February 2013 Newsletter

President’s Message

I am so delighted to have been chosen to fill this important role this year! There are so many advantages when one chooses to become involved in a professional network! My fellow officers and board members are terrific people and this first six months have been a great learning experience. It is also true that we have a lot of fun when working together.

I have enjoyed a long career in our specialty and so the opportunity of playing a role in the leadership of this organization is an honor for me, and I hope more and more PMH Nurses will consider joining the organization. Here are a few things to consider:

- NEAPNA is over 700 strong so we clearly have a lot of talent and experience to share!
- We have our exciting annual conference coming up on March 8 with great speakers and again a chance to network and form professional relationships as well as connect with friends both old and new!
- We are in the process of nominating a new slate of officers so please consider getting involved with the board or on a committee!

Check the APNA website frequently for news and updates! 2013 promises to be a very good year for our organization at both the regional and national levels so stay tuned and invite a colleague to join! Happy New Year and thank you all for your support.

Warm regards,
Vareen O’Keefe-Domaleski, MSN Ed.D, NEA, BC
The conference this year in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania happened shortly after Hurricane Sandy ravaged parts of the east coast. APNA members from New Jersey told us about the tribulations they had been through. One speaker spent the week prior to arriving at the conference in a shelter. We were thankful that New England did not see the damage that some other places did see.

The conference itself was intense and invigorating. Patrick Kennedy, former Rhode Island U.S. Representative, told us about his own experience with mental illness and alcohol dependence. He also talked to us about mental health parity law and the astounding process that preceded the passing of the mental health parity bill. He was a gripping keynote speaker and received a standing ovation.

New England was well represented at the conference, both as conference attendees and presenters. The atmosphere was one of energetic inquiry and openness. Presenters shared up-to-date, cutting-edge information in lectures. In forums, discussions were lively and the information gleaned from talking to psychiatric nurses from all around the country was invaluable. After the conference, the discussion continued on member bridge.

Several awards were handed out. One went to our very own Mary Moller DNP, ARNP, APRN, PMHCNS-BC, CPRP, FAAN of Connecticut. She received the APNA award for Distinguished Service. Congratulations Mary!
SAFER LINENS

For those of us who have practiced in inpatient psychiatric setting, there are probably thousands of anecdotes regarding patients who have used sheets and pillow cases to create ligatures. Many times our linens have had repeated laundering and become thin and even frayed, thus easier to rip and shred.

During my tenure as Sr. Vice president of Patient Care Services at Brattleboro Retreat we entered into a partnership with our Sodexo colleagues to seek a better solution to this problem.

Nursing leadership met with representatives from Sodexo and their linen supplier for a quality improvement project. This project was prominent in our joint annual goals with Sodexo.

We tried many different approaches and techniques to create stronger but comfortable patient friendly linens. Different weigh fabrics. Different styles of edging and stitching were trialed. We had hilarious sessions where we all joined in to try to damage and destroy early prototypes. What we finally determined is as follows:

Bottom sheets would be made that were designed after European shams. These were large envelopes of sheeting in a heavy gauge material that would slip totally around mattresses and have a tuck in area for a flap. These sheets were fairly closely fitted to the mattresses and were not easy to put on—and here is the point, very difficult to remove. It would take an individual a fair amount of time to remove the sheet and given the frequency of safety checks, the likelihood of staff discovery of a patient at risk was enhanced.

We dispensed with top sheets and designed heavy gauge quilted blanket spreads what were soft and yet durable. These were difficult to rip and nearly impossible to twist into a ligature due to the thickness of the quilting.

The pillow cases were made of the quilted material as well with the same difficulty and the potentially life-saving time interval that would allow discovery in many cases.
In instances when an individual was assessed to be at imminent risk of suicide, quilted mattress sized pads were put into place as part of suicide precautions and safety linen packets were available hospital-wide.

One problem that arose was that some environmental services staff needed a second person to assist with applying the “envelope” sheets. Again, our partnership with Sodexo assured that we could put safety over convenience in caring for our patient population.

Although this set of interventions has not been studied it is a common sense solution to an issue that is widespread across inpatient psychiatric areas.

Special thanks go to Mary Fisher the Environmental Services director at Brattleboro Retreat for her steadfast dedication to an optimal experience for every patient. Also to John Rennie of Hardy Linens in York Maine for his patience and persistence in helping with this project.

Article by Vareen O’Keefe-Domaleski, MSN Ed.D, NEA, BC

Call for NEAPNA Awards

NEAPNA members are invited to submit nominations for candidates for 2014. The deadline is not yet determined but will be early in 2014. The third and newest award is for a non-member.

NANCY M. VALENTINE EXCELLENCE in LEADERSHIP AWARD
The Nancy M. Valentine Excellence in Leadership Award recognizes a NEAPNA member who demonstrates vision, tenacity, perseverance, commitment, initiative and facilitation in improving mental health care and the advancement of the profession of psychiatric nursing.
CRITERIA:
1. Demonstrates the above qualities in the practice, management, research or education area.
2. Recognized as a leader committed to empowerment and assists others in their role development.

GRAYCE M. SILLS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
The Grayce M. Sills Distinguished Service Award is intended as an award for commitment, initiative, loyalty, integrity, exceptional and meritorious service to the New England Chapter and the American Psychiatric Nurses Association.
CRITERIA:
1. Service may include, but not limited to, officer, board member, state or regional representative, service on task forces or committees of NEAPNA or APNA.
2. Demonstration of inspirational ideas and the implementation of these ideas that benefit the mission of NEAPNA.
3. Annual regional and national conference attendance: Must have attended at least 2/3 of all annual conferences in the past five years.
4. Annual regional and national conference contribution: Must have presented a scientific paper, poster session, presented in an abstract plenary session, workshop or breakfast symposium.
5. Publications: should have published at least once in the Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses
Association or NEAPNA Newsletter. Articles, editorials and letters will be considered.  
6. In the absence of the above criteria (3, 4 or 5) candidates will be considered if they have made an overall exceptional contribution to the NEAPNA.

**SUE SCIPIONE AWARD**  
**CRITERIA:**  
1. Generalist RN or LPN working in direct care psychiatric setting which may include Inpatient, Partial hospital, Community psychiatric care or any similar setting.  
2. Recognized for his/her leadership role in direct care psychiatric setting.  
3. Recognized for implementing psychiatric nursing interventions effectively with clients/patients and families if indicated. This award provides a year’s membership to APNA as well as tuition voucher for the next year’s NEAPNA annual conference.  

**PROCEDURE:**  
The following information is required when nominating a NEAPNA member or Non-member for an award:  
1. Name of the award  
2. Nominee’s name, occupation title, business and home addresses  
3. A narrative statement of one type written page and two letters of recommendation  
4. Nominee’s curriculum vitae or resume  
Send the completed nomination package to:  
Karen Chesley  
3 Juniper Ave  
Middleton, MA 01949  
zkaren@comcast.net

**THE TOM MARLAND SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING STUDENTS**  
Tom Marland, an active member of the New England American Psychiatric Nurses Association, has offered his time and energy to NEAPNA for many years. The scholarship fund, set up in Tom’s name, is derived from his tireless work to raise educational funds through raffle baskets at the NEAPNA conferences. This year’s scholarship for an ADN nurse interested in pursuing a career in psychiatric nursing will be $250.00. Two references are required for application: one from a nursing instructor and one from a peer.

We will be congratulating the awards and scholarship winners at the awards ceremony on March 7th 2013 at Rivier University in Nashua, New Hampshire. Details about the event are included in the annual conference brochure. You can access the conference brochure by following this link or copying and pasting it to your browser’s address bar: