

THE VOICE

Volume 2, Issue 5

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Don's Story:  
Difficult  
Choices

by Anna Raudenbush,  
Client Advocate

Don worked for a small company. One day he was called into his employer's office. He was told his work performance had deteriorated and that he was on administrative leave until he could get a full psychiatric evaluation stating he was fit to work.

Don complied with his employer's request and got a psychiatric evaluation. The doctor concluded Don could not meet the performance requirements of his job, due to his mental illness. Don's employer offered him a choice between resignation or termination. At this point, Don contacted a MHAM advocate.

After a lengthy conversation with his advocate, Don admitted he did not feel able to perform his work. He had trouble focusing and remembering, and he had a hard time learning new tasks. Though concerned about the prospect of being unemployed, he agreed with his employer. Don made the first of many difficult decisions: it was time to leave his job, and he did not want to pursue a wrongful termination case.

Now Don had to decide which would be the most beneficial to him—resignation or termination. Don and his advocate weighed the pros and cons. While he didn't want to be fired, Don chose termination so he could participate in the unemployment insurance program.

In the meantime, Don needed to find a way to cope with not having a reliable income or medical insurance. His medications alone, without insurance, easily topped \$1,000 a month.

Don had acquired assets worth \$22,000 through his years at work. This disqualified him

*Don's Story continued on page 7*

mham 2011

by Ed Eide, Executive Director

The staff of MHAM is looking forward to 2011 and is planning new projects for the coming year. We will continue to work with mental health Local Advisory Councils (LACs) throughout the state. We want people at the local level to have a voice in the delivery of services they need. We will also share our new Steps to Wellness self-care kits to aid people in maintaining overall health and independence. (See the article on page five for information about how you can order a kit for yourself or a loved one.)

In 2011 we will also support the Minnesota 10 x 10 Project that has a goal of extending the lives of people with mental illnesses by 10 years in the next 10 years. Currently Minnesotans who have a mental illness live an average of 24 years less than people who do not have a mental illness. We see this as a public health issue and not simply an issue relating only to mental health.

During the coming year, we will share the voices of people in Minnesota who have a mental illness with our elected officials. With so many new people in elected office, we have a big job ahead. We will continue to provide individual advocacy services to people like Don (see our cover story), so that when there is nowhere else to go they can count on

*MHAM 2011 continued on page 2*

MHAM to be there for them. Our calls and cases are becoming more complicated and are taking longer to find a resolution. We anticipate this will continue into 2011. There are many more people who have lost their job and their healthcare so it becomes harder to find alternatives.

Another exciting project for 2011 will be our new Facebook page. We hope the Facebook page will expand communication around Minnesota and serve as a forum for individuals to share their experiences, concerns, successes, and information about mental health services in Minnesota.

2011 will be a year for change in many ways. But, MHAM will continue, as we have for 71 years, to fight for the rights of people to receive services they need. **We thank you for your support and belief in what we do.**

## Legislative Update: What's in the Cards?

by Ben Ashley-Wurtmann, Outreach and Policy Associate

Last year's legislative session was full of ups and downs. We lost General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC) and got an inferior hospital-based system in return. Personal Care Attendants (PCA) and other services faced cuts. Will 2011 be any different?

As we go to press, the election results seem to indicate that Minnesota has, by a very close margin, chosen a governor of one party and a legislature controlled by the other. We expect very tough negotiations over the size of spending on human services, including mental health. The governor alone cannot spend money, but he may use a line-item veto. When the government is split like this, the balance of power tends to rest with the party that wishes to do less.

A quirk of the final compromise of last session leaves the governor with the option to trigger early enrollment in Medicaid expansion, covering much of the former GAMC population. However, this option expires on January 15, 2011. A protracted recount might leave Governor Pawlenty at the helm past that date with a friendly legislature, something he never had during his term. The results would be hard to predict, but they could be dramatic.

Despite the likely chaos, we will still be at the Capitol, pushing for better services. Ultimately, we know this is not a partisan issue, but a human one. We're heartened by last year's vast bipartisan support of a draft compromise on GAMC, and we hope that this session can be more productive in finding budget solutions that do not put unfair burdens on counties, providers, and people with mental illnesses.

In 2011 we'll be talking about the State Operated Services (SOS) redesign and PCA services, access issues in Greater Minnesota, and the strain on our hospitals.

In short, we'll continue to address the need for better help-seeking options than the emergency room and the need for appropriate options for treating people before and after a crisis. Please stay connected with us by

signing up for our policy updates and finding information on our website. Look under **Be Informed for Issues**

**Advocacy.** We're going to need all of your help to keep mental health services a priority in Minnesota.



MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
of Minnesota **mham**

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Nancy Paul, Editor.*

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info@mentalhealthmn.org

## Letter from the Executive Director



As we come to the end of another year – a year that brought all kinds of deficits – we should still give thanks.

