



NEWSLETTER

Coalition News

Vol V, #9

Coalition Coordinator : Al Bashevkin 664-4511 x519; 802 442-5200

Coalition Address : NASC Box 9075 North Adams, MA 01247

The Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition is supported by the Berkshire Area Health Education Center with funding from UMASS Medical School. The Coalition is hosted by North Adams State College.

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May 1991
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May Coalition Meeting

First Baptist Church of North Adams 131 Main St No Adams
Please Enter via Eagle St Entrance

Friday May 10th 10:00 AM to Noon

Meeting Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Introduction of Participants : **Who's here today**
- III. What's Happening : **Announcements by Coalition Membership of interest to all**
- IV. Coalition Topic : **Access to Health Care : *In Massachusetts and in Washington, everyone is talking about the health care crisis. Does everyone in Northern Berkshire have equal access to preventive and acute health care ? Why are there so many uninsured in North County ? Mark Rucavino of Health Care for All, along with members of Northern Berkshire's business and health care community discuss the issue of access to health care.***
- V. Other Business
- VI. Adjournment and Conclusion

Coalition News is the newsletter of the Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition. Its function is to keep the mailing list informed of what's happening around the Northern Berkshire area. It's a service to the entire COALITION membership and friends (over 290 at this point). Announcements submitted to the newsletter will reach our entire mailing list. So, take advantage of this unique, free mechanism for informing our membership of news important to all. Please submit these announcements to Al Bashevkin, Coalition Coordinator, P.O. Box 1417, Bennington, VT 05201. For insertion into the June newsletter (final one until September), your announcements should reach Al Bashevkin by May 24th.

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What's Happening I

- April's Events

April Meeting

April's Coalition meeting featured a discussion with all Coalitioners about an issue that is affecting all Americans: the disenfranchised. Kate Hill of Women's Services led the Coalition meeting audience in an honest roundtable conversation about how people are faring in light of the economic recession and government cutbacks. Is there a growing disenfranchised (out of the mainstream) population? What programming is working to bring people back into the mainstream? What can be done?

While the meeting can not offer any definitive statements about the disenfranchised (people need to speak for themselves), the meeting did offer common themes for observation. Organizations are sensing a growing feeling of hopelessness and despair among their constituencies. Job training programs lack jobs to place their graduates into. More people are unemployed, and there's a growing segment of middle class families that are feeling the effects of the recession. People are losing confidence in themselves as the economy turns sour. People and organizations are beginning to turn on each other as resources are becoming scarcer. Seniors of Northern Berkshire are yearning for the days that were more successful. More applications for home businesses are being requested in Adams as residents turn to themselves for the economic answers. Mental health crisis lines are receiving more calls than before and Northampton State Hospital is seeing its largest census in the past ten years. The lack of medical insurance keeps many away from health care until the problems are too serious to overlook. Helpline has fewer resources to refer callers to. Families of the handicapped are scared to apply for assistance they fear will be taken away.

There's a melting snowball of state services: the more that's taken away, the more frightened families become of utilizing existing services, the

more government believes they can take away. Higher education, universal health care, and subsidized day care are examples of this phenomena. People are less reliant on State services, but is it because they don't need them, or is it because of their fear of losing these services shortly after starting them?

Despite how it sounds, there were some optimistic and positive tones to our discussion of the disenfranchised. More than one speaker saw the successes of bottom-up planning. We can't plan for the disenfranchised. We need to create the forums so that the disenfranchised can plan for themselves. The River / Hall / Bracewell Neighborhood Organization and its sponsor, the Berkshire County Partnership for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drugs is an example of the successes of bottom-up planning. Organizations are talking more about listening to what programs their clients are asking for. Founders of the "Rapline" said that sometimes people just need each other; they don't always need service providers. Despite difficult times, health and human services are finding new ways of working together. The Parent's Place is an example of unusual collaborations to help overlapping clientele (more about the Parent's Place later in newsletter). The Social Security Office is seeing fewer people over the age of sixty five applying for SSI. That may mean that more social security recipients are getting up to standard benefits.

The issue of the disenfranchised will not go away. Future discussions may look at the Coalition's role in the region's economic development and projects at work in Northern Berkshire. All should keep these issues alive and use Dan Bosley's Economic Summit as a forum to share your ideas with others from the community.

