

eCommunication

From the Director

The spring months were highly productive for the TAC! We participated in a range of activities described in this issue of the eCommunication, interacting with State agency personnel, local providers of behavioral health services, and older adult consumers. We are currently planning a full slate of summer and fall events, including additional state planning events as well as attendance at the *National Association of Area Agencies on Aging 31st Annual Conference: Shaping Communities for a Maturing America* to present in a new topic area for the TAC, disaster planning and response for older adults. The TAC team is comprised of several staff with extensive disaster planning and response experience at the national, state, and local levels, and we are excited to bring this expertise to bear on older adult issues.



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In early March, the TAC hosted a state planning event composed of representatives from Connecticut, Maryland, and Ohio. Aging, substance abuse, and mental health personnel from the three states met to discuss their state's strengths and weaknesses in planning for older adult behavioral health issues.

TAC staff also conducted a six-month followup evaluation with attendees from the September 2005 Washington/Oregon State Planning Event. Over 90% of respondents reported that as a result of the meeting, substance abuse, mental health, and

aging resource knowledge within their respective states increased. In addition, 70% of respondents have taken steps to establish collaborative relationships outside their own agencies as a result of the training.

One participant stated that, due to the training, state "leaders [are] now armed with evidence to make a commitment to create system change to improve services for older adults with mental health and substance abuse needs. Oftentimes it takes 'outside' experts to open the

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The mission of the **Older Americans Substance Abuse and Mental Health Technical Assistance Center** is to enhance the quality of life of older adults by providing training and technical assistance to health care agencies and providers regarding health issues common in late life. TAC priorities include the prevention and early intervention of substance abuse, medication misuse and abuse, mental health disorders, and co-occurring disorders.



TAC Update

SAMHSA's Older Americans Substance Abuse and Mental Health Technical Assistance Center has been very busy this spring! TAC staff presented four sessions at the 2006 *Joint Conference of the National Council on Aging and the American Society on Aging*. Staff exhibited for three days, fielding dozens of requests for Get Connected! Toolkits and technical assistance requests. Shortly after the meeting, TAC staff partnered with the National Council on Aging to provide Get Connected! Toolkit training at the *Southern Gerontological Society 27th Annual Meeting Natural Bridges: Preparing for an Aging South* in Lexington, KY.

The TAC was pleased to be invited to provide opening remarks and a breakout session at the *Illinois Art of Aging Mind, Body, Spirit* statewide conference for mental health clinicians and aging service providers in Chicago, IL. In late April, the Hanley Center held the *Second Annual National Aging and Addiction Conference* in West Palm Beach, FL. TAC staff attended, providing the Get Connected! Toolkit training. Through the exhibits and conferences, e-mail, 800-number, and ongoing support and technical

assistance, the TAC has responded to the needs of 25 states and territories.

Following the successful state planning meetings for Washington, Oregon, Connecticut, Maryland, and Ohio, the TAC is excited to begin planning the next fall state meetings. Through the late spring and summer, TAC staff will conduct interviews with key stakeholders in substance abuse, mental health, and aging to prepare integrated state reports. These reports will be used as planning tools in determining state priorities and next steps of action. In late September, state teams will be convened from

the Territories for another state planning meeting. During the state planning meetings, the TAC strives to assist states to identify priority areas for technical assistance and training and to engender discussion between key stakeholders invested in older adults' behavioral health long-term planning. The TAC is working with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and the Administration on Aging to plan trainings for states and territories over the next three years.

STATE ACTIVITIES

Information/Materials

Alabama
Arizona
California
Connecticut
DC
Florida
Georgia
Idaho
Illinois
Massachusetts
Maryland
Michigan
Minnesota
North Carolina
New York
Ohio
Oregon
Pennsylvania
South Dakota
Tennessee

State Planning

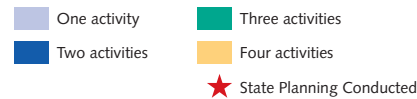
Connecticut
Maryland
Ohio
Oregon
Washington

Presentation

Alabama
California
DC
Indiana
Maryland
Massachusetts
Washington

Exhibit

California
DC
Florida
Maryland
Pennsylvania
West Virginia
Washington





Older Adults and Disasters

The U.S. 2006 hurricane season begins on June 1st. Recent hurricanes in the South have illuminated the need to plan for the unique needs of older adults.

As older adults are at risk during and after disasters, disaster preparedness and response must take into account the special considerations of this population. This includes mobility issues, medication stockpiling/replenishment, medical issues, and relocation of benefits. Evacuation procedures and shelter-in-place demands for older adults must be addressed early in the planning process.

There are steps that older adults can take themselves to plan and prepare for their safety and well-being. It is important for older adults to maintain a list of all medications, dose instructions, and a minimum three day supply of each medication. Other important courses of actions include:

- Plan how you will evacuate or signal for help.
- Plan emergency procedures with home health care agencies or workers.
- Tell others where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach others how to operate necessary equipment.
- Label personal equipment like wheelchairs, canes or walkers.
- Plan how you will care for your pet in the event you are evacuated.

