

WASHINGTON STATE NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2008 EARLY FALL EDITION

**SSWLHC ADVOCACY,
PRIORITIES, ISSUES &
ACTIVITIES**

- **October 31, 2008**
HARBORVIEW MEDICAL CENTER
"COMPLEX DISCHARGE PLANNING"
HARBORVIEW MEDICAL CENTER AUDI-
TORIUM, SEATTLE
- **Friday, November 7, 2008**
SWEDISH MEDICAL CENTER, GLASER
AUDITORIUM, FIRST HILL CAMPUS
"BEYOND THE DIAGNOSIS: UNDER-
STANDING AND RESPONDING TO
PATIENTS' SPIRITUAL NEEDS IN
CANCER CARE"
SEATTLE, WA
- **JANUARY 31, 2009**
NASW "LASW/LICSW LICENSURE PREP"
HIGHLINE MEDICAL CENTER
BURIEN WA

SOCIAL WORK LICENSING FEES INCREASE EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1

Professional licensing fees for Advanced Social Work Licensure and Independent Clinical Social Workers have been increased effective September 1, 2008.

In 2008, the legislature authorized fee increases for the professions the Department of Health regulates. These fee increases were effective August 1, 2008 for 43 of the health professions. However, fees for Social Workers, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists (also including Dentists, Radiologic Technologists, Recreational Therapists, Counselors, and Respiratory Care) were adopted September 1, due to the fact that a large number of stakeholders expressed their concerns about the financial burden of the proposed increases on these providers.

The professions listed above provided the majority of the 600 comments received by the State indicating that the increases were excessive and would be burdensome during this time of economic hardship, particularly for lower paid professions. In response to the large number of concerns raised during the rulemaking process, the Department changed the renewal and late renewal penalty fees from

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SSWLHC ANNOUNCES 2009 SLATE ADDITIONAL NOMINATIONS OPEN UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30

Please note that Board elections are in the process of nomination. The slate as selected by the Nominations Committee, Kathleen Fellbaum, Chair, is presented on page 7 for your review. Nominations remain open until September 30, 2008.

Following the closing of nominations, ballots will be mailed to the SSWLHC Membership on October 1, with the deadline for return on October 31. The election results will be posted in the November Newsletter.

Please send your nominations to Kathleen Fellbaum, at 206-248-4535 or kath@fellbaum.com



SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE FEES INCREASE SEPT 1,

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the proposed rules for these nine professions. Fees for the other 43 professions remained the same as in the proposed rules.

Professional disciplinary activity drives 85 percent of the costs and has increased dramatically in recent years. State government requires that the cost of operating each profession must be fully supported by fees paid from the profession's members. Increased costs are a result of new laws, court cases, and disciplinary trends and cover the costs of investigations, legal analysis, outside experts, Attorney General advice and prosecution, records collection and reproduction, staff attorneys, law judges, and hearing room rentals. State law requires that each profession be self-supporting.

When trends or laws change, these changes

will be included in budget projections and the DOH will be required to adjust fees accordingly. In 2005, fees for some professions, including social work, were lowered because there was more revenue than expense. However, soon after the fees were reduced, discipline cases exceeded projections and new requirements were created by the Legislature.

Library Access: \$25.00 of your annual fee permits access to the University of Washington (UW) online journal access. The legislature recently made this fee a requirement to receive online access to a set of health-related journals and other publications through the University of Washington Health Sciences Library.

For more information on social work licensure fees, go to: www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/FeelInformation/FeelInfoDefault.htm

SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE FEES EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1

For LICSWs and LCSWs

FEE TYPE	ORIGINAL FEE	PROPOSED FEE	FINAL ADJUSTED FEE
Application	25.00	150.00	125.00
Initial License	25.00	125.00	125.00
Renewal	42.00	170.00	105.00
Late Renewal Penalty			52.50
Expired License Reissuance			72.50
Duplicate License			10.00
Certification of License			10.00
UW Library Access* Fee Included in Renewals			25.00

UW Health Sciences Library Access for clients outside the University will be available Jan 1, 2009

USE IT OR LOSE IT A KEY TO BRAIN HEALTH

Contributed by Paul Beck, MD

Most of us are familiar with the concept of regular exercise as a key factor in maintaining physical strength, balance and skills. To avoid decline because of monotony or boredom, new and/or more difficult exercises must be undertaken periodically. Skilled athletes cannot improve their performance levels unless they push themselves to undertake progressively difficult tasks. The most talented musician cannot perform at peak level without regular practice.

