



V A C C : W I N T E R 2 0 1 0

# Virginia Association of Clinical Counselors

## President's Corner

by Theresa Johnson-Sion, Ph.D., LPC



It is a privilege to be elected to serve as President of the Virginia Association of Clinical Counselors. To be sought out by your peers is an honor within itself, and I am humbled by the recognition.

As a Licensed Professional Counselor who recently completed the Doctorate program in Christian Counseling, I'm excited and confident that I can be an asset to the organization. I look forward to representing the qualities and values of the profession in which so many of us believe and invest our time and energy on a daily basis, in an effort to provide meaning and understanding.

I am honored to work with a dedicated team of skilled professionals, who are committed to furthering and protecting our profession. As clinicians, we understand the challenges and the important issues facing our members. VACC Board Members serve as your liaison to the Virginia Board of Counseling, AMCHA, the Fair Access Coalition on Testing, and the leadership of other provider groups within and outside our state.

VACC continues to be dedicated to providing professional development through a variety of workshops, including our Clinical Supervision and Powerhouse Practice workshops, which derived from the vision of our past presidents. Under their leadership and direction, our program of workshops has been successful for many years.

As president, I am committed to continuing in the footsteps of many great presidents who have dedicated themselves to serve our members. Our past-president, Joan Normandy-Dolberg, deserves special recognition for selflessly guiding the organization in expanding our exposure through our website and newsletter.

As I prepare for my presidency, I am excited about the opportunity to work closely with the Board of Counselors and AMCHA to better serve our members. My goal is to continue protecting the organization from discrimination and inappropriate reimbursement practices by industry, government, and managed care. I also seek to ensure that we receive the appropriate recognition we deserve as licensed professionals.

As we continue in our professional development for the upcoming year, it is important to get involved on the local level. VACC has survived over the last 30 years through the dedication of members who have a passion for our profession. It is important to remember that the organization is only as successful as its membership. I strongly encourage each member to become actively involved in service and membership recruitment. With your help, we can develop more and more programs and services to help our membership.

### Upcoming Events:

**January 22**-Richmond-Supervision Training, Session 2, with Penny Norford

**January 29**-Virginia Beach-Building a Powerhouse Practice

**February** – Winter Professional Development Symposium

**July 15-17**-AMHCA's Annual Conference, Creative Therapy, Creating Change, Boston MA.

## ***BUILDING A POWERHOUSE PRACTICE***

Friday, January 29, 2010  
Virginia Beach Public Library  
4100 Virginia Beach Boulevard, Virginia Beach, VA 23452 (757) 385-0150

*PowerHouse Practice Workshops* are designed to introduce specialties with low barriers to entry that enhance clinical skills and provide the clinician with additional income

### ***Morning Sessions*** 9:00-12:00

Hypnosis – Clayton C. Maguire, LPC  
Psychological Testing – Michael E. Nahl, LPC  
Christian Counseling – Rosemarie Hughes, Ph.D.

*Lunch on your Own*  
12:00 – 1:30  
Nearby restaurants are within walking distance

### ***Afternoon Sessions*** 1:30- 4:30

Working with Chronic Pain Patients – Kirsten Herman, R.N., LPC  
Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing - Robin Shelton, LCSW  
Clinical Supervision – Suzan K. Thompson, Ph.D., LPC

6 hours of continuing education will be available through NBCC

### ***Fees***

<b>VACC Member</b>	\$75 prior to January 25 <sup>th</sup> ; \$85 at the Door
<b>Non VACC Member</b>	\$95 prior to January 25 <sup>th</sup> ; \$105 at the Door
<b>Student</b>	\$45 prior to January 25 <sup>th</sup> ; \$55 at the Door



Register on our website ([www.vacc.org](http://www.vacc.org)) or send the attached registration form to:  
Roger Snapp-Laplace, VACC Treasurer, 1115 First Street, SW, Roanoke, Virginia 24016 Roger can be reached at [ccs5@msn.com](mailto:ccs5@msn.com) or 540-343-0004. Questions about the conference or nearby lodging can be addressed to Michael Nahl at [michaelnahl@cox.net](mailto:michaelnahl@cox.net) or 757-456-1279.

**VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL COUNSELORS**  
**WINTER 2010**

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

**Anna Epperson, Chair**

In these tough economic times, membership in our professional organization is more important than ever. As the state chapter of the AMHCA we lobby on both the state and national level to encourage our legislators to pass legislation to protect and improve our profession. We also work with managed care companies to improve coverage and increase payments for services. You cannot afford to be out there alone...join us in our work to help all counselors throughout Virginia!

As of December 20, 2009, VACC has 189 members, a decrease from our high of 235 in May 2009. These members include 156 clinicians, 3 regular members, 2 retired members, and 28 student members.

We hope to continue to increase student membership through providing a scholarship to several students who are working through licensure to pay for supervision.

You can renew your membership on-line at <http://www.vacc.org/amember/signup.php> If you have any questions please contact me at [anna.epperson@yahoo.com](mailto:anna.epperson@yahoo.com).