Additional supplies for seniors:

- List of prescription medications including dosage in your supply kits. Include any allergies.
- Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries.
- Extra wheelchair batteries or other special equipment in your supply kit.
- A list of style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers in your emergency supply kits.
- Copies of medical insurance and Medicare cards.
- List of doctors and emergency contacts.

Disasters can be particularly traumatic for older adults who have lived through previous tragedies. They may feel anxious or depressed, and are at greater risk for experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Everyone responds to disaster differently, and it is important to recognize that:

- Physical reactions to a disaster are normal.
- Acknowledging your feelings can help you to recover.
- Focus on your strengths and abilities.
- Accepting help from community programs is healthy.
- Exercise, eat a balanced diet, drink plenty of water, and rest.



- Do the things you enjoy.
- Everyone heals at their own pace.
- Everyone has different needs and different ways to cope.

INFORMATION

Information was provided by:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at www.samhsa.gov
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security at www.ready.gov
- The National Mental Health Association at www.nmha.org



TAC Presentations

2006 Joint Conference of the National Council on Aging and the American Society on Aging: Invest in Aging

In March, the TAC staff attended the 2006 Joint Conference of the National Council on Aging and the American Society on Aging in Anaheim, CA. TAC staff exhibited and fielded many different technical assistance requests. The TAC was pleased to provide four presentations on substance abuse and mental health issues:

SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices: Older Adult Substance Abuse and Mental Health Programs and Practices

This session offered an opportunity for the TAC to discuss with participants how Federal and State agencies are emphasizing grant awards to entities that utilize evidence-based programs. The TAC presenters fielded questions from the audience regarding the NREPP application process and offered TAC's expertise and services to assist potential older adult candidate programs. One of the priorities of the TAC includes identifying and promoting such programs in the SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

National Resources and Strategies for Addressing Substance Abuse and Mental Health in Later Life

This session presented the TAC as a resource for states and communities in addressing substance abuse and mental health issues, along with medication misuse, in older adults. The TAC focuses on state planning, identification of evidence-based programs, and provision of training and technical assistance. The need to implement strategies such as education, prevention and early intervention were highlighted.

Get Connected! Toolkit: Investing in Aging through Linkages to Medication, Alcohol and Mental Health Resources

NCOA and the TAC partnered to present information regarding older adult substance abuse, mental health and medication misuse problems. Participants were able to increase their awareness regarding obstacles associated with these issues and learned how to use the Get Connected! Toolkit to increase linkages and build partnerships with services providers that address these important issues.

State Planning for Older Adults' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Needs: Collaborations between Federal, State, and Community Stakeholders

Participants learned about how the TAC assists states in partnership building efforts to develop and implement substance abuse prevention and early intervention and mental health promotion for older adults with the existing framework of social services. Presenters explained TAC efforts to encourage states and territories to incorporate best practices at multiple levels – state, community, and local provider levels.

presentations

The National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging joined the American Society on Aging Mental Health and Aging Network and the National Council on Aging to offer a session titled "Critical Issues in Aging: Mental Health Promotion and Substance Abuse Prevention." The TAC was pleased to contribute to this session which discussed national policy initiatives, the latest clinical research, and grant and program opportunities and partnerships. Dennis Romero, MA, Acting Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), presented CSAP's expanding efforts in addressing the needs of older adult substance abuse prevention and mental health promotion.

The TAC would be happy to share additional information regarding any of the presentations mentioned above. Please feel free to contact TAC staff at 1-888-281-8010 or e-mail OlderAmericansTAC@westat.com to receive a copy of the presentations.



TAC Staffing Update

Due to the TAC's success and expansion since October 2004, we have had the opportunity to add new staff, as reported in the last eCommunication, and to promote some of our existing team members. The TAC is pleased to announce the following promotions:

Dianne McElroy, M.A., has been promoted to Deputy Project Director. Ms. McElroy, an original member of the TAC team, has served as the TAC's project manager. Ms. McElroy, our lead Get Connected! Toolkit trainer, will now devote a greater portion of her time to the development of training and technical assistance modules. With a background in social marketing as well as years of training experience, Ms. McElroy is especially well-suited to design and oversee training and technical assistance activities in support of the TAC's growing repertoire. Based on feedback from the older adult field, the TAC is in the process of developing a series of workshops to address a range of concerns. Ms. McElroy will lead these efforts, among other activities.

Megan Martin has been promoted to Project Manager. Ms. Martin brings to the project strong technical assistance and training expertise, particularly with state agency personnel and local providers of behavioral health services. Ms. Martin's organizational skills are a real strength, and she will oversee the administrative requirements of the TAC. A skilled presenter, Ms. Martin will join Dr. Lisa Patton, Project Director, and Dianne McElroy, Deputy Project Director, in conducting training and technical assistance in all modalities.

Congratulations to Ms. McElroy and Ms. Martin!