- **THANKS** that we still have a wide array of health services for people. Yes, due to budget constraints they are somewhat harder to access, but they are mostly intact.
- **THANKS** that we have people who care about us. As I traveled around the state this year I saw people sharing their lives with others. Many were not family members, but rather friends watching out for other friends. I guess that would be family, wouldn't it?
- **THANKS** for the people who are joining together to work smarter in finding new ways to provide basic services to the community.
- **THANKS** for people sharing their stories to reduce the stigma associated with a mental illness. Views and decisions change when we see people as people and not as an illness.

While most of us can give thanks for many things, we still have a number of people who have lost or will lose basic services and perhaps their very independence. We know that being in a hospital is expensive – why do we keep cutting services that keep people living independently in their own home and prevent hospitalization?

Why do we still fear people because of their illness?

Like many nonprofit organizations, MHAM is going to have a tough financial year in 2011. We will continue to work hard to keep our services available to people, while saving money wherever possible.

Those of us who have much to be thankful for should also share with others so more of us can give thanks. When MHAM staff members work with people to keep their independence, the people always thank us for helping them. They are also thanking YOU for your support of MHAM.

Won't you help support the services we provide so that others can live a productive, full life?

- **A \$50 donation allows us to provide advocacy for a person like Don, who is highlighted in our cover story.**
- **A \$100 donation will allow us to share the message that seeking and providing help is expected, responsible behavior with hundreds of people through workshops.**
- **A contribution in any amount will allow us to pursue our mission to enhance mental health, promote individual empowerment, and increase access to treatment and services for persons with mental illnesses.**



Be kind to one another.

# Mental Illness Stigma: Recent Study Shows Little Change

by Brett Dumke,  
Education Coordinator

Over the last decade, many local and national anti-stigma campaigns have concentrated their efforts to improve public understanding of the neurobiological causes of mental illness; that is, mental illnesses are like any other disease. Over the years, MHAM has also been involved with this type of approach through many of our outreach efforts, including our mental health workshops. From our post-workshop surveys, the feedback we receive is that there is an increased understanding from participants about the biological causes of mental illnesses and the importance of treatment. However, what we don't know from these surveys is how this increased awareness will relate to the social acceptance of individuals with mental illnesses. A recent study, conducted by Indiana University and Columbia University, sheds some light on that question.

The study, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), compares two surveys from the 1996 and 2006 General Social Survey (GSS) based on responses to vignettes describing individuals with schizophrenia, major depression, and alcohol dependence. What the study found was that stigma toward people with mental illnesses has not decreased despite the increased public understanding that mental illnesses have a neurobiological basis and that support for treatment is recognized by most people. Other key findings from the 2006 survey include:

- A larger portion of respondents supports the neurobiological causes of mental illness in the 2006 survey than in the 1996 survey.
- Social or moral conceptions of mental illnesses decreased significantly in most areas. However, alcohol dependence either remained unchanged or increased.
- A large majority of the respondents supported both general and specialty care and prescription medicine for individuals with mental illnesses.
- Endorsement for hospitalization for depression and alcohol dependence remained unsupported by a majority of respondents.

MHAM will continue its effort to inform the public about the latest research on mental illnesses and provide science-based information on mental health treatment and care. MHAM will also look at different approaches to reduce the misperceptions and attitudes that currently exist in the general public. To do this, it will take more than facts and figures. As the study suggests, stigma reduction efforts should focus on the person's abilities, competencies, and community integration of individuals with mental illnesses. For this to be successful, engaging civic organizations that have not necessarily been involved with mental health issues in the past will be essential. These organizations can help create awareness for the need of inclusion and the rights of citizenship for individuals with mental illnesses.

Moving forward, MHAM will create partnerships that will help develop and foster social integration for people with mental illnesses.

The study was published online on September 15, 2010, in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* and can be found at: <http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/abstract/167/11/1321>

#### Journal Reference:

Bernice A. Pescosolido, Jack K. Martin, J. Scott Long, Tait R. Medina, Jo C. Phelan, and Bruce G. Link. 'A Disease Like Any Other'? A Decade of Change in Public Reactions to Schizophrenia, Depression, and Alcohol Dependence.' *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 2010; DOI: 10.1176/appi.ajp.2010.09121743

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# Steps to Wellness Self-Care Kits Now Available!

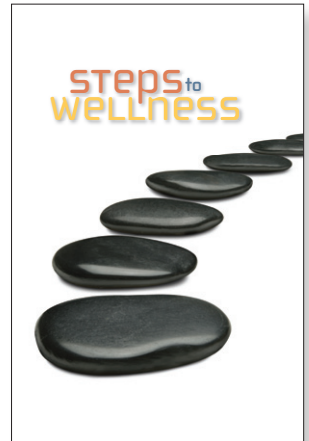
We are very excited to introduce our brand new Steps to Wellness self-care kits. The kits were unveiled at the October 5 *Celebrating Recovery* education event, and they have proven to be very popular. In the first month they were available, we distributed over 800 kits. The feedback we have received has been very positive. Individuals, family members, and providers indicate that they find the tools in the kit to be useful. Many providers ask for kits to share with their patients or clients. Some mental health facilities include them in packets given to patients when they are discharged.

