

COMPASS

The Newsletter for the Association of Private Practice Therapists

NABHO Update

By Kathy Dombrowski

During this past year it has been my privilege to be the APPT representative to NABHO (The Nebraska Association of Behavioral Health Organizations). Rich Lombardi and Julie Erickson are our lobbyists through NABHO.

Several members of NABHO and the Behavioral Health Coalition on Tuesday, Sept. 23 with Nebraska Gov. Mike Johanns, State Sen. Jim Jensen and his aid Jeff Santama, Ron Ross, Director of HHS and other members of the HHS staff. I had the privilege to represent APPT. This was a meeting arranged by our lobbyists.

It was clear at the meeting that both the Governor and Sen. Jensen are committed to making major changes in the way public mental health services are provided in this state. Both men are convinced that the money it costs to operate the three regional centers could be better used to provide a continuum of quality community services. While both clearly believe that there are a number of patients who need institutional services, they also believe that one regional center, combined with smaller short-term care facilities and a continuum of services in the community, would provide higher-quality care to individuals with severe mental illnesses. They see the regional centers as antiquated, dilapidated and depressing facilities. They believe they are too large, in need of major physical renovations and that it would be better to close two of them and provide more services locally.

The Governor commented that it was upsetting to him that if his

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Fall Conference Scheduled for Oct. 24

When Methodist Richard Young closed in April of 2003, it had ramifications for therapists and clients throughout the Omaha metropolitan area—and beyond, to the state's regional mental health centers.

Six months later, what services are taking the place of Methodist Richard Young? How is Omaha responding to the loss of the facility and the services provided there?

Join us on Friday, Oct. 24, for the Association of Private Practice Therapists' Fall Conference: "Mental Health Services in the Wake of Methodist Richard Young's Closing: Six Months Later — Where Are We?"

There are three parts to the conference:


Eating Disorder Treatment in Omaha

Chrissy Powell, MSW, PLMHP, is the Clinical Therapist with the Eating Disorders Program at Children's Hospital. The program offers both inpatient hospitalization and outpatient treatment. Powell's responsibilities include daily group therapy, weekly family therapy and casework/discharge planning. She has worked in the program since August 2002.

Lora Sladovnik, MS, LMHP, is an Eating Disorder Behavioral Therapist with OMNI Behavioral Health. OMNI's Eating Disorder Clinic provides comprehensive, individualized evaluation and treatment for individuals diagnosed with anorexia nervosa, bulimia, binge eating and other eating disorders.

Inpatient Mental Health Services: The Spring Center

Tracy Adams, Director of the Spring Center, will talk about the program's 10-bed voluntary inpatient mental health services, emergency protective services, 24-hour help line, triage program and intensive outpatient services.



Mental Health Services in the Wake of Methodist Richard Young's Closing: Six Months Later — Where Are We?

Friday, October 24, 2003
8:30 a.m. to Noon

Country Inn & Suites Hotel
119th & Miami (between Blondo and Maple) in Omaha

To Register, call Bridget at (402) 393-4600

Changes in Outpatient and Inpatient Treatment as a Result of Methodist Richard Young's Closing

Dr. Paula Jo Malin is the Director of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry at the Creighton University Medical Center. She will talk about how area psychiatrists are adapting to the changing needs of Omaha's mental health consumers. In her presentation, Dr. Malin will address the use of nurse practitioners in psychiatric assessment and medication evaluations and how they are helping shorten the amount of time

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From the Editor's Desk *By Bridget Ann Weide — Editor of The Compass*

John Atherton is out of town as we go to press, so I'm filling in for his column!

APPT members continue to be very involved in supporting legislation that affects our clients. You'll find more detail on several topics related to that in this issue.

