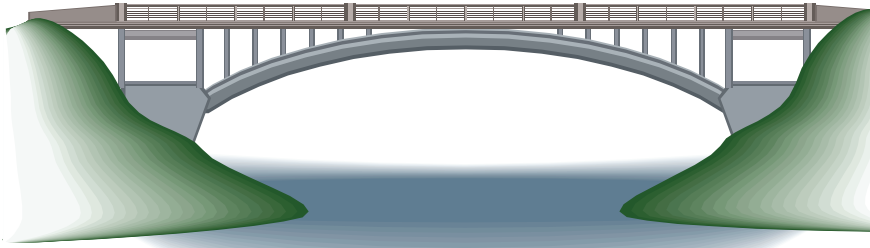


MHASI Matters



“Building Bridges Between Mental Health and Aging”

Spring 2009

ABCs of Fall Prevention

Falls and Fractures Among the Elderly

Falls frequently cause injuries and hospital trauma admissions among the elderly and consequently are major factors preventing them from being able to remain in their own homes.

Fractures are the most serious consequence of falls with the highest incidence being of the pelvis, hip, femur and vertebrae. Of these, hip fractures are the most serious and most costly. Half of all elderly adults hospitalized for hip fractures cannot return home to live independently.

Home safety and fall prevention are issues that family caregivers must deal with when caring for aging or disabled loved ones. Factors that increase the risk of falls include dementia, visual impairment, neurologic and musculoskeletal disabilities, medications and difficulties in gait and balance. Home safety hazards such as slippery surfaces, uneven floors, poor lighting, loose carpet, and clutter also contribute to falls. Once a person has fallen, the amount of time they lay without adequate medical attention can greatly impede their recovery (see *emergency home response info on page 3*).

In many instances, some very simple home modifications can allow a person to safely age in place in the home that they know and love. There are also times when home simply is not the safest place and alternatives need to be explored.

The contributing author of this article is Effingham County MHASI Advisory Group member, Jackie Witges, RN, BSN, Life Care Coordinator at ReschSiemer Law Office, LLC in Effingham, IL.

- Improve lighting in the home, especially on stairs.
- Make stairs safe—firmly attach handrails and secure carpeting.
- Install grab bars in the shower / tub and near the toilet.
- Only use step stools when another person is at home.
- Wear shoes that are easy to walk in, give support, and have good traction.
- Use the cane or walker as needed for balance.
- Wear eye glasses as prescribed. Get regular check-ups for cataracts or other eye conditions.
- Exercise daily to help maintain balance, flexibility and strength.
- Review medications with your doctor if they are causing drowsiness or lightheadedness.

Mental Health & Aging Systems Integration

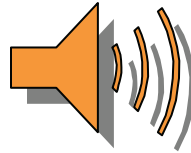
Data collection for calendar year 2008 was completed by community mental health centers in the Illinois Department of Human Services/Division of Mental Health, Region 5.

This information shows that 296 people over the age of 60 were seen for the first time in a community mental health center or by a community mental health worker. Of these, two times more females were seen than males. Age categories are broken down into five year increments, beginning with 60-64 through 95-99, ending with the category of 100+. Seventy-five individuals were in the 60-64 range while only two were in the 95-99 range. There was no one seen who was age 100 or better. Only 13 of the 296 were seen at home through a joint visit by a mental health professional and aging case manager.

The statistics show that people in this age group present most often with the following symptoms:

- Confusion, memory problems, dementia, and behavioral issues due to dementia
- Depressed mood due to losses, medical issues, family problems, major depression, sometimes recurrent
- Anxiety
- Substance Abuse
- Suicidal thoughts, plans, attempts

This information is vital for the Gero-Psych Program to use for training purposes, service provisions, and quality assurance. Thanks to the community mental health centers for their reports!



Upcoming Events

March 24—The Health Care Response to Abuse/Neglect of Older Adults (Train-the-Trainer), CEUs
Wedeborg Conference Center
Memorial Medical Center
Springfield, IL
Registration: Call 217.524.9644

March 28—Southern Illinois Men's Health Conference
John A. Logan College
Carterville, IL
Registration: Go to www.simenshealth.org.