CHALLENGE THE BRAIN: Neurophysiology and neuropsychology research is now showing that the same concept applies to maintain good brain health into old age. The brain must be challenged regularly to maximize memory, good judgment, and the rate of processing new and old information. Even professional health care workers find their effectiveness waning if they don't use their skills for an extended period of time or engage in situations that require learning new information or techniques. Even if you do the New York Times crossword puzzle every week, a new challenge is needed to overcome boredom and to prevent stagnation - challenges such as Sudoku, learning a new dance step, or studying a new language. Interestingly, brain health and heart health both benefit from attempts to normalize blood pressure, serum cholesterol levels, and weight, as well as regular exercise. In addition however, maintaining brain health requires "making it sweat" periodically by engaging in challenging, unfamiliar activities.

AMERICAN SOCIETY ON AGING: These concepts were the subject of many clinical and scientific presentations at the 2008 meeting of the American Society on Aging (ASA) and the National Council on Aging (NCOA). The clinical studies reported success in improving auditory and visual perception skills in individuals ranging from 30 to 75 years of age. Documented improvements continued for 1-2 years after completion of the training exercise. In some studies, the average performance of the 70 year olds improved from the lowest level for 20 year old young adults

to the highest level of performance of 20 year old adults for the perception skills tested. Afterwards, many of the study subjects reported improvement in their rate of thinking, level of attention, and memory.

BRAIN PLASTICITY: The scientific explanation for these improvements is based on brain plasticity. Over the past two decades, numerous clinical and laboratory studies have documented that the human brain has the capacity to reorganize itself and to generate new neuronal connections when properly challenged. There are regions of the brain that have neuron stem cells that appear to be stimulated to reproduce by moderately vigorous exercises such as brisk walking (but not golf) and sustained by repeated and new mental activity. As these new neuronal connections develop, they provide new pathways to channel thought processes, analogous to adding new lanes to a congested highway. Sometimes these new pathways speed up the rate of thought transmission; other times they may bypass obstacles such as mental blocks. Taking on a new mental challenge---learning how to use a new computer program, or solving unfamiliar problems at home or in a clinical setting---simply enhances the development of these new neuronal pathways. A good reference describing progress in brain plasticity science in lay terms is the recent New York Times bestseller, The Brain that Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science by Norman Doidge published by Penguin Books in 2007.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF BRAIN PLASTICITY: Looking to the future, brain research investigators envision many possible opportunities for harnessing the power of brain plasticity. Possible breakthroughs include

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IN FOCUS: LEADERSHIP PROFILES**HARRISON MEDICAL
CENTER****Karen Leader Scott, MSW****Marsha Hedges, MSW**

Karen Leader Scott and Marsha Hedges are Lead Social Workers at Harrison, working under the mentorship of Linda Batway, who has been their Social Work Director for the past 15 years. The Social Work Department in this 90 year old urban hospital, now comprises 35 social work staff members, up from 7 staff members in 1993. Much of the recent expansion in the Department is attributed to the inspired leadership of these two staff members.

Karen Leader Scott: Karen joined the social work staff at Harrison Medical Center (HMC) in 1983. When asked for her resume for purposes of this article, she explained: "I have not had to revise my resume since then".

Education: Karen earned her M.S.W. from the University of Washington in 1979. Her first job after graduation was as a county designated mental health professional for Kitsap Mental Health. When her son was born in late 1980 she had a few months off, and went to work part time for KMH for a number of months. In 1982 she began to work part time at the Olympic Peninsula Kidney Center. This began her journey into medical social work.

Work Background: "I can never overstate how very much I learned about medical social work during my time at the Olympic Peninsula Kidney Center (OPKC). From 1983 to 1989, I had 2 part time jobs, splitting my time between Harrison Medical Center and OPKC. From 1989 onward I have only worked for HMC. Until about 4 years ago I covered 2 units, the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and the Progressive Care Unit (PCU). As much as I loved my ICU time I found covering the 2 units less than ideal. I have worked solely on the PCU in recent years. This has coincided with the development of the cardiac surgery program at HMC. I have had the honor and pleasure to be the primary social worker for the cardiac surgery team. This follows many years of working with the cardiologists and staff of PCU. I feel incredibly lucky to have been part of the teamwork of these care teams as we work with our patients. I am also grateful for the vast array of patients I have met over the years, for what each one has shared with me. I have worked hard to know their issues and the needed resources appropriate to my patients.

Special Project - Delirium and Dementia Care: In recent years, in addition to being a "lead" social worker

which comprises supervision and evaluation of 6 – 7 employees, I also became interested in the issues of delirium and dementia care. With my coworker, Vivien Galitzki, RN, MSW, we proposed a dementia care task force for our hospital which our director, Linda Batway, supported. That task force wanted a dementia care program at Harrison Medical Center. One of our task force members secured a grant for three of us to go to a NICHE (Nurses in Care of Health Elders) conference in Philadelphia in 2008 which I had the opportunity to attend. Our task force is now working on a grant to get staffing for a coordinator for what we now call our Geriatric Center for Excellence. Our hope is to institute some NICHE type initiatives at HMC.

