



WFMH

World Federation for Mental Health

PO BOX 807, OCCOQUAN, VA 22125 info@wfmh.com FAX: 703.490.6926

WFMH NEWSLETTER

World Health Organization

The World Health Organization's Executive Board, meeting in Geneva in January, has recommended that the World Health Assembly (the highest WHO body) adopt a Resolution on mental health at its annual meeting in May. The draft Resolution recognizes the wide prevalence of mental disorders, the limited treatment provided for them especially in low- and middle-income countries, and their close association with a number of other illnesses and with disadvantaged social conditions.

It notes that mental disorders account for 25.3% and 33.5% respectively of all years lived with a disability in low- and middle-income countries, and that between 76% and 85% of those affected with severe mental disorders receive no treatment (2004 figures).

WFMH sent a Statement drafted by Secretary General Vijay Ganju in support of the proposed Resolution to the January WHO Executive Board Meeting in Geneva. It was read to the meeting by the Federation's Main Representative in Geneva, Myrna Lachenal.

If the Executive Board's Resolution is adopted in May Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director-General of WHO, will submit a comprehensive mental health action plan to the World Health Assembly in 2013. The Resolution urges Member States to develop their own comprehensive strategies in collaboration with WHO, covering not only treatment but measures "as appropriate" to promote public awareness, tackle stigma and major modifiable risks, provide for mental health promotion, and adopt interventions for the prevention or early identification of disorders. The Member States are asked to "give appropriate priority" to mental health and, on the key matter of budget support, "to allocate appropriate resources in this regard."

Throughout 2011 the World Federation for Mental Health and many other organizations were active advocates for increased attention to mental health in WHO strategies for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

Mental Health Conference in Perth, Australia, 17-19 October 2012; Abstract Deadline 31 March

The abstract deadline for the Seventh World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders is 31 March 2012. This is also the deadline for early registration. WFMH is a founding partner of this conference series and includes promotion and prevention among the Federation's core values. Details of the conference program, keynote speakers, and online abstract submission can be found at the conference website (www.perth2012.com).

Australia has been a leader in mental health promotion and the adoption of interventions to prevent or lower the risk of mental and behavioral disorders. The program will include the latest developments in the field, both nationally and from the panel of international speakers.

The program also incorporates an aboriginal mental health conference held each year in Perth, providing an exceptional chance to learn about the special concerns of indigenous communities.

World Mental Health Day, 10 October 2012

The theme selected by WFMH for World Mental Health Day 2012 is "MAKING THE CONNECTION: Depression and Co-morbidity." The Day is used by mental health associations and agencies around the world for public education about mental illness, and to direct attention to needs and opportunities for improved care. Information and material will be posted on the WFMH website (www.wfmh.org). The website also contains reports from past events in many countries that illustrate the ways the Day is used to convey each year's message. Government health departments launch campaigns, and local organizers arrange talks, marches, signs on billboards, and art displays. More and more use is made of the Internet for dialogues and blogs on the year's topic, but at the other end of the spectrum, mental health messages have also been carried aloft on huge balloons, and carried on banners on the sides of camels and elephants.

World Mental Health Day 2012 is the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Day by WFMH. The concept originated with the Deputy Secretary General, Richard Hunter, who envisioned it as a way to draw international, national and local organizations together in an event that would have global reach. Richard Hunter was a quiet and determined man, devoted to the mental health cause. His imaginative vision about the possibilities was amply fulfilled – and shows how

one person can make a difference. The Federation hopes that the 20th anniversary will be celebrated along with this year's theme.

UN Commission on the Status of Women

The 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women was held at the UN from 27 February to 9 March. The priority theme for the meeting was "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges." (The website for the 56th Session is at www.unwomen.org/how-we-work/csw/csw-56/)

In addition to the official meeting of member governments, a lively NGO CSW Forum is held, attracting representatives from organizations around the world. This year the Forum featured nearly 300 side events, including a well-attended meeting arranged by Nancy Wallace, WFMH's Main Representative at the UN, on "Challenges and Opportunities Impacting the Mental Health of Rural Women." The panel included Henia Dakkak, Technical Advisor to the United Nations Population Fund; Mandisa Monakali, Executive Director of *Ilitha Labantu*, an NGO in South Africa dedicated to the elimination of violence against women and children; and Chueh Chang, a former WFMH Board member who is a university researcher on Asian women's mental health. Dr. Chang also led a side event on "Capacity Building and Mental Health Promotion of Rural Women."

The 2013 session of the Commission on the Status of Women will address the important theme of "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls."

Mental Health Initiatives in Singapore

Singapore has announced a new, comprehensive mental health plan to provide services within the community, integrated with primary care and long-term care services. Primary care doctors will provide counseling and psychotherapy services; the number of beds available for psychiatric care will be increased; and an expanded provision will also be made for rehabilitation services and sheltered accommodation. More professionals will be trained, and a greater emphasis will be placed on public education.

The Health Promotion Board of Singapore has launched programs to support the mental health of young people. The "Youth Support Youth" project is the first training program to be offered in the city-state to equip young people to provide peer support. It is open to young people between the ages of 17 and 25, and aims to provide them with a set of skills to help others in need of assistance. The Board is presenting this program in partnership with the Institute of Mental Health's youth-oriented Community Health Assessment Team, Silver Ribbon (Singapore) and Samaritans of Singapore (SOS).

The Board has also launched an online kit for young people, “Bounce Back Stronger,” that includes informative stories and videos, peer support tools and techniques, and an eight-question checklist to provide youths with an indication of their current level of resilience.

Film from South Africa

During the WFMH World Congress in Cape Town last October, physician and filmmaker Delaney Ruston was filming at the Congress and in a nearby township to record international viewpoints on mental illness. One of the first products from her work in South Africa is a short (five-minute) film called “GO AWAY EVIL: Buyiswa’s Mental Health Story” that explores the options for mental health care in the township. The film can be viewed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtjvr6Vnql4>

Mental Health Initiatives in Canada

Parallel to the work of the Mental Health Commission in Canada, several of the Canadian provinces have launched programs in recent years for mental health promotion and prevention of mental disorders. Manitoba hosted an invitational Mental Health Summit in Winnipeg on 15-16 February 2012 to bring delegates from across Canada for a program on *Mental Health Promotion and Mental Illness Prevention for All*. Manitoba’s provincial mental health strategy released in 2011 placed mental health promotion as its top goal. Current initiatives include Healthy Child Manitoba, a network of strategies to promote children’s development; a media campaign linking physical activity and mental wellbeing; an initiative linking mental wellbeing to chronic disease prevention activities; a healthy aging strategy; and a youth suicide prevention strategy focused on aboriginal young people, using school- and community-based programs.

Honors for our Board Members

On 20 December 2011 the work of Professor George Christodoulou, WFMH’s President Elect, was recognized with a celebration in the Aula Magna of the University of Athens, where he was presented with a festschrift volume of more than 1200 pages honoring his long record of academic and humanitarian contributions.

Board member Gabriel Obukohwo Ivbijaro was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire in the New Year Honours List, for services to the National Health Service in Britain. Dr. Ivbijaro is a general practitioner (primary care doctor) and clinic director in Walthamstow, London, where he has integrated mental and physical health care for a disadvantaged community.