April 3—Suicide Prevention: A Community Response to a Community Problem, CEUs
John A. Logan College
Carterville, IL
Registration: Call 618.453.2243

April 21-22—6th Annual Southern Illinois Meth & Other Drugs Conference, CEUs
John A. Logan College
Carterville, IL
Registration: Call 618.985.2828 x8510

April 22-24—9th Annual Mental Health and Aging Conference, CEUs
Lincolnshire Marriott Resort
10 Marriott Drive
Lincolnshire, IL
Registration: Contact the Gero-Psych Specialist in your area.

May 19—Alzheimer Disease: Risk and Protective Factors and Early Interventions, CEUs
Sponsor: SIU School of Medicine Center for Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders
Crowne Plaza Hotel & Conference Center
Springfield, IL
Registration: Go to www.siumed.edu/cme.

Southern Illinois Task Force on Mental Health, Aging & Substance Abuse

New name—same vision. This group originated in 2003, under the auspices of the Gero-Psych Program, as the Southern Illinois Substance Abuse and Aging Task Force in response to the identification of adults who were in need of alcohol and other drug abuse treatment services. Task Force members perceived that despite existing needs, services in rural Southern Illinois were inaccessible for persons over the age of 60.

SIU – Carbondale staff, Dr. Elaine Jurkowski (School of Social Work) and Dr. Shane Koch (Rehabilitation Institute) have facilitated Focus Groups and researched grant possibilities. The most recent interest is in the Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral, Treatment Model. Another area of interest is in getting affordable transportation to our very rural folks in need of services.

The current chair person is Lynn Tadda, LCSW, Gero-Psych Specialist at The H Group, formerly Franklin-Williamson Human Services, Inc. The Southern Illinois Task Force on Mental Health, Aging and Substance Abuse, as it is now called, met December 4 and February 5 with the next meeting (March 26 @ 9 a.m.) scheduled as a phone conference. Call in # is 877.336.1831, pass code 7790332.

Emergency Home Response Service

Emergency Home Response Service (EHRS) is a 24-hour link to assistance outside the home for older adults. This service is provided by a two-way voice communication system, with a base unit connected to a land line telephone, and an activation device worn by the older adult (bracelet or pendant). When activated, the older adult is automatically linked to a professionally staffed support center for assistance. The purpose of providing EHRS is to improve independence and safety in-the home. Find your local Community Care Program provider by calling the Illinois Senior HelpLine at 1.800.252.8966 or 1.888.206.1327 TTY.

Fact Sheets Specific to Older Adults

The following fact sheets are available by contacting a Gero-Psych Specialist (see back page) or by going to www.heartlandhs.org and clicking on Resources then Fact Sheets.

- Alcohol and Health
- Bereavement and Loss
- Drug Interactions
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
- Retirement
- Stress
- Mental Health, Aging & Substance Abuse Task Force
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Exercise
- Memory
- Self Neglect
- Suicide

Questions or Comments? Contact the Gero-Psych Specialist in your area.

The H Group (Tan)

Formerly Franklin-Williamson Human Services, Inc.

Contact Person: Lynn Tadda, LCSW

902 West Main St.

West Frankfort, IL 62896

618.937.6483 x7504

Email: lynn.tadda@Hgroup.org

Website: www.buildingbettertomorrows.org

Heartland Human Services (Green)

Contact Person: Linda Warner, EdM, QMHP

P.O. Box 1047, 1200 N. Fourth St.

Effingham, IL 62401

217.347.7179 x1046

Email: lwarner@heartlandhs.org

Website: www.heartlandhs.org

Southeastern Illinois Counseling Centers, Inc. (Blue)

Contact Person: Juanita Suro, MA, LCPC

P.O. Drawer M, 504 Micah Drive

Olney, IL 62450

618.395.4309 x230

Email: jjsuro@msn.com

Website: www.seicc.org

