



Silence Hurts. . . Step Up. . . Speak Out!

Inside

- MRN Representatives Visit U.S. Rep. Kenny Hulshof
- National Call-In Day Update
- St. Louis Hands Across the Bridge for Recovery
- Recovery Day at Busch Stadium
- Nominations Sought for Mental Health Champions
- Anti-Smoking Pill Shows Promise in Curbing Drinking

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MRN Working Toward the Future

Submitted by Brenda Schell, MRN Project Director

It is truly rewarding to be in a position to recognize and appreciate the energy and talents of the countless number of people who are making a difference in the recovery community. Change happens in our world because people care and get involved. But it takes more than caring to make needed change. It takes a vision, dedication, persistence and strong collaborative efforts! By working together in this fashion, we can make a difference, raise awareness and work toward a better understanding of addiction while removing the stigma and shame that surrounds recovery.

The MRN continues to work on ways to strengthen these efforts and we are asking for your active involvement in MRN. Our focus for this fiscal year will be on the following activities:

- **Workforce Development in the Addictions Field**—MRN will work diligently to promote career opportunities in the addictions field. MRN will play a vital role in educating and engaging individuals to consider this field as a career choice. MRN will collaborate with individuals, organizations and agencies to break down barriers that may deter choosing this career to help ensure that there is an adequate workforce to treat on demand.
- **Develop a Speaker's Bureau**—MRN will cultivate and develop a speaker's bureau, comprised primarily of those in personal recovery, who are willing to share their addiction struggles and recovery experiences with others.
- **Membership**—MRN will work toward recruiting new members representing people in recovery, their families and friends, treatment professionals and allies who share our vision.
- **Outreach Recovery/MRN Resource Person**—MRN will develop a statewide network of contacts well versed in recovery support to assist individuals in finding various recovery support resources in their local communities.
- **Program Sustainability**—MRN will research funding opportunities to sustain our efforts. We are open to suggestions on how to enhance this endeavor.

Continued on page 2

Check out our website
www.morecovery.org

MRN Representatives Visit U.S. Representative Kenny Hulshof

Submitted by Brenda Schell, MRN Project Director

MRN supports the federal legislation HR 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. This legislation would improve access to life saving mental health and addiction recovery services by limiting the discriminatory barriers that have kept many Americans from getting necessary care. If enacted, it would make it possible for individuals to get the help they need, restore the lives of families and communities, and save taxpayer dollars. Serious gaps exist in our nation's ability to help people with alcohol and drug problems recovery from their addiction, even though we know that helping people achieve long term recovery will safeguard our nation's health and build safer communities. It's time to end discriminatory practices that deny the same benefits for mental health and addiction care as they do for other physical conditions. MRN

representatives visited with U.S. Representative Kenny Hulshof on September 12 regarding this important parity legislation. Congressman Hulshof serves on the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health. MRN signed onto letters that were sent to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the House Committee on Ways and Means and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce voicing our support of HR 1424.

MRN also sent out an action alert encouraging all members, friends and allies of recovery to take part in the National Call-In Day to End Insurance Discrimination on September 18th. A toll free number was given and members were urged to call House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The message was simple. *Please schedule a vote on HR 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007 by mid October. The time has come for mental illness and addiction to be treated the same as other illnesses.*

Continued. . . MRN Working Toward the Future

- **Collaboration/Networking**—MRN will build and strengthen our network with various individuals, agencies and organizations that support the mission and vision of the MRN. We will strive to ignite dialogue between the recovery community and those seeking information about recovery.
- **Advocacy Efforts/Public Policy Education**—MRN will plan, implement and coordinate our first Advocacy Day at the Capitol (planned for April 30, 2008). We will inform and educate membership, elected officials, and other interested parties on MRN's legislative priorities. We will foster the recovering population's ability to become informed, active and effective participants in the political process at all levels. MRN will explore opportunities to raise the level of public awareness and achieve a more prominent presence on the legislative agenda.
- **Stigma Reduction**—MRN will educate the public about the damaging effects of stigma associated with addiction, work toward reducing internal

National Call-In Day Update

The National Call-In Day to Speaker Pelosi for mental health and addiction parity was a HUGE success! In fact, additional operators were hired to take more calls because of the overwhelming response! As a result of the number of calls, the toll free line was deactivated in the early afternoon.

Faces And Voices of Recovery (FAVOR)

provided an update on the parity legislation, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. "The Senate passed S. 558, addiction and mental health parity legislation on the unanimous consent calendar (9-18-07), a process where senators can avoid a full debate on bills. The legislation was scheduled for action when Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) agreed to remove his hold on the legislation. Action on the bill now moves to the House where the bill will be marked up before the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee with full Ways and Means Committee action tentatively scheduled for September 26th. Final House committee action is tentatively scheduled at the Energy and Commerce Committee for the first week in October. It is our hope the full House votes on the legislation before the end of October. Following passage by the House, we hope differences between the House and Senate version can be ironed out quickly and a bill be sent to the President before Thanksgiving."