I think that the inherent challenges, rewards and stimulation of medical social work have contributed to my longevity in the field. I also think that I have kept this particular position for so long due to having great leadership and coworkers.

Two people have been particularly unwavering in their helpfulness to me. The director of my department, Linda Batway, has always been positive and supportive in her dealings with me. She has given opportunities for growth and learning. The PCU Nursing Director, Carol Green, RN, has worked with me for a long time. We have gone through many a patient crisis together. On her unit, with her and with the people who work for her I never feel alone as the challenges of the day are faced. Having key people like these colleagues, promote an atmosphere of teamwork and high quality patient care which is huge in promoting staff member cohesiveness and satisfaction.

On the personal side, I am single at this point in my life. I stay busy outside of work with a variety of activities. I love to travel, read, hike, attend live theater. I also belong to the Society, NASW and other organizations. I am also the primary "go to " person for my 93 year old mother who lives in an assisted living facility. In addition, I cherish whatever time I get with my 27 year old son. I also look for classes for learning about work issues as well as non work interests."

Marsha Hedges: Marsha Hedges joined the Harrison social work staff in 1987 following a UW practicum placement with a former Department Director. Marsha's arrival at Harrison was a planned goal after introduction to medical social work.

"I moved to this area 28 years ago with my husband and two young children, and up until that time I had worked as a manager in retail while I also taught aerobics several days a week. I was eager to be more challenged, so I volunteered with Project Family in Kitsap County. As a volunteer at Project Family, I met Carol Dearing, MSW, who worked with moms and babies at Harrison Hospital. My respect for Carol and my curiosity with the field of social work lead me to enroll in the U of WA School of Social Work. My goal at that time was to work at Harrison, and I had hoped in the same department as Carol.

While selecting a second year practicum placement, I asked for and received placement at Harrison for which I was thrilled. As a student, I grew to love working with patients who had complicated medical challenges and challenging families more than working with the moms and babies. As soon as I completed the necessary practicum hours, I was hired in March, and completed the degree in June. I have had my dream job for the last 21 years.

About 2 years ago, I changed to a per diem position in preparation for my eventual retirement. However, Linda Batway continued to challenge me by giving me several opportunities to help facilitate several projects instead of retiring! Did I emphasize why this has been my dream job for the past 15 years? That is when Linda Batway came to our department, and having Linda as a Director and mentor has been an absolute gift.

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LEADERSHIP PROFILES: LEADER SCOTT AND HEDGES

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Linda's ability to challenge workers in our department as well as in the hospital and community to do our best work speaks volumes to why so many of us have stayed energized here at Harrison. As one of Linda's leads, I have been active in assisting with professional evaluations, creating and leading our department's yearly education presentations, offering a supervision hour each month for workers seeking their licensure, and other projects in addition to working the floors when my time permits. I am also usually the first to train newly hired workers to the inpatient areas.

Special Project - Social Work and the Electronic Medical Record: Most recently though, I have been very active in bringing the vision of Social Work to the hospital's newest edition of the electronic medical record which includes the clinical practice guidelines, which were designed by nurses. Because the documents and the entire electronic program included little structure or provision for Social Work, I have been able to lend my voice within a large interdisciplinary task force, to speak to the values, goals, and contributions of Social Work to the patient's hospital experience. With Linda's guidance and support I am thoroughly enjoying this leadership role, and the many contributions Social Workers offer for discharge planning, crisis counseling, grief support and education. Social Work contributions for immediate and long term needs are truly valued and included in the project.

Personal: I have belonged to a women's reading group for the past 22 years and it is one of the highlights of my month. Our members have remained loyal and we have a lot of fun. Just last month we met, had dinner and talked about the book selection and then watched Hillary Clinton give her concession speech, which I thought was brilliant. Reading and politics are strong interests of mine, and I share these interests also with my husband of almost 40 years. He is a local physician who would never have even started to contemplate slowing down from his workaholic pace, but with my moving to part time status, he

has actually begun to take a Friday off here and there. We both turn 60 this year, and we have a bit more time now to enjoy his 86 year old parents who live in assisted care not too far from us, as well as grandchildren who live in Portland.

Our son is also a physician and his wife is a physical therapist, so medical challenges are near and dear to us all. Our daughter, and her new husband--they married one month ago--live in Seattle, also not far from us. Our daughter is an American Sign language interpreter and works at the University and many colleges. We are getting to know our son in law who takes great care of our 'grand dog.' We have two golden retrievers which keep us pretty busy, but it is great fun to get us all together—children, grandchildren, great grandparents and three big dogs. Full retirement is on the horizon, but not quite yet. There are too many projects still to be completed.