Mental Health Parity

As you know, the revised Mental Health Parity Bill (LB 588), did not pass last year. As we work on this issue again this year, I thought it would be useful to review the elements of the existing parity bill (LB 355), passed in 1999. The intent was to provide persons with group health insurance plans covering mental health conditions with a minimum level of coverage, and to ensure that no greater financial burden be assessed for mental health coverage. The law says:

- On or after Jan. 1, 2000 ... any health insurance plan delivered, issued or renewed in this state (a) if coverage is provided for treatment of mental health conditions other than alcohol or substance abuse, (i) shall not establish any rate, term or condition that places a greater financial burden on an insured for access to treatment for a serious mental illness than for access to treatment for a physical health condition and (ii) if an out-of-pocket limit is established for physical health conditions, it shall apply such out-of-pocket limit as a single comprehensive out-of-pocket limit for both physical health conditions and mental health conditions, or (b) if no coverage is to be provided for treatment of mental health conditions, shall provide clear and prominent notice of such noncoverage in the plan.

- If a health insurance plan provides coverage for serious mental illness, the health insurance plan shall cover health care rendered for treatment of serious mental illness (a) by a mental health professional, (b) by a person authorized by the rules and regulations of the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure to provide treatment for mental illness, (c) in a mental health center ... or (d) in any other health care facility licensed under the Health Care Facility Licensure Act...
- The Director of Insurance may disapprove any plan that the director determines to be inconsistent with the purposes of this section.

The need for further protections for consumers in terms of mental health parity are clear: Parity between physical and mental health insurance coverage only exists in terms of annual out-of-pocket limits. Insurance plans still maintain the artificial physical/mental dichotomy through:

- Different rates for deductibles, co-insurance and copayments;
- More robust coverage for physical health services (and coverage for fewer mental health services);
- More restrictive treatment, visitation, financial and therapeutic limits on mental health services than physical health care services.

CADAC Update

Many of you received a survey recently from the Nebraska Board of Mental Health Practice. This survey is designed to collect

data to support opposition to the CADAC/ Substance Abuse issue, as outlined in the August issue of *The Compass*.

A Directive for Review has been issued for the CADAC credential by Sen. Jim Jensen and Richard Nelson, Director of the Department of Health & Human Services Regulation and Licensure division. This directive will take place over the next four months and include feedback and participation from the Board of Mental Health Practice and the state professional associations, as well as other interested groups (including APPT).

The directive letter states, "Nebraska needs an adequate supply of qualified persons to evaluate and treat alcoholism, drug abuse and other addictions. The effect of certification of CADACs for programs funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and the conflict within the Chapter 71 statutes governing the Department

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- Submissions may be edited for content, clarity and/or length. Subscriber comments are welcome.

Editor Bridget Ann Weide
Publisher/Newsletter Advisor ... John Atherton


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An Update On Issues Facing APPT

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ment of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure [of mental health practitioners] are creating confusion as to the role of and services provided by CADACs and their relationship with other licensed health professionals whose scope of practice includes the evaluation and treatment of persons with alcohol, drug abuse and other addictions.”

The directive will examine:

1. If HHS regulations appropriately and adequately describe the scope of practice for those who are CADAC certified.
2. Are CADACs appropriately integrated into the Nebraska health system to provide services?
3. Are all services provided by CADACs appropriately regulated? If not, should CADACs be licensed by HHS?
4. How can the statutory conflict between the Department of Health and Human Services and the DHHS Regulation and Licensure be resolved?

If you have any questions about this initiative, please call Kevin Kaminski at Azevedo & Associates at (402) 894-9971. Or e-mail him at kampal@juno.com.

The 407 Coalition

Another issue that your board has been working on over the summer is the 407 Coalition. The Coalition was formed in March to formally change the scope of practice as defined for LMHPs/PLMHPs within the state of Nebraska.

The goal is to take the appropriate steps to make new legislation that will allow for an expanded scope of practice, which includes the treatment and diagnosis of mental illness and the independent practice of mental health therapists.

Much has been done on this issue in the past few months — more than I can summarize here. We'll have more information on this topic in the next issue of *The Compass* — but we wanted you to know that APPT is actively working on your behalf!

Hope to see you on Oct. 24!



