



SWPAG E-Newsletter



CHAIR'S CORNER

Our Time Has Come: Leaders, Advocates, and Champions Past, Present, and Future

By CDR Indira Harris, LCSW, BCD



If there is anything that honoring Social Work Month in 2018 has taught me, it is that we remain at the forefront of the discussion on all the issues that affect our profession, those we serve, and the public health of our nation as a whole. Social Workers in the Corps not only stand on the shoulders of giants who historically paved the way of our profession, but also the Social Workers who came before us in the Corps. The way we can continue to do them justice is to seek out innovative ways to enhance service delivery, identify and address systemic inefficiencies, demonstrate our subject matter expertise in relevant topics that affect the public health of our communities, and increase our impact on developing, influencing, and changing policies that hinder our ability to more effectively serve others. Our stature within the Corps continues to be elevated based on demands that have been placed on our service in areas where we excel (i.e. behavioral health, disaster case management, etc.). Do not take your foot off the gas; keep pushing forward; keep impacting communities, regions, our nation, and the international community; do not take 'no', 'it can't be done', or 'this is not going to work' for an answer. Instead qualify that with a response of "YES – I know what needs to be done...and I have the knowledge base and expertise (or access to it) to make it happen!" We are not on the cusp of something great – WE ARE GREAT! Continue to go forward and do great things, Corps Social Workers! We have a tremendous voice individually, but collectively the thunder we produce is unstoppable. Do not sit passively on the sidelines. Actively participate and demonstrate your leadership in SWPAG & HSPAC Subcommittees. Pace yourself and do your part to enhance the initiatives that we have put forth in 2018. Here are some of the activities we are currently working on:

1. The development of a comprehensive Social Work Capacity/Capability Survey

2. Social Work White Paper – detailing wide-range capabilities of a SW Officer in the Corps (Companion piece to #1)
3. Homeless Veteran National Outreach Campaign in several areas in almost every corner of the country
4. Nationwide Baby Shower collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Center for Women Veterans – impacting over 2400 Veteran families
5. Development of a formal Social Work Internship Program – first of its kind for Social Workers in the Corps
6. Creation of a seamless awards process to ensure timely submission for PAG awards

#TheTimesNow

MAY is Mental Health Awareness Month

Do You Focus on Fitness #4Mind4Body?

Mental health is essential to everyone’s overall health and well-being, and mental illnesses are common and treatable. So much of what we do physically impacts us mentally –it’s important to pay attention to both your physical health and your mental health, which can help you achieve overall wellness and set you on a path to recovery. This **May is Mental Health Month**; SWPAG is raising awareness about the connection between physical health and mental health, through the theme *Fitness #4Mind4Body*.

The campaign is meant to educate and inform individuals about how eating healthy foods, gut health, managing stress, exercising, and getting enough sleep can go a long way in making you healthy all around. A healthy lifestyle can help to prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions like depression and anxiety, as well as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other chronic health problems. It can also play a big role in helping people recover from these conditions.

Stamp Out Stigma
@StampStigma

Did you know May is **#MentalHealthMonth**? Join us every Wednesday in May at 2pm EST for **#SOSChat**!

MAY 2018: #SOSCHAT SCHEDULE

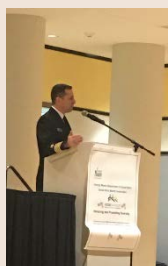
May 2	May 9	May 16	May 23	May 30
at 2pm ET	at 2pm ET	at 2pm ET	at 2pm ET	at 2pm ET
Reducing the Stigma of Mental Illness	Suicide Prevention	Opioid Addiction Prevention	Mental Health & People of Color	Whole Body Health
Co-host:	Co-host:	Co-host:	Co-hosts:	Co-hosts:

Taking good care of your body is part of a before Stage Four approach to mental health. Getting the appropriate amount of exercise can help control weight, improve mental health, and help you live longer and healthier. Recent research is also connecting your nutrition and gut health with your mental health. Sleep also plays a critical role in all aspects of our life and overall health. Getting a good night's sleep is important to having enough physical and mental energy to take on daily responsibilities. And we all know that stress can have a huge impact on all aspects of our health, so it’s important to take time to focus on stress-reducing activities like meditation or yoga. SWPAG wants everyone to know that mental illnesses are real, and recovery is always the goal. Living a healthy lifestyle may not be easy, but by looking at your overall health every day – both physically and mentally – you can go a long way in ensuring that you focus on your *Fitness #4Mind4Body*. For more information, visit www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may.