**VACC BALLOT 2009-2010**

*Please vote for the candidate of your choice:*

<b>President</b>	_____	TERESA JOHNSON-DION
	_____	_____ (write-in)
<b>Secretary</b>	_____	KATE MOORE
	_____	_____ (write-in)
<b>Treasurer</b>	_____	ROGER SNAPP-LAPLACE
	_____	_____ (write-in)
<b>President-Elect</b>	_____	ED NAVIS
	_____	_____ (write-in)

***Please return ballots to:***

VACC Election  
C/o Michael Nahl  
P.O. Box 7066  
Virginia Beach, VA 23457

FAX 757-436-0023    or    [michaelnahl@cox.net](mailto:michaelnahl@cox.net)

**VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL COUNSELORS**  
**WINTER 2010**

**CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS**  
**2010 Winter Professional Development Symposium**  
**Richmond, VA**

The Virginia Association of Clinical Counselors is pleased to sponsor a professional development symposium in February 2010. The theme of the conference is Challenges and Innovations in the Practice of Clinical Counseling

Presentations May Include (but not be limited to):

1. New directions or challenges in delivering counseling services
2. Professional development and recruitment practices
3. Emerging service provision issues
4. Effects of specialization on professional identity
5. Professional empowerment
6. Emerging ethical and legal issues
7. Innovations in career practices

The format of the proposal must include:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Title of Presentation</li><li>2 Names, credentials, address, phone and email address of the presenters</li><li>3 Brief biographic sketch of each presenter (200 word maximum)</li><li>4 Learning objectives</li><li>5 Abstract: typed, double spaced(150 words maximum)</li><li>6 The presenter(s) are required to type the following statement under the abstract and initial the same: " I understand that if accepted, the abstract may be reprinted by VACC in any of its official publications. I am responsible for my travel, room, and</li></ol> | <p>expenses associated with my presentation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7 Presentation: 1.5 hour</li><li>8 Audio-visual needs: VACC will provide a screen, sound system, and overhead projector. The presenter will be responsible for providing any other equipment.</li><li>9 Submission is due January 28, 2009 and may be e-mailed to Ed Navis at <a href="mailto:navis_ed@yahoo.com">navis_ed@yahoo.com</a></li></ol> |
|--|---|

Our Hampton Roads chapter hosted dynamic, information-packed fall professional development training. The presentation, led by Suzanne Getz Gregg, PhD, LPC (our chapter's treasurer) and assisted by Kelly G. Scharver, LPC and Allison R. Graham, MS, was a fascinating look at "Examining the Evidence in Evidence-Based Counseling Practices". The 18 members and guests of HRACC in attendance enjoyed networking, fellowship and snacks provided by Patricia Elkins after the 2-hour workshop.

The Hampton Roads Association plans a Celebration of California's recognizing professional counselors at a festive social to be held in Virginia Beach immediately after the VACC "Building Power House Practice" training on January 29<sup>th</sup>. Our Winter professional development training will feature Suzan K. Thompson, Ph.D., LPC presenting on "Complementary, Alternative & Integrative Therapies" in March. Any interested VACC member may contact Joe New, LPC, President of HRACC for membership or meeting details at [joenbarb@gmail.com](mailto:joenbarb@gmail.com) or 757-536-7412.

## **CLINICAL DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

If you are a licensed provider of outpatient mental health services involved in billing clients and insurance companies for your services, you are required by regulatory law as well as by provider agreement to document your services by keeping an up-to-date hard copy or an electronic medical record (i.e., EMR), as well as billing record. When you enter into a legal agreement with any insurance company, including Medicaid and Medicare, there are published clinical recordkeeping guidelines available to guide you in your efforts to document your services. In the event of an audit, not meeting these guidelines could have severe consequences. The most severe could be criminal prosecution for any obvious pattern of fraudulent billing for services that have not been provided. In any instance of insufficient documentation, or lack of documentation, the insurance company will require full reimbursement of any payment for that session or service.

Depending on the extent of the problem that may be uncovered by an audit, the insurance company could terminate your provider agreement, and file a complaint with the licensure board which could result in suspension or revocation of your license, and involve requirements for reinstatement, unless you are facing criminal charges.

Recently, Medicaid of Virginia sent notices to all enrolled providers that they have contracted with a third-party organization to audit providers. Information disseminated at regional meetings indicated that they use specialized audit software to mine for atypical billing patterns to red-flag providers, or provider groups, for audits. Audit procedures can involve a request for copies of selected records for a specified period of

billing, which they indicated will extend from July 2008 through July 2009. These audits will be different from the typical site visits in which the insurance agent may engage in a cursory review to determine that dates of service and clinical documentation match billing records. Audits can be implemented by mailing of records selected in advance by Medicaid, or can be randomly selected records in the event of an onsite audit of any or all records. Medicaid audits are typically very stringent, as are their requirements for clinical documentation. If you are lacking a quarterly review (quarterly reviews are required every six sessions or every nine months, whichever comes first), payments for those services beyond the date of the missing quarterly review could result in request for repayment of all of the subsequent services. In addition, there have been instances in which a lack of appropriate clinician signature and date results in a repayment requirement. All billed services must meet medical necessity requirements.

