It is with great excitement to inform the full Coalition that there is now a Southern Chapter. This was officially announced during the conference held on October 3, 2003 that Pima Council on Aging, Community Partnership of Southern Arizona (CPSA), and South-eastern Arizona Behavioral Health Services (SEABHS) planned together. We now have both a Southern Chapter and a Northern Chapter of the Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition.

During the last full Coalition meeting that was held on September 16, 2003, members decided that the full meetings should be held three times per year (it was previously four) and be held in different regions of the state. The January 13th meeting will be held in Tucson, and all meeting will now be available via telemedicine. Telemedicine capabilities are available throughout the behavioral health network. It is the hope that by having the meeting throughout the state, and offering the telemedicine options, more members statewide will be able to participate in the full coalition meetings. Details of the meetings will be e-mailed out by Sharon Tolman. If you are not on the e-mail list, please contact Sharon at (602) 364-4613 or stolman@hs.state.az.us

Creating Collaborations: Preventing Alcohol and Prescription Drug Use Problems in Older Adults

The Arizona Department of Health Services, Division of Behavioral Health (ADHS/DBHS) obtained technical assistance funding from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and offered a one day meeting/training on September 12, 2003 titled: Creating Collaborations: Addressing Substance Abuse and Prescription Misuse in Older Adults. Dr. Frederick Blow, a national expert on this topic, presented information to the Directors and/or program clinical staff of the Regional Behavioral Health Authorities, Area Agencies on Aging and Adult Protective Services throughout the state. Approximately 60 individuals participated to learn more about the unique needs of the older adult population, as well as the prevention and treatment for these disorders. The participants of the training also discussed future collaborations and made regional recommendations. ADHS/DBHS is awaiting the final report from CSAP; it will be disseminated to the different workgroups to assist in their continued efforts.
Southern Arizona BHAC

The Southern Arizona Chapter of the Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition has had a very successful start-up over the past several months. The Southern Chapter has had a significant response and participation from multiple agencies and individuals throughout Tucson and has met twice.

Currently the Chapter is working on refining Mission Statement and Key Goals. The next Southern Arizona BHAC meeting is February 11, 2004 at 9:30 am at the Pima Council on Aging, 8467 East Broadway in Tucson.

For additional information contact Mike Rozer at the Tucson Mental Health Association (520-882-4806) or Deborah Acuna at COPE Behavioral Health (520-584-5844).

Conference on Behavioral Health Services and Older Adults

On October 3rd, 2003, Pima Council on Aging, Community Partnership of Southern Arizona (CPSA), Southeastern Arizona Behavioral Health Services (SEABHS) and over 15 local behavioral health and aging-related organizations sponsored an extremely successful Conference on Behavioral Health Services and Older Adults at the Doubletree Hotel in Tucson, Arizona. 400 mental health/aging professionals and lay public attended the conference.

The conference addressed multiple issues through individual speakers and panel groups with audience participation. Two highlights of the day were a family panel following lunch and keynote speaker Donna Wagner who gave an excellent presentation; she outlined current and future behavioral health needs of the aging population with an emphasis on the need for future community collaboration.

The conference planning committee remains active and will meet again in January to consider follow-up plans. Plans that are currently being considered: a second conference within 18 months and various other prior events including a doctor’s dinner and educational meetings between the mental health system and area aging case managers.

Northern Arizona BHAC

Dennis Garvey of Yavapai College is developing an upcoming workshop entitled “Life Transitions”. Dennis will co-facilitate this workshop with David Van Gorder and will announce details as they become available.

NAZBHAC is looking forward to the completion of the Tri-City Resource Guide (Prescott, Prescott Valley and Chino Valley). Look for this great addition to your information and referral library early in 2004.

NAZBHAC is sponsoring a two day training with Naomi Feil on Validation Therapy Technique April 16-17, 2004. Brochures will be printed and available in January 2004. Call Southwest Education Center at (928) 776-6124 for a brochure or more information. CEUs will be available. Save the Date!
Advocacy Committee

The focus of the Committee’s efforts is on Mental Health Insurance Parity Legislation and on the Gate Openers—Older Adults at Risk Pilot Program legislation.

Mental health Insurance Parity Legislation would support comprehensive mental health parity requiring insurance companies to treat all illnesses on an equal basis and prevent discrimination against individuals with mental illness.

Gate Openers—Older Adults at Risk Pilot Program Legislation would support a collaborative effort between state government, the RBHAs, and Area Agencies on Aging that would identify older adults in need of mental health care and other services through coordinated outreach, intake and case management.

The Advocacy Committee meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 10:00 am at MHA. All BHAC members are invited to attend.

Best Practices Committee

The Best Practices Committee is partnering with the Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health/Office of Prevention to assist in the updating of “Prevention Framework for Behavioral Health”. This document was originally developed in December 1996 and included very little information about older adult prevention.

The Committee had been working on an addendum to this document, but learned that the document itself was being revised.

The Committee is a part of the workgroup that is updating the document; the goal is to have the document completed in the Summer of 2004.
The Arizona Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition provides opportunities for professionals, consumers, government and private organizations to work together towards improving the availability and quality of mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment for Arizonans 60 years of age and older, and their families.

The Arizona Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition (ABHAC) promotes awareness of and access to behavioral health services that enhance the quality of life of older adults.

16th Annual Arizona Indian Council on Aging Conference

In conjunction with the 8th Annual Conference On Advocacy for American Indians with Disabilities
April 13-15, 2004
Sheraton Wildhorse Pass Resort and Spa, Gila River Indian Community

The purpose of the 16th Annual Arizona Indian Council on Aging (AICOA) Conference is to focus on policies and healthy practices which will advance the well being of American Indian elders and individuals with disabilities. The conference is designed for these persons as well as service providers, informal and formal caregivers, volunteers, advocates, and others who impact policies and practices at the federal, state, local and community level.

For more information, please contact: Mr. Gilbert Patino Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc., 2214 North Central, Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85004

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