SOCIAL WORKERS FRONT & CENTER

George Mason University 3rd Annual SW Month Event Showcases SWPAG Members

By LCDR Chad Wheeler, LCSW, BCD



The U. S. Public Health Services Social Workers celebrated Social Work Month in collaboration with George Mason University Department of Social Work for the third year on March 16, 2018. This year's subject matter was **Leaders/Champions/Advocates; Honoring and Promoting Diversity.**

DR. Molly Davis of GMU co-facilitated this event with LCDR Chad Wheeler. "We are honoring our profession and the dedicated and committed social work professionals, Officers and students who contribute to the lives of so many people." -Dr. Molly Davis



The program highlighted two keynote speakers, RADM Peter Delany and CAPT Matt Kleinman and also featured panel presentations on:

- Developing Psychological Health Fitness and Resilience
- Promoting Child Well Being and Safety
- Building a Career in Leadership in Social Work
- Working in Inter-professional Settings
- Emergency Mental Health and Disasters
- The Global Impact of Social Work
- Wellness and Self Care Techniques



Panelist included LCDR Cara Alexander, CDR Tarsha Cavanaugh, CDR Marivic Fields, CDR Anthony Johnson, CDR Jamie Seligman, and LCDR Chad Wheeler.

This event was by all accounts a huge success. Social Work CEU's were offered and plans are in the works for next year's event. Don't miss it!!

Social Workers Stand Tall During National Social Work Month 2018!

By LT Jamillah Bynum, LCSW, BCD

In March, The Stakeholders and Community Engagement Community launched the Social Work Month Initiative to commemorate National Professional Social Work Month. The objective is to use National Social Work Month as a way to celebrate and showcase the great things PHS social workers are doing. We must continuously strive to reinforce the valuable contributions that social workers provide to the Corps, particular in he the midst of budget cuts, reorganization, etc. As social workers, we are leaders, advocates, and champions and want others to be aware of our strengths!



LCDR Loquita Roberts, FRC OIC/ED Social Worker at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, partnered with registered pharmacist Robert Rohrbaugh to facilitate a presentation on the opioid epidemic at NICO in support of Social Work Month. LCDR's presentation educated 43 mental health providers on the importance of communication and relationship building between patients, their beneficiaries, and providers. It also stressed the importance of social workers being advocates for patient and empowering them to advocate for themselves (see Feature Article, below)

LT Jamillah Bynum, Clinical Social Worker at the National Institutes of Health, along with the members of the NIH Social Work Department Staff Development Committee, coordinated a ceremony in honor of Social Work Month. Major General James K. Gilman, M.D., U.S. Army (Retired), Chief Executive Office of National Institutes of Health Clinical Center, and Ms. Colleen McGowan, Executive Officer of the Clinical Center, attended the cake cutting ceremony, read the National Association of Social Workers' Social Work Month Proclamation and expressed gratitude for the contributions and impact social workers have made upon the Clinical Center.

LT Delice Echols, a newly commissioned officer and graduate of OBC 101, has already begun showing her leadership skills. She and LCDR Vickie Stowers, Clinical Social Workers at Immigration and Customs Enforcement Health Service Corps –Krome, located in Miami, Florida, provided a presentation to the Medical Unit staff regarding the dynamics of a clinical Social Worker. LT Echols also created a "What is a Social Worker Flyer" that was disseminated to the unit. The nursing staff provided lunch, cake and ice cream to express their appreciation for the officers and all they do.