Calendar of Events

Friday, Oct. 24, 2003

“Mental Health Services in the Wake of Methodist Richard Young’s Closing”

8:30 a.m. to Noon

APPT FALL CONFERENCE
Country Inn & Suites Hotel
119th & Miami (Omaha)

Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2003

“Advanced Principles of the Gottman Method Couples Therapy”

with Bob Atherton, M.S.

MINI-PRACTICE SERIES WORKSHOP
Olive Garden (76 & Dodge – Omaha)

\$13.50 – APPT Members

\$16.00 – Non-Members

– Cost includes salad, entrée, breadsticks, and water/tea/lemonade.

Call 393-4600 to RSVP

or use the form on page 5



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APPT Offers Scholarships For Continuing Education

Now's the time to start looking at conferences you want to attend in the next few months. If you see a session you're interested in attending — and want to get a little financial help (and give back to the association at the same time!), then we've got an offer that you won't want to miss out on!

The APPT Scholarship for Continuing Education is designed to help APPT members defray the cost of a workshop they attend (75 percent of the cost of the workshop, up to a maximum of \$100).

Simply complete the scholarship application form and submit it along with a copy of the workshop brochure (if available). Up to four scholarships are awarded each year.

Your scholarship request will be reviewed by the APPT Scholarship Committee and you will be notified of their decision within 7 days of your application.

If selected, you will be reimbursed for the awarded amount after attending the workshop and sharing the information with APPT members, either through a presentation or by writing an article for *The Compass* summarizing the content of the workshop.

Questions? Call Pam Feldman at (402) 445-9175.

Application for APPT Scholarship For Continuing Education

Name _____

Practice Location _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Conference Title and Location (please attach a copy of brochure, if available)

Date: _____ Cost: _____

I am willing to:

- Present a brief summary of the workshop at a mini-practice workshop
- Write an article for *The Compass* summarizing the content of the workshop.

Please note: The maximum amount awarded is 75 percent of the cost of the workshop, up to \$100. If selected, you will be reimbursed the awarded amount after attending the workshop and sharing the information with APPT members through a presentation or article.

Submit completed application to: Pam Feldman, LPC, 702 North 129th Street, Suite 104, Omaha, NE 68164 or fax to (402) 431-1535. Applications will be considered and a decision reached within 7 days of receiving your application.

APPT Book Reviews

We have several books at the APPT office that are available for therapists to review for an upcoming issue of *The Compass*.

Reviewers may keep the book when they are finished. Reviews of between 350 and 750 words must be submitted to the APPT office for publication in the newsletter.

Requests for books will be honored on a first-come, first-served basis. APPT will send you the book and assign you a deadline for an upcoming issue (you will usually have 90 to 120 days to read the book and complete the review).

Call Bridget at (402) 393-4600 to request a current list of books.

In addition, if you have read a book not on our list but would like to review it for an upcoming issue of *The Compass*, please contact Pam Feldman or Bridget Weide.

NABHO Update: Mental Health Care Reconstruction

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child had diabetes, state-of-the-art treatment was available, but if he had bipolar disorder, he risked being placed in an antiquated institution.

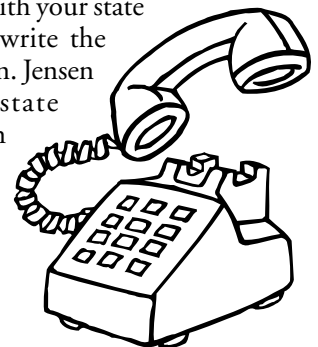
Both seem to be doing considerable research and reading, and to be actively seeking input. They both said that they are limited to three more years in their current offices, and that they were committed to getting something done while they are still in office.

As private practice therapists, your input is important. We all know or have been involved in situations where someone needed mental health services that were not available to them, either because of finances or a lack of beds or services at a higher level of care.

There is a danger that the regional centers could be closed without adequate community services to care for the indi-

viduals released. This would be a travesty. The federal government is shifting costs to the states and the states are shifting costs to local governments under the guise of local control and autonomy. Mental health parity has not passed, and insurers are cutting back mental health benefits as a cost-saving measure. All of these factors leave those with severe mental health problems at great risk.