TAC's 2nd Annual Expert Panel Meeting

On May 9, 2006, the TAC convened the Second Annual Expert Panel meeting at SAMHSA in Rockville, MD. The TAC Expert Panel is composed of consumers, providers and researchers who are leaders in the field of older adult mental health promotion and substance abuse prevention. Federal representatives from the Administration on Aging, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse also attended to share the TAC's experiences, activities, and outcomes of Year 1. Participants discussed barriers and opportunities related to state/community planning

for older adult substance abuse and mental health service needs and further refined the TAC role in facilitating science-to-service efforts.

The TAC was pleased to invite Jennifer Rosenbaum from the New York State Office on Aging to discuss the innovative Project 2015 initiative in New York. Donna Wagner Carender of COPE Behavioral Services, Inc. presented the COTTAGE program, an older adult mental health and aging services program, particularly focusing on evaluation in older adult programming. Following presentations and discussion, Expert Panel members addressed state/community planning and research issues in workgroups.

We want others to know about your program! We invite you to submit information regarding the special work that your program is doing. Please send us the following: name of program, location, contact person and contact information, and a 50-word summary highlighting the program's mission and achievements!



News from our Federal Partners

In 1986, the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics was established with the goal of bringing Federal agencies together that share a common interest in improving aging-related data. Since its inception, the original three core agencies, National Institute on Aging, National Center for Health Statistics, and Census Bureau has grown to include senior officials from the Administration on Aging, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Management and Budget, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in HHS, Social Security Administration, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and continues to play a critical role by evaluating existing data resources and limitations, stimulating new database development, encouraging cooperation and data sharing among Federal agencies, and preparing collaborative statistical reports.

The Older Americans 2004: Key Indicators of Well-Being is the second in a series of reports produced by the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics. This chartbook describes

the overall status of the U.S. population age 65 and over and provides Federal statistics from over a dozen national data sources to monitor several important areas in the lives of older Americans – population, economics, health status, health risks and behaviors, and health care.

The Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics hopes that this chartbook will stimulate discussions by policymakers and the public, encourage exchanges between the data and policy communities, and foster improvements in Federal data collection on older Americans. By examining a broad range of indicators, researchers, policymakers, service providers, and the Federal Government can better understand the areas of well-being that are improving for older Americans and the areas of well-being that require more attention and effort.



LISA PARK, MSW
SAMHSA

If you would like to learn more about the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, including the chartbook, please visit <http://agingstats.gov>

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dialogue and to get buy-in from disparate systems of care on a difficult and ignored issue. I owe this new level of commitment to improve our systems of care to the events of September 13th and 14th so wonderfully planned, organized, and implemented by the Older Americans

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Technical Assistance Center.”

We appreciate such positive feedback and also value learning about areas in which the TAC can grow. We look forward to continued collaboration with the older adult field!



Calendar

June 2006

2006 Alliance of Information and Referral Systems Training and Education Conference

June 4-7, 2006
Milwaukee, WI
[http://www.airs.org/events/
events_conference.asp](http://www.airs.org/events/events_conference.asp)

**American Diabetes Association
66th Scientific Sessions**

June 9-13, 2006
Washington, DC
<http://scientificsessions.diabetes.org>

National Men's Health Week

June 12-18, 2006
<http://www.menshealthweek.org>

**World Elder Abuse
Awareness Day**

International Network for the
Prevention of Elder Abuse
June 15, 2006
<http://www.inpea.net/wead.html>

**National Association of
State Units on Aging (NASUA)
Membership Meeting**

June 25-27, 2006
Washington, DC
<http://www.nasua.org/events.cfm>

**Working Conference on Emergency
Management and Individuals with
Disabilities and the Elderly**

Administration on
Developmental Disabilities
June 28-30, 2006
Washington, DC
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add>

**National Association of
Nutrition and Aging Services
Programs (NANASP) Annual
Training Conference**

June 29- July 1, 2006
Birmingham, AL
[http://www.nanasp.org/
conf2006](http://www.nanasp.org/
conf2006)

Home Safety Month

Home Safety Council
June 2006
[http://www.homesafety
council.org/homesafetymonth](http://www.homesafety
council.org/homesafetymonth)

July 2006

**National Therapeutic
Recreation Week**

National Recreation and Park
Association
July 9-15, 2006
<http://www.nrpa.org>

**31st Annual National Wellness
Conference**

July 15-20, 2006
Stevens Point, WI
<http://www.nationalwellness.org>

August 2006

**n4a 31st Annual
Conference & Tradeshow**

National Association for Area
Agencies on Aging
August 6-10, 2006
Chicago, IL
[http://www.n4a.org/2006conf/
chicago2006.cfm](http://www.n4a.org/2006conf/
chicago2006.cfm)



Florida Conference on Aging 2006

August 14-17, 2006
Tampa, FL
[http://www.fcoa.org/Conf2006/
conf2006.html](http://www.fcoa.org/Conf2006/
conf2006.html)

**13th Annual National
Prevention Conference**

August 27-30, 2006
Lexington, KY
[http://swpc.ou.edu/npn/
npnagenda.htm](http://swpc.ou.edu/npn/
npnagenda.htm)

Cataract Awareness Month

Prevent Blindness America
<http://www.preventblindness.org>

National Pain Awareness Month

National Pain Foundation
[http://www.nationalpain
foundation.org](http://www.nationalpain
foundation.org)



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