Government Transition Information

Tentative plans are in the works for a visit from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Secretary David Forsberg to visit the Northern Berkshire area and the Coalition. This visit is planned for June 12th at Louison House in Adams. For more information, contact Al Bashevkin. Our legislators addresses are as follows:

Rep Dan Bosley	- 3 Elmwood Ave	North Adams	01247	663-7486
Rep Shaun Kelly	- 30 Florence St	Dalton	01226	684-4418
Sen Jane Swift	- 8 Bank Row	Pittsfield	01201	442-5240

Task Force about Volunteerism

The Task Force on Volunteerism held its **Volunteer Fair** at the Concourse, 85 Main Street in North Adams, on **April 25**. Twenty

organizations were represented in what was a most successful event. Many thanks to the core of planners for this event that included George Crosby, Donna Piaggi, Arlene Reilly, Pam Knisley, Terry Louison, and Diane Carlo

Neighborhood Focussing

The River/Hall/Bracewell Neighborhood Association's Spring clean-up was a rousing success. Over one hundred volunteers and neighbors worked together to make the RHB neighborhood clean. Even more important was the feeling of empowerment that the clean-up offered the Association's members. The Association now is turning its attention to turning a vacant lot into a play-area and celebrating the neighborhood's culture through activities with LaFesta.

Northern Berkshire agencies are asking about how they can become involved in the local neighborhood association. Support breeds success in this project, and the support on projects like the neighborhood clean-up earn workers a community profile of someone willing to get out of their offices to help. Other ways to assist this project and other neighborhood organization projects will be explored at an organization's meeting to help the RHB Neighborhood Association, scheduled for **Tuesday, May 21 at 9 AM** at the office of the Northern Berkshire United Way, 85 Main Street, North Adams. For more information about how you can help come to this meeting.

Task Force About Violence

Solutions will continue to come through community discussions. The task force is discussing corporal punishment in a variety of settings and is considering taking a stance about it. Congratulations are in order for the second recipient of the "Unsung Heroes" Award, an award that is meant to commend individuals and programs that are working hard to find alternatives to violence. This recipient is **Marie Crosby**, a retiring cafeteria worker at Drury High School whose special relationships with students has helped to avert many violent situations. The last meeting of the Task Force About Violence discussed the Coalition's role in educating the public about corporal punishment. Steve Ryan of DSS has written an excellent position paper about this topic. The next meeting will be Tues, May 21 at 10:30 AM at the Haskins Community Room. More info, call Maggie Bittman(664-6104).

Annual Meeting for the Coalition

Save the date, **June 14th** for the Coalition's 5th Annual Meeting. This year the Coalition will be producing, directing, and performing the "Follies", a musical revue of the Coalition's events. You can be a part of this exciting event by attending the planning meeting for the "Follies", Thursday, May 2nd at 1:30 PM at the office of Northern Berkshire United Way. Cost for the Annual Meeting is \$12. (\$10 for early registrations)

**NORTHERN BERKSHIRE
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
COALITION**

PRESENTS :

Coalition's 5th Annual Meeting

Date :	Friday	June 14, 1991
Time :	Noon (sharp)	to 2 PM
Place :	North Adams State College.	The Pub
Cost :	\$10 (early registration postmarked by May 21) \$12 for registration postmarked after May 21	
Catering :	Hot meal catered by ARA Food Services	
Program :	Coalition Year in Review	
	Peer Recognition Awards	
	The Music of Coalitioning	
	Featuring a musical revue of our year performed by the Coalition Follies	
<i>Guaranteed to be the most Memorable Annual Meeting Yet !</i>		

Coalition Lunch Registration :

Name : _____ Phone : _____

Address _____ Coalition Supporter ?
Yes _____ Not yet _____

Make check out to : AHEC Coalition Lunch **Early reg by May 21**
Deadline June 7

Mail To : Berkshire AHEC, Inc.
725 North St Pittsfield, MA 01201



Berkshire AHEC

Area Health Education Center

Berkshire County Partnership for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse
725 North Street • Pittsfield, MA • 01201

413-499-7008 FAX: 413-499-0370

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED

Two years ago, E. Goplerud, of the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention, put together a technical assistance guide for prospective demonstration grant applicants. This unpublished manuscript identified major lessons that had been learned from successful as well as unsuccessful alcohol and other drug abuse prevention programs.

I am sure most of the following conclusions are known to you, but reminders never hurt. Simple one-shot interventions do not work. We must not assume that whatever works for the middle-class will work for all. There is no basis for believing that solutions will be arrived at without sacrifice. Simple didactic educational programs aimed at informing and changing behaviors don't work. In fact they may increase the likelihood that program participants will use illicit substances.