What can you do? Follow this issue carefully, attend the public hearings, get acquainted with your state senator and write the Governor, Sen. Jensen and your state senator with your ideas.



APPT Legislative Update

By Pam Feldman, M.S.

As you read in Kathy Dombrowski's NABHO update, Gov. Mike Johanns and State Sen. Jim Jensen are committed to LB 724, which is intended to improve the mental health delivery system in Nebraska.

The result of LB 724 — which will be drafted in mid-November — will be a dramatic restructuring of services, leading to a better use of funds. By restructuring the regional centers (through closure and/or consolidation), the focus will shift to community-based services as well as improved systems for education, research, treatment and outreach. The governor is asking Creighton University and UNMC to help in planning the latter component.

As mental health providers, we have been invited to participate in the dialogue. Sen. Jensen met with providers in five cities recently at public meetings to hear what we have to say.

It is imperative that this plan for the re-shaping of our mental health delivery system be secured in the next three years while Sen.

Jensen and Gov. Johanns are still in office. Please help educate your state senators about your needs and invite them to support LB 724.

National Medicare Legislation

The American Counseling Association is one national group working to obtain Medicare reimbursement of Licensed Professional Counselors, a provision that was passed by the Senate as part of its Medicare bill. The LPC coverage provision was sponsored by Sens. Craig Thomas (R-Wy.) and Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), based on their standalone bill ("The Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act, S. 310).

Please contact your House of Representative member to ask for their support for the Senate Medicare bill's provision establishing reimbursement of state-licensed professional counselors and marriage and family therapists.

Express your support (and find out more information) at: http://capwiz.com/counseling/mail/oneclick_compose/?alertid=3658641

Oct. 24 Conference

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clients wait to see a psychiatrist. Dr. Malin completed her residency in psychiatry at the combined residency program of Creighton University and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She completed her fellowship in Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry at the combined residency program in 2002.

The cost to attend the conference is just \$30 for APPT members; non-members may attend for \$35 each. Student registration is \$15 per person. (Early registration discounts ended Oct. 15.)

Registration is from 8:30 to 9 a.m. Network with your colleagues while you enjoy our breakfast item selection. The program will begin at 9:15 a.m. and will conclude by noon.

Reservations are appreciated, but walk-ins are also welcome. Call Bridget at (402) 393-4600 to RSVP or e-mail your reservation to APPT2000@aol.com.

Working with Difficult Couples: Advanced Principles of the Gottman Method Couples Therapy

If you work with couples, you'll want to attend our next APPT Mini-Series Workshop because Bob Atherton, M.S., will share strategies for deepening your understanding of the Gottman Couples Therapy Method. He'll also share copies of actual homework assignments for these clients. Bob's presentation is based on a five-day Gottman Institute training program which he attended in Seattle in July.

 **Tuesday, November 4, 2003** 
Olive Garden — 74th & Dodge Street (Omaha)

11:30 to 12:00 p.m. Meet / Greet / Networking
12:05 to 12:35 p.m. Speaker
12:35 to 12:45 p.m. Question & Answer Time/Wrap-Up*
(If you need to get back to your office for a 1 p.m. client, feel free to leave at 12:35 p.m.)
APPT Members \$13.50 per person
Non-Members \$16.00 per person

Cost includes entrée, salad, breadsticks, beverage and gratuity.

**Questions? Or to Register by Phone
Call Bridget at the APPT Office — (402) 393-4600**

The APPT Office is Managed by Image Building Communications.
Feel free to leave a message on the voice mail.

NOV. 4 MINI-PRACTICE WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM

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Reservations Due By Noon on Friday, Oct. 31, 2003

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Free Legal Consultation. Remember, each APPT member is entitled to a free legal consultation with an attorney from Erickson & Sederstrom, P.C. (up to one hour) per year. Call Chuck Sederstrom, attorney at law at (402) 397-2200.

If you access this service, please give us feedback. Call Bridget at the APPT Office at (402) 393-4600 and let us know!



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