The point of this article is to make you aware of your responsibilities when you enter into a provider agreement. Many clinicians see recordkeeping as an annoyance, but good recordkeeping is in fact your best insurance in the event of any audit, and hopefully will protect you financially, legally, and ethically.

If you would like to obtain further information about documentation requirements, visit the Virginia Medicaid website using the following link to locate the appropriate manual and clinical documentation requirements:

<http://websrvr.dmas.virginia.gov/ProviderManuals/Default.aspx>



## **WEBSITE UPDATES**

By Michael Nahl, Communications Committee Chair

Have you looked at our website ([www.vacc.org](http://www.vacc.org)) lately? We have redesigned it to be more user-friendly, adding some great links, to the Board of Counseling and the Department of Health Professions, to nearby state clinical counseling associations, to AMHCA, to Virginia graduate counseling programs, insurance companies, and to all the state and federal legislators. Our website is a handy site for connecting to other places you might want to go.

For the students, we have a separate page that includes links to the state counseling programs, Board mentors, and a list of clinical supervisors. By the way, any VACC members who provide supervision can list themselves on our site at no charge. You can also advertise yourself and your practice for free on the Member's Spotlight, which is easy to complete.

Updates on federal and state legislation affecting LPCs can be found on the home page and the You Can Help sections of the website.

Looking for a job? Want to advertise a job position you have available? Need or want to rent office space? We can help. Look for the Job Opportunities section.

Want to renew your membership or become a member? You can do that online. You can also register for our conferences and pay for them over the website.

The history of our profession and VACC can also be found on the website, as can recent newsletters and our bylaws.

There's much more. And don't forget to tell a colleague about us! [www.vacc.org](http://www.vacc.org)

## **INTRODUCING NEW BOARD MEMBER, BETSY HICKOK, LPC**

Betsy Hickok trained at the Pacific Graduate School of Psychology in Palo Alto, California. Betsy provided intensive in-home family therapy for at risk youth and their families for three years with the Institute for Family Centered Services. More recently she was the Regional Director of Child and Family Guidance with Specialized Youth Services of Virginia in Petersburg. While in that job she revitalized an ailing in-home therapy department. This year Betsy was a program supervisor with Clinical Alternatives working with their management team and running the in-home family therapy program there. Due to budget cuts Betsy was 'downsized' to an outpatient therapist. She is working to expand her private practice in which she specializes in working with people to achieve satisfying, healthy relationships as an Imago Relationship Therapist and a Collaborative Divorce Coach. Her website is <http://hickokgroup.com>.

Betsy and her husband Doug moved to Richmond from Santa Fe, New Mexico seven years ago. Doug, a former psychotherapist, is a business coach and trainer who specializes in working with small to medium sized, women owned businesses with an emphasis on change management. Betsy's three sons are busy making her a grandmother. Her only regret is that they live far away -Skype helps her keep in touch with them. Betsy's favorite hobby is playing a little known horseback sport called polo Crosse that is lacrosse on horseback. "it's more fun than you should be allowed to have on the back of a horse!" While polo is played some in Virginia, she has yet to find other horsemen interested in trying polocrosse, which is not as refined as polo.

Betsy looks forward to serving the therapeutic community by serving on the board of the Virginia Association of Clinical Counselors. Her office is at 2405 West Main St., Richmond, 804-767-6123.

## Senate Bill Lacking LMHCs Medicare Coverage Sent to Conference

with Pro-LMHC House Bill 12/24/09



Early Christmas Eve morning, the United States Senate, by a vote of 60-39 passed H.R. 3590, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The vote for H.R. 3590 was entirely partisan, with the Democratic caucus fully supporting the measure, and the GOP membership voting it down.

Following the holiday recess, leaders of the Senate and House committees tasked with health care reform will convene to begin the process of melding the House and Senate health care bills.

Medicare eligibility of LMHCs never made it into the Senate's bill, H.R. 3590. This important mental health access provision is currently included in Section 1308 of the House's health care reform bill, H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act. AMHCA presently asks its members to continue to impress upon their Senators the importance of Medicare eligibility for LMHCs. Members are encouraged to ask their U.S. Senators to support addition of H.R. 3962's Section 1308 in any final bill health care reform bill sent to President Obama for a signature.

AMHCA commends the breadth of advocacy work that has already been performed by numerous LMHC members. Conference sessions between the House and Senate over the final shape health care reform will take are expected to last into late January and possibly early February. Please continue to advocate for LMHC inclusion in the Medicare outpatient

mental health provider pool. Additionally, thank your U.S. Representatives for including this necessary provision in the House's health care reform bill. Request that House members do their best to preserve Medicare eligibility of LMHCs in the final bill sent to President Obama for enactment.

*Please contact AMHCA's Director of Legislative Affairs, Julie A. Clements, J.D. at [jclements@amhca.org](mailto:jclements@amhca.org) or via phone at (703)-548-6002 ext. 105 for further information.*

