



The Thermometer Times

Published by The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Riverside, California

VOL. 21 NO. 4 *Out of darkness . . . April 2009*

Dates to Remember

CARE & SHARE GROUPS

Clients and their guests are invited to come and participate. *Professional care providers very welcome.*
Riverside County Mental Health Administration Building
(see page 9 for address & map)

Saturday 10:00 am -12 noon
April 4, 11, 18 & 25

Chris Neighbors, LCSW
Relaxation and Visualization Techniques.
Sat., May 16, 10:00 am

Web Site for DBSA, Riverside:

<http://californiadbbsa.org>

E-mail for DBSA, Riverside:

dbsaofriv1@aol.com

E-mail for DBSA, California:

dbsaofca1@aol.com

Meetings start promptly at 10 am. Do yourself a good turn: Be on time...visit with friends before the meeting. If you come late, please enter quietly.



Directions to

Jo Ann Martin's Home

Exit 91 Frwy at Van Buren. Go south 4.2 miles on Van Buren to Whispering Spur. Turn left.

2nd driveway on the right



16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside, CA 92504
951 / 780-3366

HEROICS IN CALIFORNIA

The Mental Health Association in California (MHAC) was awarded one of three HEROIC (HMO Enrollee Regional Outreach and Information Center) contracts in 2008. The Center provides assistance and advocacy to mental health consumers who are enrolled in a HMO or PPO health plan. There are twelve other organizations who are providing information and assistance at the local community level. You can visit the MHAC website to see the complete list. (<http://www.mhac.org/advocacy/heroic.cfm>)

The purpose of MHAC's project is to address the enforcement of California's current mental health parity law. Local MHA chapters advised the MHAC this is still unfamiliar territory to many mental health HMO/PPO enrollees. This is particularly true for those for whom English is not a first language. Therefore, MHAC is collaborating with the Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDC) to provide information about why, when and how to seek mental health care, including how to pursue an effective complaint if enrollees are wrongfully denied care.

Background

The Office of the Patient Advocate (OPA), an independent office of the California Department of Managed Health Care, was established in 2000 charged with informing and educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities as Health Plan enrollees. OPA is required to publish an internet-based HMO Report Card on the quality of HMO services annually, develop consumer education materials and programs, assist HMO/PPO enrollees in handling claims and complaints, advise the Department of Managed Health Care regarding consumer issues, and collaborate with government and community-based patient advocacy organizations.

In 2002, OPA created the HMO Enrollee Regional Outreach and Information Centers (HEROIC). This program is to provide a local focus to OPA's education and awareness outreach efforts. The purpose of HEROIC's local consumer outreach is to help enrollees make the best use of their health insurance plans, to provide them with the information and resources they could utilize to better navigate the health system, and to help them deal with problems when they occur.

Heroic Resources

OPA is working with MHAC to increase awareness about the resources that are available to Californians who have health insurance through an HMO or PPO. In particular, OPA would like to have more people call the Help Center with the problems they are experiencing in relation to accessing/paying for mental health services through their health plan. The OPA is committed to addressing the needs of health plan enrollees in California, and would like to know the issues they are frequently facing so they can be better informed and prepared to resolve

Continued on Page 8 (HEROIC's)

a note from the Editors

We invite you to submit material for review and possible publication in the newsletter. Your articles allow us to get to know one another in greater depth and to learn of the many talents, interests and assets of our members.

Articles, poetry and/or drawings can be on anything pertaining to your personal experiences with depression and/or bipolar disorder; what it is to live and cope with it; what helps, what doesn't. You may write on any other mental health issue or problem that you are passionate about. You can tell us about yourself and how you spend your time and what's important to you. You may want to write a report on a mental health event you attended or a mental health book you have read. We would appreciate that, too.

Drawings should be black and white, line or half-tone.

Your work may be submitted to JoAnn, Leroy or Lynne at DBSA Riverside meetings.

It may be mailed to: The Thermometer Times
% Jo Ann Martin
16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside, CA 92504

E-mail it to: joanmartin1@aol.com

FAX to: 951/780-5758

Materials submitted may or may not be published, at the discretion of the editors, and may be edited for length.