Also, parent involvement programs, "Just Say No" Clubs and mass media campaigns are generally ineffective when provided alone. Without an aggressive outreach and comprehensive prevention/intervention these popular programs generally do not show much effect on high risk, hard to reach youths and families. Unless "alternative programs" that engage youth in non-drug recreational activities teach life skills, they too will have little positive effect on use. Finally, the most successful programs do not lend themselves to mechanical or even quick transfer from one setting to another.

Successful prevention programs which teach life skills incorporate the following skills: communication, problem-solving/decision-making, critical thinking, general assertiveness, resistance skills, peer selection, low-risk choice making, self-improvement, stress reduction and consumer awareness skills.

I think it is important to once again emphasize that prevention is prevention. My focus may be alcohol and other drug abuse prevention, but the activities, etc., mentioned above, impact all prevention efforts. If you are interested in any of the above information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

The next meeting of the "hard to reach parents" task force is scheduled for Friday, May 24, 9 AM, in the offices of United Way, 85 Main Street. We encourage those of you who are interested to join us.

Until next time...

Bob Hulse
Prevention Project Coordinator



Congratulations . . . The Northern Berkshire Mental Health

Association has chosen a new director, **Marge Cohan**. Marge has long been an advocate for mental health in her work for the Department of Mental Health and has established for herself a positive presence in North County. Both NBMHA and the Northern Berkshire community will benefit from Marge's leadership. Congratulations to Marge for her new appointment.



Get Well to Ginny Walsh. . . Let's send some cheer to one of our own who is not feeling so well. Get well cards for Ginny Walsh, Director of Helpline, can be sent to her at 38 Charles Street, Williamstown, 01267.

Coalition Peer Recognition Awards

It's time again to consider who you would like to nominate for the Fifth Annual Coalition Peer Recognition Awards. This is your chance to give recognition to someone who deserves it. Awards will be given out at the Coalition's Annual Meeting. The following are guidelines to follow for the recognition awards :

- * All interested in the area's health and human services are eligible
- * Nominees must not be in health and human services management
- * Nominees should exemplify the Coalition's goals of "working together"
- * Award winners will be chosen by the Coalition Steering Committee
- * **Nominations must be in by May 16** (so don't delay !)

Nominee _____

Your Name _____

Reason for Nomination (attach extra sheet if necessary)

Mail nominations to: Al Bashevkin, Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition, NASC Box 9075, North Adams, MA 01247



Late Breaking Info . . . Just got word that the Northern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce Breakfasters will be having Barbara Anderson (of Proposition 2 1/2 and CLT fame) as guest speaker at their May 16th gathering. To register, for info call the NBCC at 663-3735. Should be interesting !



Outreach to the Small Cities . . . Elder Services has been selected to

implement the elder component of a Small Cities grant in the towns of Williamstown, New Ashford, Cheshire Savoy, Clarksburg, and Florida. This grant complements the agency's efforts, also funded by Small Cities, in South County. In cooperation with Berkshire Housing Development Corporation, local residents, and Councils on Aging, Elder services will provide outreach to the designated communities and offer assistance to the individual towns in the development of new resources. In addition, the Small Cities grants will also fund home delivered meal routes, and expanded nutrition and transportation services in selected localities.

To implement this new grant venture over the next twelve months, four new Outreach Workers have been hired. Edith Durham will be working in the towns of Williamstown, New Ashford, and Cheshire. Jim Livesey will direct his energies toward Clarksburg, Florida, and Savoy. In addition, Marie Stuart and Kathryn Wedderburn have been assigned to the project in South County (West Stockbridge, Gt Barrington, Sheffield, New Marlboro, and Monterey). The two outreach workers from North County can be reached at the Elder Services office in North Adams (664-6512) and will be available in the targeted towns.