The Stake Holders and Community Engagement Subcommittee would like to continue to put you in the "spotlight". As a result, a new initiative has been created. SOCIAL WORK SPOTLIGHT. Social Workers are amazing people that are basic agents for positive change, advocates, injustice fighters and so much more. We must show our value and worth and Social Work Spotlight will provide an opportunity to SPOTLIGHT you and be featured in SWPAG newsletter. We want you to brag on yourself. FMI: Email LCDR Loquita Roberts, loquita.d.roberts.mil@mail.mil, or LT Jamillah Bynum: jamillah.bynum@nih.gov .

**SERVICES ACCESS TEAM (SAT) #5:
SOCIAL WORKER RECRUITMENT**

Services Access Team (SAT) #5 is recruiting a limited number of Social Workers in the Commissioned Corps.

- Are you a Social Worker looking to join a Response Team?
- Are you a skilled Case Manager?
- Are you interested in serving “at-risk” individuals and populations?
- Are you able to deploy within 36 hours of notification?
- Are you able to speak another language, preferably Spanish?

Yes, yes, yes, yes? Then, look no further!

If you are interested in joining SAT #5, please send your CV to [LCDR Aisha Faria](#) and [LCDR Iman Martin](#) by **MAY 16, 2018**.

CDR Tarsha Cavanaugh, Team Commander

CDR Qiana Coffey, Deputy Team Commander

SAT Fact Sheet:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/RedDOG/FactSheets/SAT_Fact_Sheet_FINAL.pdf

LIFELONG LEARNING

Continuing Education Resources for Professional Development

By LCDR Sean Bennett, LCSW, BCD

This month we are highlighting online resources on health systems improvement and public health effectiveness.



1. **SAMHSA Recovery to Practice (RTP):** Find educational curricula and training to help build and strengthen a recovery-oriented workforce within and across disciplines. Six (6) professional organization work with Recovery to Practice (RTP) to develop educational curricula and training material that promote recovery principles within their specialty areas. Applicable to both specific disciplines and a multidisciplinary behavioral health and integrated workforce, these curricula may be used in academic settings and for professional development activities. Access the curricula to learn more about the participating organizations. Click the link FMI:
<https://www.samhsa.gov/recovery-to-practice/rtp-curricula#peer-specialists>
2. **The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)** provides access to the IHI's 'Open School' to support you in your quality improvement efforts. The Open School offers essential training and tools in an [online, educational community](#) to help you and your team deliver excellent, safe care and to build core skills in improvement, safety, and leadership. The Open School offers more than 30 online courses in quality, safety, leadership, the Triple Aim, and patient-centered care. FMI please click the following link
<https://www.ihi.org/layouts/15/ihi/userregistration/userregistration.aspx?displayuserreg=full&ReturnURL=http://app.ihi.org/lmsspa/#/validatePasscode>
3. The **CDC** has a free CE program known as **Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA)**. The purpose of COCA continuing education opportunities is to increase clinicians' knowledge and competencies of threats to the public's health, their effects on human populations, and evaluation and management strategies of these threats. COCA continuing education is free. **How to earn continuing education (CE):**
 - a. Go to the [CDC Training & Continuing Education Online System](#).
 - b. Log in as a participant. If this is your first visit, you will need to register and establish a login name and password
 - c. Click on "Search and Register"
 - d. Under "keyword search" find the course you are interested in by entering:
 - e. "WC2286" for calls hosted in last 30 days
 - f. "WD2286" for calls hosted more than 30 days ago
 - g. Select your course
 - h. Complete evaluation
 - i. Pass posttest at 50%
 - j. Print your CE certificate

Consider signing up today for these professional development opportunities. Hope to see you around in the virtual classroom!

Feature Article

Social Workers: Leaders, Advocates, Champions

By Bernard S. Little WRNMMC Command Communications (reprinted here from

www.dcmilitary.com/journal/features/social-workers-leaders-advocateschampions/article_6c81f364-201a-5db2-8974-e1852220fd37.html)

What role do social workers play in the current opioid epidemic? “We need to advocate for our patients, and encourage our patients to advocate for themselves,” said U.S. Public Health Service Lt. Cmdr. Loquita Roberts, a licensed clinical social worker at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. She stressed the importance of relationship-building between providers, beneficiaries and their families, as well as the critical role that multi-disciplinary teams play in the care of patients and their outcomes. Walter Reed Bethesda registered pharmacist David Rohrbaugh agreed that combating the opioid epidemic requires a team approach and social workers are key members of multidisciplinary teams impacting patient outcomes.