Get your creative juices flowing and share your knowledge and experience with your DBSA friends through *The Thermometer Times*.

Thank you.
The Editors

MOVIE NIGHT AT JO ANNS*

2nd and 4th Tuesday of January

6:30 PM

Tuesday, April 13

“MILK”

Sean Penn stars in the Academy Award winning true story of Harvey Milk. An American Classic!

Milk's impact on rights for humanity.

Tuesday, April 27

“TITANIC”

Winner of 11 academy awards...the doomed luxury liner collides with an iceberg. Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio

Enjoy pizza and an additional movie of your choice!

*Directions to Jo Ann's home on page 1, bottom of column 1 of this Newsletter.

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Please feel free to reprint any of our articles. However, please acknowledge our publication, date, and author or source. It will please the authors and recognize their efforts.

Riverside Suicide Crisis Help Line

Call (951) 686-HELP [686-4357] if you need to talk to someone. It is available 24 hours - 7 days a week.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) if you need to talk to someone in any of 109 crisis centers in 42 states. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has just been launched by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) as part of the National Suicide Prevention Initiative (NSPI). In addition, a new Web-site has been established at

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Behavioral health center expansion under way

REDLANDS: The Loma Linda University project will enlarge the site's treatment capacity.

BY DARRELL R. SANTOSCHI
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

A 46,000-square-foot, \$17 million expansion of Loma Linda University's Behavioral Medicine Center in Redlands is expected to open in winter 2009.

The Behavioral Health Institute Outpatient Pavilion, as the two-story stucco building will be called, is across Iowa Street from the University's 61,861-square foot Behavioral Medicine Center.

The center handles 4,000 mental health and drug- and alcohol-addicted inpatients a year and 22,000 outpatient visits from residents of the Inland Empire and the nearby deserts.

Grading and preliminary construction had to be interrupted briefly Tuesday when university officials held a formal groundbreaking ceremony.

Center administrator Jill Pollock said details of the pavilion's interior configuration still are being worked out, but she expects it to increase the center's outpatient capacity.

Pollock said the behavioral medical center is the only hospital in San Bernardino or Riverside counties that treats mental health patients under the age of 13 and one of only two in San Bernardino County that treats patients under age 17. The other is in Chino Hills.

As a result, she said, the center has on occasion had to turn away patients.

Besides treating more out-patients, Pollock said, the new building will bring together five Loma Linda University medical disciplines now spread across the area, including a marriage and family clinic on Hospitality Lane in San Bernardino.

The university will conduct research and train mental health interns and residents at the pavilion, and some faculty from the psychology and psychiatry departments will move there.

Eventually, she said, the university hopes to expand the 3.2-acre site to allow all of its behavioral medicine students to attend classes there.

Source: *The Riverside Press-Enterprise*
July 10, 2008

Depressive mixed state may be warning



November 1, 2008, KANAZAWA CITY, Japan— Depressive mixed state may be a warning sign of bipolar disorder and a possible risk factor for emergency hospitalization, a new study suggests.

Japanese researchers said while depressive mixed state has been reported to be one of the most useful clinical markers for bipolar II disorder in outpatient settings, little was known about its significance in emergency psychiatry.

They studied the charts of people hospitalized in an emergency psychiatric ward with an initial diagnosis of major depressive disorder.

Nearly a third of the people eventually had their diagnosis changed to bipolar disorder, most to bipolar II. Of those whose diagnosis was changed to bipolar, far more had experienced depressive mixed state than among those with major depressive disorder.

The researchers said their findings suggest it could be a useful marker of bipolar disorder but that more research is needed.

The study, which appeared in the *Journal of Affective Disorders*, was titled "Impact of depressive mixed state in an emergency psychiatry setting: A marker of bipolar disorder and a possible risk factor for emergency hospitalization."