**Overview of the Steps to Wellness Kits:** An essential component of health is wellness. Personal wellness is a self-care approach to enhance our overall health and well-being. Steps to Wellness is a personal tool kit that can improve your health and well-being. The kit has several tools designed to work together to help you develop a plan for self-care, address a crisis should it arise, and advocate for yourself to receive treatments that work best for you. The tools include: a self-advocacy wallet card with helpful reminders on how to effectively prepare, document, and communicate your needs before you address an issue; a medication wallet card and worksheet to help you organize your medications so you can share accurate information with your healthcare providers; a daily wellness chart to track your daily steps toward wellness; crisis plan worksheets for you and your support system to help prevent or better manage a crisis; and a wellness journal.

Steps to Wellness kits are available on the MHAM website ([mentalhealthmn.org](http://mentalhealthmn.org)). On the home page, click on the link **Steps to Wellness Kits Now Available**. On the Steps to Wellness page you can download each of the tools by clicking on the picture of each piece. You can also order a hard copy of the kit by clicking on the **Steps to Wellness Order Form** link on the right sidebar. If you would like multiple copies of the kit, please contact Brett Dumke at 612-331-6840 or [brettd@mentalhealthmn.org](mailto:brettd@mentalhealthmn.org).

*Steps to Wellness is supported by:* An education grant from Lilly USA, LLC  
Janssen, Division of Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceutical, Inc. • Park Nicollet Foundation Healthy Community • Pfizer Healthcare

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## Celebrating Recovery Education Event



On October 5, 2010, MHAM hosted the *Celebrating Recovery* education event at the Ramada Plaza hotel in Minneapolis. At the event, the new Steps to Wellness kits were unveiled. Brett Dumke, MHAM Education Coordinator, shared information about each of the tools in the Steps to Wellness kit and demonstrated how the pieces work together to improve health. Dr. Michael Trangle, MD, talked about the Minnesota 10 x 10 Project to increase the life expectancy of people with mental illnesses by 10 years in the next 10 years and the DIAMOND Project. Kim Lutes and Brian Doran shared their personal stories and information about how family members and friends can support a loved one. There was also a wellness fair

featuring MHAM, the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota, Guild Incorporated, Community University Health Care Center, Volunteers of American Mental Health Clinics, Golden Living, Consumer-Survivor Network, NAMI-MN, and Storefront Group.

# 2010 Memorial and Honor Gifts to MHAM

## In Memory

### David Birch

Angel Birch

### Marcella Buehring

Anna Wetterling

Ray and Suzan Schmidt

### Shyrlée Cutler

Dorsey and Whitney Foundation

Robert J. Dwyer, Jr.

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David and Kathleen MacLennan

Minnesota Zoo

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Uzi Roshia

Jeanne Smith

### Emily LeMay

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R.L. and M.K. King

Donald Lied

Earl and Corrine Lunde

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Anonymous

### Beatrice F. Perkins

Anonymous

### Ryan Plante

Anne Gullion

### Patty Rubbelke

Carol Jernberg and Anna Knaeble

### Mendon F. Schutt Family

Mendon F. Schutt Family Fund

### Russell H Rusty Smith

Anonymous

## In Honor

### Brett Dumke

Precision Gasket

### LaVina and Phil Fiola

Douglas and Jane Fiola

### The Marriage of Sandy and Howard Fisher

Jane Emerson

### Keith E. Hjellming

Anonymous

### Tom Johnson

Clare and Jerome Ritter

Sandra Williams

### Laurie Kramer

Janice Gepner and Eric Newman

### Kim Lutes

Dianne Lutes

### Timothy Norling

Jerry and Carol Norling

### Janet O'Neill

Margaret O'Neill Escabí and José Escabí

### Yin Simpson

Robert and Pearl Bergad

*This list is current as of November 12, 2010.*

*Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy.*

*If you note an error or omission, please accept our apologies. You can notify us of changes by calling*

*Nancy Paul at 612-843-4868, ext. 9.*

## Tom Murphy Golf Tournament

On Saturday, September 18, 2010, Tim Murphy hosted the 17th Annual Tom Murphy Memorial Golf Tournament to raise funds for MHAM. We are very thankful to Tim for his continued commitment to improving the lives of people with mental illnesses. The golf tournament took place at the Theodore Wirth Golf Course in Golden Valley followed by dinner and a silent auction at the Doubletree Hotel in St. Louis Park. The event raised over \$5,000 for MHAM's Advocacy and Education Programs. **Thank you Tim Murphy, golfers, and sponsors for making this event such a success!**



