:**

**VISN 5 MIRECC Psychopharmacology Clinic:**

The VISN 5 MIRECC Psychopharmacology Clinic is designed to provide consultations on the pharmacological treatment of patients with schizophrenia and related disorders, who continue to exhibit residual positive or negative symptoms or whose cognitive impairments interfere with their role functioning. The clinic is also designed to facilitate the participation of eligible participants in ongoing pharmacological clinical trials. Personnel include Janet Bledsoe, R.N., who is a full-time Research Nurse, Bruce Kaup, M.D., who provides physician care for Baltimore VAMC research participants and Dina Friedman, Psy.D. The Clinic is currently located at the Baltimore, VAMC, with plans to expand to the Perry Point VAMC later this summer. If you are interested in further information or would like to make a referral, please contact: Dina Friedman, Psy.D.: 6C-113; 410/605-7000, ext. 5540 or 443/255-9961; dfriedma@mprc.umaryland.edu

**VISN 5 MIRECC Movement Disorders Clinic:**

The VISN 5 MIRECC Movement Disorders Clinic will provide consultation to VA psychiatrists in the Mental Health Service Line Mental Health Clinics. The Clinic will focus on the recognition and management of movement disorders such as akathisia and tardive dyskinesia that are associated with neuroleptic administration. The clinic will also facilitate the participation of eligible veterans in ongoing movement disorders research protocols. The Clinic will be directed by Guntant Thaker, M.D. Other personnel will include Jay Sherr, Pharm.D., a research pharmacist at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center, Matt Nelson, Pharm.D., a clinical pharmacist at the Perry Point VAMC, Bruce Kaup, M.D., a VA psychiatrist and Janet Bledsoe, R.N., a MIRECC Research Nurse. It is anticipated that the clinic will start both at Baltimore and Perry Point in September of 2000. In addition, Dr. Thaker will provide support to an already established movement disorders clinic in coordination with Richard Rosse, M.D. at the Washington VAMC. Expansion of the clinic to the Martinsburg VAMC is expected in the next fiscal year. If you are interested in further information or would like to make a referral, please contact: Guntant Thaker at 410/402-6821 or e-mail Dr. Thaker at gthaker@mprc.umaryland.edu.

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**NEW MEMBERS OF THE VISN 5 MIRECC TEAM:**

**Carolyn Heimberg, M.D.** In conjunction with Stephen Deutsch, M.D., Ph.D. Director, Mental Health Service Line, VISN 5, and Christine LaGana, Ph.D., Facility Service Line Manager, Mental Health, VAMHCS, we have recruited Dr Heimberg, as the Medical Director of the Mental Health Clinics in Baltimore and Perry Point. In addition to improving outpatient service delivery to veterans with a variety

of diagnoses, this position should allow for added recruitment of veterans with schizophrenia for MIRECC protocols. Dr. Heimberg comes to us from the University of Pennsylvania MHCRC, and has a strong interest in schizophrenia related care and research.

**Julie Kreyenbuhl, Pharm.D., Ph.D.** recently joined the VISN 5 MIRECC after completing post-doctoral training at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center under the direction of Raymond C. Love, Phram.D and Robert Conley, M.D. Dr. Kreyenbuhl's primary research focus is the pharmacoepidemiology of schizophrenia, which involves examining patterns of care and outcomes of pharmacologic treatments in typical clinical practice settings. She has experience working with large administrative databases similar to those available within the VA. Dr. Kreyenbuhl has also studied behavior change strategies, which will be useful in the design of educational interventions to disseminate evidence-based treatment recommendations to VA health care providers.

**Cynthia Clark, RNC, CD**, a long-time VA employee, will serve as the nurse educator for the Education Core of the VISN 5 MIRECC. Ms. Clark comes to the position with sixteen years of experience in the field of mental health nursing. Prior to nursing, she was a middle school English teacher. Ms. Clark will play an active role in coordinating staff trainings and will implement educational programming for veterans with schizophrenia and their families. She will also assist with conference planning and the administration of the Educational Core.

**Janet Bledsoe, R.N.**, a full-time research nurse will be working in the VISN 5 MIRECC Psychopharmacology and Movement Disorders Clinics. She will conduct evaluations, participate in the screening and recruitment of subjects for ongoing clinical trials, and conduct clinical rating assessments during the course of a subject's research participation.

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## **Upcoming Events**

### **Perry Point/Maryland Psychiatric Research Center Joint Lecture Series.**

September 6, 2000. The Overlap of Affective Instability and Psychosis: A discussion with Treatment Recommendations. Presented: Dr. Charles Richardson, M.D. Unit Director, Treatment Research Unit Spring Grove Hospital Center. Location: Perry Point VA. Building 20, CCTV at 12:00 noon. For more information contact Stephanie Feldman, LCSW-C at 410 402-6885 ([Sfeldman@mprc.umaryland.edu](mailto:Sfeldman@mprc.umaryland.edu)).

As noted in the last issue of the UPDATE, the MIRECC is playing a key role in coordinating the implementation of the NAMI Family to Family Education Program (FFEP) within the VISN. Several classes have already been held at both the Baltimore and Perry Point VA Medical Centers. A new round of classes will begin in Baltimore on 9/11/00 (6:00-8:30). New classes are also scheduled to begin in September at both the Martinsburg VAMC and the Washington, D.C., VAMC. For more information contact either Alicia Lucksted at (410) 328-5389 ([Aluckste@umpsy.umaryland.edu](mailto:Aluckste@umpsy.umaryland.edu)) or Bette Stewart ([Bstewart@umpsy6.umaryland.edu](mailto:Bstewart@umpsy6.umaryland.edu))

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**Reminder:** The deadline for submission of items to the September UPDATE is Friday, September 15, 2000. Items may be emailed to Richard Goldberg, Ph.D. at [Richard.Goldberg@med.va.gov](mailto:Richard.Goldberg@med.va.gov). Dr Goldberg can also be reached by telephone at (410) 605-7457 or (410) 706-2490.