Source: *bp Magazine*
Winter 2009

Health scare of the week

Wine, women - and cancer

Women have long been told that a glass of wine at day's end could improve their cardiovascular health and lead to a longer life. But a new Oxford University study of 1.3 million British women found that even moderate consumption of wine, beer, or any kind of alcohol significantly increased their likelihood of getting breast, liver, and colon cancer. The risk is not great, but it is significant: In a group of 1,000 women, the researchers estimated, consuming one drink per day would result in 30 additional cancers. "There doesn't seem to be a threshold at which alcohol consumption is safe," said researcher Naomi Allen. "That's the take-home message."

Source: *THE WEEK*, March 13, 2009

Poems by Susie Philips

Flirting

Flirting with the idea to create again.
Words clamoring to come out
After along hibernation.
Here it it... just me today.
The park,
The red and white roses,
The "truth" from my friend.
(She doesn't understand.)
I had presented the situation
For a long time,
So someone would understand
My pain.



~

Teach Me That

I have a mental disease
And I fight against it
People say
"Accept it"
Teach me that

My friend has a lung disease
She accepts having to struggle for a breath
She's my hero
Teach me that

I go to a support group
With people who struggle with a weight
Heavier than mine
(less use of mind than me)
I admire their patience and their drive
Teach me that

My friend has the same disease as mine
Yet she's happy and outgoing
She doesn't let the disease rule her
Teach me that

I'm courageous they say
Because I left him and home
to save my sanity
I did the right thing
I did my best
I've got to live with that
Teach me that

I'm feeling rested and sane
I like the sunshine on my bed in the morning
And my kitty cuddling up
I made a good decision
Thank you, God, for that

CHANGES

By Lynne Stewart

The words flowed out of me.
They came in rushes and bunches.
The colors around me,
The impressions the people made on me
Were pressed into me like etchings drawn in acid
Or pebbles under foot.
The institution's meandering walkways and
Rolling hills surrounding
Salmon hued Spanish buildings
Are indelible in my mind.
The acrid foul smelling dayroom,
The fresh pine green aroma of the grounds
Still pierces my senses.

My language has changed from chaotic and disorganized
ramblings
Into orderly whole thoughts.
There are many changes.
I don't wonder about my identity.
My future is still finite,
But it's not a frightening mystery.
The smells, sounds and images
That impress my senses are pleasant.
They are friendly.
They do not force me into withdrawal.
They encourage my presence.

Eyeglasses resting next to the phone,
A small ceramic piece with a candle nestled in it,
Sparky's plush toys overflowing the basket—All niceties of
a home I made for myself.
How far I've come.





ANNIE'S MAILBOX

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar

Depression signs easy to miss

Dear Annie: Today I mourn the loss of a dear friend. She was vibrant, energetic and full of life, but on a crisp autumn afternoon, she committed suicide. She was only 35 and left behind two beautiful little girls.

My friend spent her life inspiring other women to get fit by opening her own women's fitness center. I do not know what transpired in the final hours of her life, but I do know she had been under a tremendous amount of stress. I have been in the health care profession for many years and am ashamed to say I missed the warning signs.

I cannot change what has happened to my friend, but I can make other people more aware of the prevalence of depression. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, major depressive disorders affect 14.8 million American adults in any given year and depression is more prevalent in women. The median age is 32. Depression knows no boundaries. It does not discriminate against sex, race, age or profession.

If you or someone you love is showing signs of depression, please seek help. The National Institutes of Health have a wonderful website (www.nih.gov) and a toll free hotline **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**. The National Mental Health Information Center (<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov>) is also an excellent resource.

There is a profound sense of emptiness in the families and friends left behind when a loved one commits suicide. I ask your readers to take the time to really listen to others and be aware of the warning signs of depression. Do not assume everything will work itself out. Most importantly, tell the people you love how much they mean to you. Life is so short. Don't wait until it is too late. I did not get to say goodbye to my friend or tell her what a wonderful person she was, but her spirit will live on in the lives of all the women she inspired.

— Michelle in Greensboro, N.C.

Dear Michelle: Our condolences on your terrible loss. According to the National Institutes of Health, symptoms of depression include: persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings; feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism; feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness; irritability, restlessness; loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex; fatigue and decreased energy; difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions; insomnia, early-morning wakefulness or excessive sleeping; over-eating or appetite loss; thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts; persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment.