“In your jobs and what you do daily, you can create a relationship with the patient that oftentimes a nurse or a doctor can’t, and that might be the difference between someone transitioning to a misuse point [of opioids] or not,” Rohrbaugh added. Roberts explained it’s important for social workers to know the signs for opioid addiction, which can include dramatic shifts in moods from sleepiness to euphoria, nausea, confusion, constricted pupils, slowed breathing, constipation, slurred speech, itching, isolation and doctor shopping (multiple prescriptions from different doctors). Long-term effects of opioid abuse can result in organ damage and eventually, death, she furthered. “We need to improve prescribing of opioids, expand treatment of addiction, and reduce access to illegal opioids,” Rohrbaugh stated, adding that while the United States accounts for only 4.3 percent of the world’s population, U.S. consumption of the world’s natural and synthetic opiates is at least 85 percent. Alternatives to opioid use for pain relief can include acupuncture, physical therapy, meditation, massage therapy, chiropractic and cognitive behavioral therapy, among others therapies, the pharmacist and social worker explained.

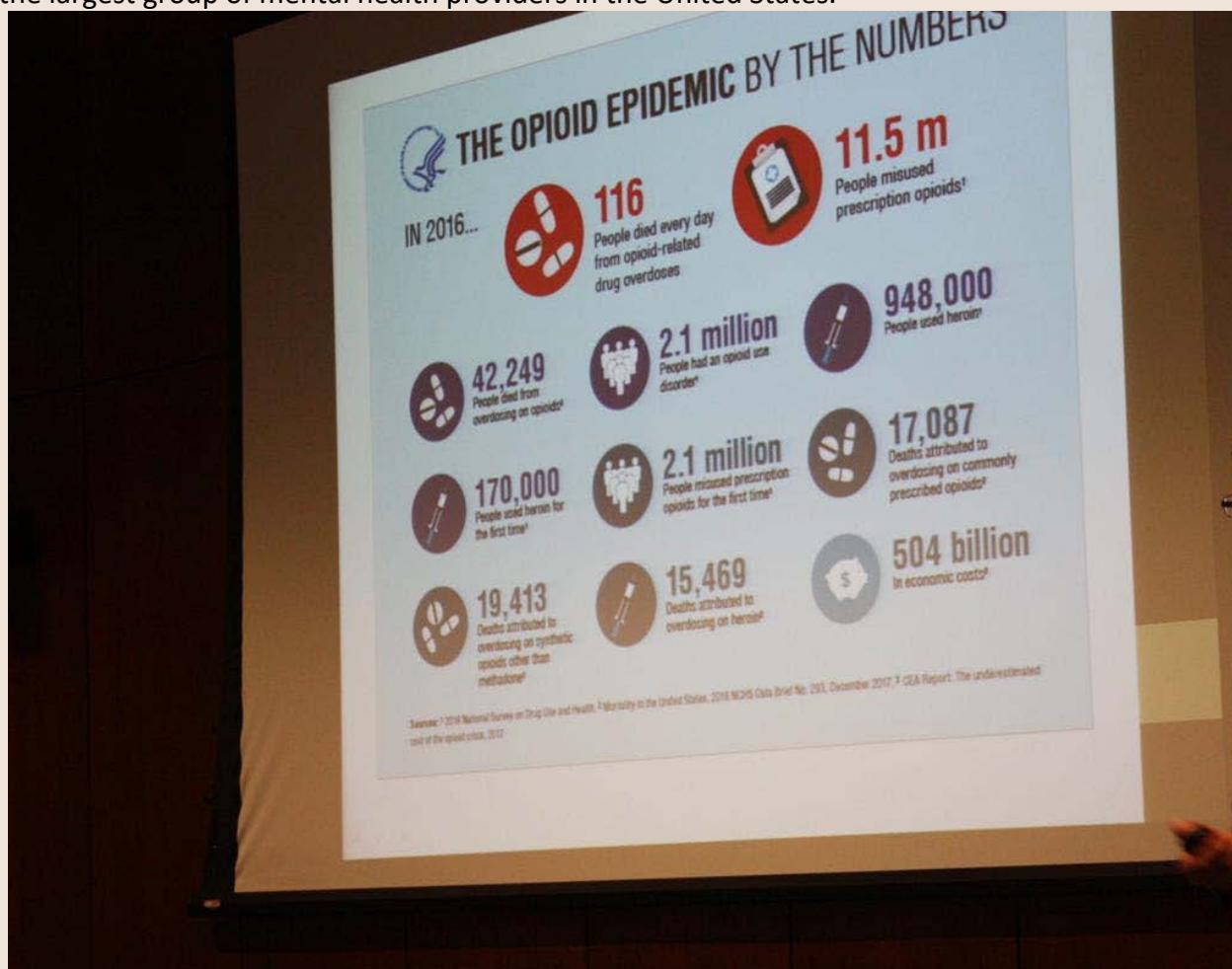
Roberts and Rohrbaugh were among a number of speakers who discussed various topics focused on this year’s theme for National Social Work Month during three day-long symposiums at WRNMMC. Observed annually during March, this year’s theme for NSWM highlighted social workers as leaders, advocates and champions.