President: Kathleen Fellbaum, MSW
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 Past President : Diedrich Meinken, MSW
 Secretary: Carole O'Brien, MSW
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SSWLHC ANNOUNCES 2009 SLATE OF OFFICERS



SELENA BOLOTIN—PRESIDENT ELECT

Selena Bolotin, has accepted the nomination for Board President-Elect. Selena is also taking on a new job, effective October 1, as project manager with Qualis Health at Northgate. She will head a three year program, funded by CMS, that will focus on improving Care Transitions. Selena, previously with Providence Everett Home Health/Hospice as Community Liaison was providing community education regarding agency service lines and project management of current and new business opportunities. She states: accepting the nomination is a combination of 1) wanting to give back to SSWLHC and to the social work profession in general. I have received valuable continuing education and updates on important professional issues thru the Society. 2) I have more time at this point in my professional and personal life to contribute to social work professionalism.

Selena can be reached at sbolotin@yahoo.com



CAROLE HENRY O'BRIEN—SECRETARY

Carole O'Brien is a 30+ year veteran of social work at Evergreen Hospital and Medical Center, where she worked as a clinical social worker and lead social worker in the Care Management Department retiring in June 2007. Carole led the social work staff through many changes as the hospital went from a small suburban facility to a large multi-faceted Medical Center. Carole has just completed a one year term as Secretary and has agreed to run for election for another year. Carole has been a member of the Society for more than 30 years and has served on the Executive Committee in the past. Carole was also involved in the early development of the Eastside Sexual Assault Center, now known as the Children's Response Center and served on that Board for 20 years.

Carole can be reached at: carolemsw@hotmail.com



JACQUELINE S. DURGIN—COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Jacqueline Durgin currently works on a per diem basis for Highline Medical Center in its various programs, Regional Hospital, a long term acute care facility in Tukwila, and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance. Earlier in her career, she worked 22 years at Harborview Medical Center retiring in 1992, and Group Health Cooperative for 8 years, retiring in 2000. Jackie has held local SSWLHC Chapter positions including President. She has also been Communications Coordinator for the past 8 years and has edited the WA Chapter Newsletter. National SSWLHC work included serving as a National Board Member, 1986—1988 and National President in 1989. As a retiree from the fray of work, she relishes the opportunities presented by unstructured time.

Jackie can be reached at: jackiedurginbeck@comcast.net.

BRAIN FITNESS, Use it or Lose it

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treating strokes and other traumatic brain injury; re-programming the thought processes of individuals with schizophrenia; slowing the process of some dementias.

COMPUTER BASED PROGRAMS AS AN AID: Demonstrated at the ASA/NCOA meetings were a number of computer based programs that can be used by individuals of all ages to enhance brain plasticity. Three of these interactive programs that I found most interesting were the Brain Fitness Program, Mindfit, and Life to the [m] Power programs. Good outcome studies for the Brain Fitness and Mindfit programs were presented at the ASA/NCOA meetings. Information about the 3 programs can be accessed over the internet at the following website addresses:

www.positscience.com

www.cognifit.com

www.dakim.com

The Positscience website provides a description of their Brain Fitness Program. By clicking on the “demos” tab on their Brain Fitness Products page, you actually interact with examples of their auditory perception and their visual perception exercises. All of these exercises are directed toward improving brain processing rate of speed. Clicking on their “Brain Speed Test”, “Speech in Noise”, and “Word List Recall” tabs (lower right hand corner of the Brain Fitness Products page) offers an opportunity to self-test one’s capabilities in these areas.

The CogniFit site promotes the Mindfit: Brain Power Fitness program and provides some brief examples. Their exercises are designed to improve attention, perception, and memory (so-called cognitive reserves) by engaging in activities that are relatively new to the participant.

The Dakim website describes the Life to the [m] Power program. It appears to be oriented toward 70+ year olds, and it engages them in exercises that resemble games like “Cranium”.

Admittedly all of these programs are a bit pricy. However the results can be gratifying. Doidge reports about a man who used an auditory memory program at age 90. This gentleman retired from anesthesiology practice at 70 and from general practice at age 80. After working on these exercises for an 1.25 hours three times a week for 6 weeks, he noticed that he was more alert mentally, more active, and more responsive to his family. Isn’t that what we all want?

Paul Beck, MD is a retired, Board Certified Geriatrician, residing in Seattle. He was formerly on the faculty at the University of Colorado and the University of North Carolina where his specialty was Internal Medicine and Aging. He was in private practice in the Seattle area for fifteen years and is a Certified Medical Director (for SNF practice). He continues a locum tenens Geriatric practice in Seattle and Hawaii and is on the Board of Senior Services of Seattle King Co. Paul can be reached at paul.beck@comcast.net for comment.