Continued on page 3

Hands Across the Bridge for Recovery Held in St. Louis

Submitted by Dan Duncan, MRN Council Chair

On Saturday, September 15th groups of recovering individuals, family members, professionals and friends of recovery gathered all over the nation to celebrate National Recovery Month. One of Missouri's events took place that evening in St. Louis. *Hands Across the Bridge for Recovery* had over 400 individuals gather at the Chain of Rocks Bridge, where they celebrated with food, music, attendance prizes and speakers. Laurie Faulkerson and Delbert Boone were the featured speakers. The event was emceed by broadcaster Paul Cook from KMOV-TV and Y98. The event culminated in a lovely candlelight ceremony (okay, they were glow sticks) at dusk. *Hands Across the Bridge* was sponsored by over 20 different agencies and entities that deal with addiction disease, including the Missouri Recovery Network.

Recovery Day at Busch Stadium

Submitted by Rhonda Flynn, MRN Project Associate

September is National Recovery Month and members and friends of MRN celebrated together on September 23rd in St. Louis with Recovery Day at Busch Stadium. The 2006 World Champions took on the Houston Astros in an evening game.



The weather was great (much different from last year), the Cards won 4-3, and fun was had by all. We had 300+ MRN supporters and members in attendance. We were recognized during the game both on the big screen and on the air with KTRS.

We wish to thank those who supported MRN with ticket purchases and for being a part of this celebration of recovery.

Continued. . . MRN Working Toward the Future

stigma within the system, and advocate to the Department of Mental Health that public awareness and stigma reduction about mental health issues, including addiction, should be of high importance and priority.

- **Show Me Recovery**—To celebrate recovery, MRN will honor, encourage and support individuals on their recovery journey, and work toward changing the focus—from the illness of addiction to the hope and reality of recovery—by recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments and courage of those who are working on obtaining and sustaining recovery.

- **Annual Recovery Event**—MRN will plan and implement an annual event that increases awareness that recovery is possible and real, there are many paths to recovery, and that individuals in recovery need to be supported on an individual, community and statewide level.

If you are interested in one or several areas listed above and would like to help us achieve our goals for FY08, you may either go online at www.morecovery.org and complete the free membership/consent form or email rflynn@actmissouri.org. We need YOU to assist us as we support individuals on their journey to victorious recovery!

Nominations Sought for Mental Health Champions

The Department of Mental Health is seeking nominations for the 2008 Mental Health Champions awards to recognize three exceptional individuals who are truly mental health champions. Persons may be nominated in one of three categories:

1. an individual with a mental illness;
2. an individual with a developmental disability; or
3. an individual recovering from a substance or gambling addiction.

The winners will be recognized at a banquet in April, 2008 and receive a trip to Branson, including lodging, meals and tickets for shows.

Nomination forms may be obtained online at <http://www.dmh.mo.gov/news.htm> or by calling Rhonda Flynn at 573-635-6669 or emailing rflynn@actmissouri.org with your request. **The nomination deadline is November 15, 2007.**

The *MRN Newsletter* is a production of the Missouri Recovery Network. Contents may be reproduced to further take action toward recovery from substance and drug addiction. Contents are not official statements of the Missouri Recovery Network. The *MRN Newsletter* is published quarterly by the Missouri Recovery Network. The Missouri Recovery Network works in partnership with ACT Missouri and the Missouri Department of Mental Health's Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Anti-Smoking Pill Shows Promise in Curbing Drinking

A single pill appears to hold promise in curbing the urges to both smoke and drink, according to researchers trying to help people overcome addiction by targeting a pleasure center in the brain.

The drug, varenicline, is already sold to help smokers kick the habit. New research suggests it could gain a second use in helping heavy drinkers quit, too.

Pfizer, Inc. developed the drug specifically as a stop-smoking aid and has sold it in the U.S. since August under the brand name Chantix. Varenicline works by latching onto the receptors that nicotine binds to when inhaling cigarette smoke, an action that leads to the release of dopamine in the brain's pleasure centers. The drug blocks any inhaled nicotine from reinforcing that effect.

A study published recently suggests not just nicotine, but alcohol also acts on the same location of the brain. That means a drug like varenicline could make drinking less rewarding just as it does for smoking. Preliminary tests suggest that is the case. "The biggest thrill is that this drug, which has already proved safe for people trying to stop smoking, is now a potential drug to fight alcohol dependence," said Selena Bartlett, a neurologist with the Ernest Gallo Clinic Research Center at the University of California, who led the study. Researchers at the Center, along with the NIAAA, are planning the first studies of the drug's effectiveness in curbing alcohol cravings and dependence, Bartlett said.