Stacey Springer, also a licensed clinical social worker at WRNMMC, stated that social workers advocate for their clients in obtaining “fair and equitable access to public services and benefits,” as well as “equal treatment and protection under the law, and they “challenge injustices that affect the vulnerable and disadvantaged.” Springer provides individual and family supportive counseling for children, adolescent and young adults, as well as their family members who have been diagnosed with cancer at WRNMMC. She also provides patient and parent education regarding advanced care planning, which includes advanced directives, guardianship and powers of attorney. The social worker explained a common goal of those in her profession is to help their “clients become independent and exercise influence and control over their own lives.” She added social workers also advocate for their clients even when the client

doesn't always agree with the social worker. "We can't control [our clients'] choices or behaviors, but we still advocate for them based on what we determine to be the [best] recommendation. We want to enhance their well-being."

Army Lt. Col. Liquori Etheridge, another licensed clinical social worker at WRNMMC, agreed, adding, "As a member of a multidisciplinary team, [social workers] conduct routine, acute assessments and follow-up evaluations and treatment in the form of individual, family and group therapy for children, adolescents and families. The Army officer explained that as leaders and champions in health care, social workers "have an obligation to advocate for the needs of individual, families and positively impact communities." Social workers contribute to military readiness by helping to ensure service members are mentally and emotionally fit to serve, Etheridge added. The lieutenant colonel stated, "[Social workers] preserve the fighting force by providing service members centered behavioral health care services. "Social workers should incorporate the organizational mission, values and goals combined with the social and psychology aspects and principles associated with the field of social work," Etheridge stated.

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, there are approximately 680,000 social work professionals who act as advocates, champion and leaders for those whom they serve throughout the United States. In addition, the National Association of Social Workers states that clinical social workers are the largest group of mental health providers in the United States.





SAT 4 Wants You!



During a disaster response be a part of a team and help those in need!

Join SAT 4 where we take an active role in Patient Movement and Disaster Case Management.

If you have experience with or willing to gain skills in:

- 1. Performing Needs Assessment;**
- 2. Clinical Care Coordination;**
- 3. Continuity/Transition Management or;**
- 4. Psycho -Social Management;**

SAT 4 is the team for you!!

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Please submit articles for future publications of the SWAG Newsletter:

- LCDR Sean Bennett – Chair SWPAG Communication Subcommittee at sean.bennett@ihs.gov
- LCDR Lorerner Brayboy, Co-Chair SWPAG Communication Subcommittee at LBrayboy@hrsa.gov
- LT Dierdra Oretade-Branch , SWPAG Executive Secretary at Doretade@bop.gov