MINDS MEETING / MINDS MENDING 1991 MENTAL HEALTH MONTH ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 7:15pm Alliance for the Mentally Ill Family support and sharing New members welcome Berkshire Mental Health Ass. Traffic Sign Signs	2 8:30am - 3:00 Supported Housing Cost Panel Caring, Mt. Mans 7:00pm Focus on Independent Living Channel 5, Pittsfield	3 8:00am Legislative Breakfast 4:00pm - 6 Art Show Commonwealth 442 North St., Pittsfield	4
5 9pm World of Differences Celebration Tough Program Open Mt. Mans mobile, Culture Diversity, BCC, AUC	6 7:30am - 8:30 Making Connections Exploring M.H. Concerns 7:30pm Teen Suicide Prevention, NIMHIA Channel 22, Adams	7 6:30pm Focus on Independent Living Channel 22, Adams 7:00pm - 8:30 South Forty Open House, 85 Main St. N. Adams	8 8:30am Addressing the Impact of Stigmatism for Children Session WAMHO, NIMHIA	9 7:00pm Focus on Independent Living Channel 5, Pittsfield	10 8:30pm Teen Suicide Rebroadcast 3/8 Channel 22, NIMHIA	11 9:00am - 1:00pm Stroke out Signers Game, Southwell Complex 9:15am E. Fuller Torrey AIM State Conference, Lanesboro
2	13	14 6:30pm Focus on Independent Living Channel 22, Adams 7:00pm The Many Faces of Addiction/Substance Abuse - NIMHIA	15	16 8:45am - 4:30 Child Abuse Conference, Berkshire Hilton Inn 1:30pm - 5:30 Overcoming Stigma Conference 7:00pm Parenting Panel, Adm Day Health Center - NIMHIA	17 8:45am - 4:30 Child Abuse Conference, Berkshire Hilton Inn Citizens Against Child Abuse/CAICA	18 10:00am - noon VVA Health Fair McCann High School
19	20	21 7:00pm Strategies For Families Caring For Elderly, NIMHIA	22 1:00pm Unraveling the Knots of Abuse - BMC Auditorium 4:00pm NIMHIA Rally Drawing and Recycled 333 E. Main St.	23 2:30pm - 5:30 Overcoming Stigma Conference 18 E. Court House DMH	24 12:30pm Stilling Discussion, Reflexive Conversation, BMC 8:00pm Changing Roles of M.H. Consumers, Channel 22, Adams	25
26	27	28	29 6:00pm Annual Dinner, Westwash, 110 Main St. Pittsfield	30 7:30pm - 9:30 Overcoming Stigma Conference 18 E. Court House DMH	31	



NEWS AND VIEWS



News from the Parenting Task Force The Parent's Place, a new program that has evolved from the work of the Parenting Task Force, will be opening in June. The Parent's Place, a parenting center, plans to locate in the Dowlin Block, 103 Main Street in North Adams. It will be a place for parents to meet with other parents and talk about parenting. Berkshire Center for Families and Children and the Family Life Support Center are leading the efforts to create the Parent's Place. Lots of other organizations will be sharing in this collaborative effort. These efforts began with at the Nov. 1989 Coalition meeting after a discussion about the need for more parenting resources. A parenting task force was formed and the Parent's Place is the fruit of those efforts. Many thanks to the Northern Berkshire United Way for their seed support. Wanna join in the efforts? Next meeting of the Parent's Place Advisory Board is May 23 at noon at Louison House.



Wanna Rap? . . . The RapLine (664-7988) will be on television Friday, May 24 at 8 PM on channel 22. The topic will be changing roles in employment of consumers of mental health. If anyone has questions about the Rapline, a telephone Helpline for mental health consumers, call Cathy or Diane at 664-7988.



Food Distribution . . . Northern Berkshire Community Action will be sponsoring its next surplus commodity food distribution on May 14th at its usual sites. For more information, call NBCA at 663-9807.





Up With Parents I . . . On Thursday, April 11th, this two hour presentation overflowed the auditorium at the Adams Memorial Junior High School. Over six hundred parents were there, and there were numerous comments in the community about its effectiveness. Parenting education is of interest.




SSI Outreach . . . Families USA Foundation is pleased to announce that it has received a one year demonstration grant from the Social Security Administration. The purpose of this grant is to raise the public's awareness of the Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI). Families USA Foundation, in conjunction with AdLib, Inc. will reach into the cities and towns of Berkshire county to seek out and assist residents with disabilities who may be eligible. SSI is a program designed to provide additional income to individuals who are in need of financial assistance. To be eligible, the disabled must be US citizens or legally permitted to live in the USA and must be currently residing in Massachusetts. An individual whose income is under

\$535/month and has less than \$2000 in resources may be eligible for this program. For a couple your monthly income could be as high as \$811 and you could have as much as \$3000 in the bank. Four other agencies will be participating throughout Western Massachusetts including AdLib center for Independent Living which will target disabled individuals under the age of 65 who may be eligible and living in Berkshire County. You can call SSI Aware at 1 800 232-7047 or 442-7047. Please pass the word to others in our community about this valuable program.

