

Contact: Ms. Kristen Frame
Mental Health America
of Licking County
Phone 740.788.0303
mhacompeerfia@alink.com

65 Messimer Dr.
Newark, OH 43055
Phone 740.522.1341
Fax 740.522.4464



Press Release

Local MHA to Offer Educational “Lunch & Learn” in Pataskala area

Newark, OH, August 4, 2010: Mental Health America of Licking County's Compeer Program is offering a free “lunch & Learn” workshops for health care professionals. The workshop will take place in the Pataskala area on Tuesday, August 10th at Tri-Village Christian Church at 2 p.m.. In the Newark area, the program will be given on Monday, August 30th at noon in the Auditorium at Licking Memorial Hospital. Additional locations and dates may be added. The workshop is free, however reservations are required.

Compeer has been awarded a designation and support grant from “25 Pioneers for Smoking Cessation,” a program of the Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

According to MHA's Compeer Coordinator, Kristen Frame, this project focuses on educating the staff of healthcare organizations, about the misconceptions concerning tobacco addiction. It will provide attendees with accurate, up-to-date information and the opportunity to participate in the tobacco education process with little inconvenience or cost.

The trainings are taking place in several locations in the county, including Licking Memorial Hospital and The Main Place in Newark, and Pataskala area.

“This training will address common misconceptions among health professionals about individuals with severe mental illness in our community who use tobacco products, and to provide them with accurate information about cessation opportunities,” said Kristen Frame. “This program has demonstrated significant impact on tobacco cessation among individuals who experience severe and persistent mental illness.”

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“SAMHSA 25 Pioneers for Smoking Cessation” is the second phase of a project which was started in 2009, in which a competitive process selected 100 projects throughout the U.S. These projects targeted the education of consumers and behavioral health professionals about the deadly toll tobacco usage has inflicted upon individuals who experience severe and persistent mental illness. Mental Health America’s (MHA) local project was to identify and advise consumers in the Compeer program, who are defined as high-risk.

SAMHSA’s second phase selected 25 of those original participants to continue with a more targeted project. MHA’s winning proposal provides free SAMHSA evidence-based education on consumer tobacco cessation to behavioral health professionals and case managers in Licking County.

Compeer recruits, screens, trains and matches volunteers in one-to-one friendship relationships with adults receiving mental illness treatment. Compeer volunteers become positive role models and mentors. They help raise self-esteem, increase social and communication skills and encourage independence of their compeer friend aiding them in their recovery.

To register for a free “lunch & learn,” or to learn more about the other programs of Mental Health America of Licking County, please contact Kristen Frame at kframe@mhalc.org , or call 740-522-1341.

Mental Health America of Licking County is the community resource for education and advocacy for individuals who experience mental illness, and their families. Mental Health America of Licking County is an affiliate of Mental Health America and a partner agency of the United Way, and the Community Mental Health & Recovery Board.

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