It is easy to miss the signs if you aren't looking because your friend or family member seems fine, but depression increases during the winter months, especially around the holidays. Please tell your loved ones how much they mean to you.



List of Medicare Doctors

Dear Annie: I sympathize with "Have Medicare but no Doctor." I live in a tiny community in the high desert, and we don't have many choices for medical care. Recently, my doctor moved to another practice and suggested I switch to another health company. I did. I then received a call telling me my doctor was no longer going to take me as a patient because my insurance didn't pay as much as others.

I had to find a new doctor and so far haven't been able to get an appointment with him in the six months I have been registered as his patient. I, too, feel deserted when I most need health care. Doctors seem to wash their hands of the elderly. I feel thrown out with the garbage. — Medicare Dump Out

Dear Medicare: We have printed information on locating doctors who accept Medicare patients (medicare.gov or **1-800-Medicare**) and those who serve rural areas (www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/Downloads/rhsfact-sheetpdf). We wish there was a better solution to this problem.



Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@pe.com or write to **Annie's Mailbox % The Press-Enterprise, Box 792, Riverside, CA 92502-0792**

CREATORS SYNDICATE

Source: *The Press Enterprise*
December 21, 2008

Lately I've been so lonely, I hate to dispose of even the ants.

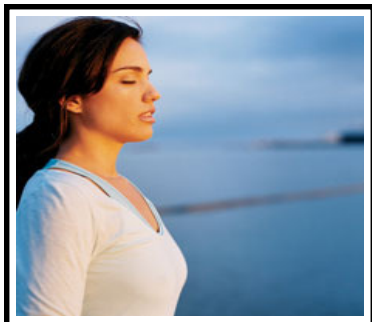
from "Thoughts from the Fifth floor", Jo Ann Martin

QUITTING TIME

Here are some strategies to overcome a nicotine addiction.

- **Distract yourself.** When the urge to light up hits, keep your hands busy. Bowers distracted herself by cleaning her closets and cupboards, for example.
- **Circle the date.** It's easier to have a fixed date for quitting.
- **Get help.** Your health care provider can direct you to what's best for you.
- **Change your habits.** Instead of drinking caffeine or alcohol, which may spark a nicotine craving, switch to juice or water.
- **Fight that fixation.** Longing for a cigarette? Pop in sugarless gum, hard candy, carrot sticks, or sunflower seeds.
- **De-stress.** Exercise, take a hot bath, or read a book.
- **Breathe deeply.** Inhale and picture your lungs filling with clean air. This will not only relax you, but remind you of why you're quitting.

Source : *hp Magazine*
Winter 2009



Up Close and Personal



Bravo to Glenn Close for her willingness to discuss mental illness. I, too, have loved ones who are afflicted with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, and for far too long I have watched as society ignores those who suffer. Perhaps more education, and more discussion, will result in more compassion.

—TONI VOGT, Boca Raton, Florida

Source: *AARP March & April, 2009*

Health Scare of the Week

Does TV damage teen brains?

Watching a lot of TV during adolescence, an alarming new study has found, can change a normal brain to a depressive one. The study, which tracked more than 4,000 adolescents as they grew up, found that for every extra hour a teen spends watching TV or playing videogames on an average day, he or she is 8 percent more likely to develop depression as an adult. Study author Dr. Brian Primack says that teens experience help shape their developing brains, and that being parked in front of a screen often replaces positive social, academic, and athletic activities that give kids a sense of mastery and self-respect. In stead, he tells the Los Angeles Times, TV teaches kids to be passive, and to judge themselves against fictional characters whose looks and accomplishments seem out of reach.

Source: *THE WEEK, February 20, 2009*

Six Chix

By Kathryn LeMieux

MY SHRINK GAVE ME MEDICATION TO HELP CONTROL MY ANXIETY.

AND...

I LOOKED AT ALL THE SIDE EFFECTS, AND NOW I'M TOO NERVOUS TO TAKE IT!

7/4

KLeMieux thesixchix.com

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