  *And Now, here's Ken!* **Northern Berkshire Tonight**, the talk show of the Coalition will be airing its May show, **Monday, May 6th** at 7:30 and repeating **Friday, May 10th** at 8 PM. The show's topic is Teenage Depression and the Northern Berkshire Teenage Suicide Prevention Network. Guests are Gavin Behrans, NBMHA; Ann French, Adjustment Counselor of Drury High School; and Richard Malluzzo of Greylock Pavilion. Tune into **Channel 7** and join thousands of others who watch the Coalition on local access TV.

EE *OK Sport Fans* . . . Special Olympics has now reached Northern Berkshire with full steam. Although there has been a program for special education kids in some schools, and state level games at Williams College, there was no access provided for retarded adults, 22 and older in our Northern Berkshire area.

But now, the management committee, under Area Manager, Ray Willis, is in place and has already conducted a very special bowling program at Valley Lanes, with fifty clients turning out the first night! Next comes track and field events at Greylock School (North Adams) in April, Desanti Field in May, with area level games at Williams College on Sunday, May 19th. Crucial in these efforts has been the initiative and cooperation of Armand Quintal of Center for Humanistic Change, and Chris Tanguay of NBSS. Thanks to Sinclair Hart for letting us now about these events.

 *Work for Youth*. . . The Berkshire Training and Employment Program (BTEP) is currently taking applications for its Summer Youth Work Experience Program. Applicants must be 14 - 21 years old and meet our eligibility guidelines. The program will be at area high schools and will last for seven weeks beginning July, 1991. Work experience will be available in areas such as culinary arts, environmental studies, landscaping, work processing, and light construction. Participants will be paid the new \$4.25 minimum wage. For more info on eligibility, contact the North Adams office of BTEP at 25 Marshall Street or call 664-8742.

Did you know?

You and your family may be eligible for free health insurance!



This the worst recession most people can remember. If you're worried about how you're going to pay your medical bills in these hard times, here is some news you can use:

As a little known part of the 1988 Universal Health Care law, the **Health Security Plan** was set up to provide medical coverage for people like you who are collecting unemployment insurance benefits.

To be eligible you must:

- ✓ Be receiving unemployment benefits.
- ✓ Be a Massachusetts resident.
- ✓ Have no other health insurance (unless it is a continuation of coverage from your last job).
- ✓ Your total family income over the year before you filed for unemployment has to be less than the following:

Family Size	Income
1	\$19,860
2	26,640
3	33,420
4	40,200
5	46,980

for each additional family member add \$6,780

There are two types of coverage under the plan:

The **DIRECT COVERAGE PLAN** provides minimum basic benefits. There is no monthly premium for this plan. *It is free* - and especially good if you have young kids.

The **CONTINUATION PLAN** will help out with monthly premiums if you want to continue coverage (from your last job) that you are now paying for out of your own pocket. *The Plan will pay \$80 towards individual coverage and \$200 towards family coverage.*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 2** - River / Bracewell / Hall Neighborhood Meeting Salvation Army 7 PM
- May 6** - Northern Berkshire Tonight Teen Depression Ch 22 7:30PM
- May 6** - **Making Connections** - Employing Mental Health Consumers in Human Services Mt Marie Conference Center, Holyoke 9 AM - 4:30 PM
- May 9** - **FACT Meeting: Parent's Place** Haskins Community Center Noon
- May 10** - Northern Berkshire Tonight Teen Depression Ch 22 7:30PM
- May 10** - **All Coalition Meeting** : Access to Health Care Baptist Church North Adams 10 AM to Noon
- May 16** - **Barbara Anderson at Breakfasters** call NBCC at 663-3735
- May 21** - **Organization's Meeting for River / Hall / Bracewell Neighborhood Organization** NB United Way 9 AM
- May 21** - **Task Force on Violence** : Haskins Community Center Conference Room North Adams 10:30 AM
- May 23** - **Steering Committee** NA City Hall 9 AM
- May 23** - **Parent's Place Advisory Board** Louison House Noon
- May 24** - **"Hard to Reach Parent's Task Force"** NB United Way 9 AM
- June 14** - **Coalition's Fifth Annual Meeting: Coalition Follies NASC**

YES, SIGN ME UP AS A COALITION SUPPORTER for 1990-91 |

Name _____
Organization _____
Address _____
Phone _____

- Ind (\$10)
 Sm Org (\$25)
 (\$100,000 budget)
 Lg Org (\$50)
 (\$100,000 budget)

Checks payable to AHEC/NBHHS. Mail to Berkshire AHEC 725 North St
Pittsfield MA 01201

Areas of Interest :

Are you willing to be listed as Coalition Supporter Yes No