# MHAM's 71st Anniversary Virtual Celebration, Celebrating Recovery!

Each November, MHAM holds a gala event to celebrate our anniversary and to raise funds to support our Advocacy and Education programs. This year, we decided to let our sponsors and guests take a break before the busy holiday season by offering a virtual event. The Celebrating Recovery virtual event allows 100% of the sponsors' contribution to go directly to services. In addition, staff time and agency resources are spent on services directly related to our mission. On Saturday, November 13, 2010, we invited our sponsors to reflect on the progress that we've made in mental health and then have some fun doing whatever they enjoy most. Some sponsors held parties in their homes to recognize 71 years of mental health advocacy and education. Others made it a family night and took advantage of a free Saturday evening to enjoy dinner and a movie with their loved ones. However each sponsor spent the evening, we are very thankful for their support. Please join us in thanking them!

## *Celebrating Recovery Virtual Event Sponsors:*

### **BENEFACTOR**

Linda and Ken Cutler  
Joel and Laurie Kramer  
Matt and Katie Barrett Kramer  
RJW Foundation

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Pete Thelen and Lynne Gibeau  
Michael Trangle, MD and Barb Beuler  
Kaimay and Joseph Terry  
Bryn and Schelly Vaaler

### **DONORS**

Bruce Shnider and Patricia Strandness  
Carolyn Brue and Brian Legried

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*Don's Story* continued from page 1

from any public health insurance program. Though his monthly income would be zero, he would not be able to get assistance as long as he had assets. Another difficult decision needed to be made. Don worked hard to save money in his retirement account. As much as Don would prefer to keep his savings intact, he didn't have any other resources. Don and his advocate went through the steps of finding out how to cash out his retirement account to lower his assets and access public health insurance.

While working with his advocate, Don mentioned he had some relatives that might be willing to help him. He and the advocate discussed whether or not he was ready to reach out to his support system to ask for help. He decided that he could ask for help, and he made a list of people to call. Don and the advocate practiced different ways to approach the question.

At the end of the call the advocate sent Don an information packet that included phone numbers for sliding scale clinics, a prescription discount card, prescription assistance program information, organizations that provide free financial counseling to homeowners, utilities assistance programs, and a hotline to call for information about food shelves – resources that would help Don make the next decisions in his transition out of employment.

What had seemed like a frightening situation seemed more manageable for Don. He understood what the next steps were and knew he had a resource he could go back to if he faced more difficult decisions.

Support Groups

**DULUTH SUPPORT GROUP FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES**

1st and 3rd Thursday of each month, 5 – 7 pm, Miller Dwan Medical Center, Meeting Room 1 – 3, Lobby Level, East Side, *For more information, call MHAM at 1-800-862-1799.*

**REACH FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS (ALL IN GREATER MINNESOTA)**

Albert Lea	4th Thursday, 7 pm	Nancy Heidal	507-373-8090
Alexandria	1st Monday, 7 pm	Linda Fahlin	320-763-3466
Bemidji	3rd Tuesday, 7 pm	Robin Wold	218-444-6748
Milaca	1st Tuesday, 6:30 pm	Mary Fehring	320-983-6724
St. Cloud	1st Tuesday, 6 pm	Dale Anderson	320-240-3327



**DBSA SUPPORT GROUPS**

For people living with depression or bipolar disorder and their family members and friends

**TWIN CITIES**

Dakota County/Eagan <i>(formerly Apple Valley)</i>	1st and 3rd Tuesday, 7pm	Audrey Weiner	651-454-8329
Eden Prairie	1st, 3rd, and 5th Monday, 7pm	Jonathan Moerschall	612-210-1704
Maple Grove	1st and 3rd Thursday, 7-9 pm	Beth Bell	612-722-4185
Mounds View	2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7 pm	Steve	763-425-6505, ext. 515
St. Louis Park	2nd and 4th Thursday, 7 pm	Pam Karls	612-867-6863
St. Paul	1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesday, 7 pm	Bobby Nemer	952-938-8941
Woodbury	2nd and 4th Wednesday, 7 pm	Marjorie Sigel	651-698-0767
		Carol Treague	651-735-2345

**GREATER MINNESOTA**

Albany	Every Monday, 6:30pm		320-845-6104
Crosby	Every Thursday	John Pappas	218-546-6520
Rochester	1st and 3rd Monday, 5:30 pm	Sandy (daytime)	507-282-8372
	2nd, 4th and 5th Monday, 7 pm	Jonathan (evenings)	507-292-9679
St. Cloud	Every Thursday, 6 pm	Lynn Keller	320-240-3324
Walker	Every Friday, 7 pm	Beverly Brown	218-547-3905