Upcoming Schedule of Events  
February-March 2014

Monday, Feb. 3; 5pm -- Rx Drug Task Force  
1301 Barcarrota Ave., 1st floor conference room

Wednesday, Feb. 5; 2pm -- Board of Trustees  
1112 Manatee Ave. W, 3rd floor conference room

Wednesday, Feb. 12; 3pm -- Community Coalition  
1701 Tamiami Trail, Bradenton

Thursday, Feb. 13; 9am -- Alcohol Task Force  
1112 Manatee Ave. W, 3rd floor conference room

Monday, March 3; 5pm -- Rx Drug Task Force  
1301 Barcarrota Ave., 1st floor conference room

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2014 Board of Trustees

In This Issue
Marijuana Task Force Update
(L to R)
Jim Christinidis (media); Jessica Spencer (staff); Brena Slater (youth serving organization); Pat Bartholomew (law enforcement); Treasurer Reba Rogers (business); Sharon Kramer (staff); Rita Chamberlain (staff); Jessica May (health); Recorder Jane Testa (service provider); Wendy Nebrija (civic); Chairperson Steve Rinder (education); Past Chairperson Rachelle Madrigal (business); Steve Gulash (parents); Lynn Anderson (government); Vice Chairperson Rick Wells (law enforcement);

Not pictured:
Drena Green (faith based); Ella Biggins (student) and Becky O’Brien (student)

IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR!
Outgoing Board Chair, Rachelle Madrigal, opened the January 15 Board Annual Retreat recognizing 2013 highlights including:
1) DCF Level 1 prevention service approval;
2) VetCorps recognition in the 2013 White House Office of National Drug Control Strategy;
3) MCYC’s Youth Group award from Healthy Teens Coalition;
4) Healthy Start of Manatee recognition;
5) The Heroes Among Us Red Ribbon Celebration;
6) National Youth Leadership Initiative training for over 100 students from 11 counties; and
7) Let's Talk.

Stigma Surrounding Addiction
MCYC Update
What You Need to Know...

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Develop community partnerships to prevent and reduce substance abuse while promoting health and wellness across the lifespan, especially among youth.

"Medical Marijuana" - Florida's Future or Just a Pipe Dream?

On February 6th Marijuana Task Force Co-chair Jessica Spencer will be speaking at the Manatee Tiger Bay Club meeting at Pier 22 in downtown Bradenton. The topic is medical marijuana. Other panelists include: Dr. Fabian Ramos, incoming President of the Manatee Medical Society; Cathy Jordan, "medical" marijuana user and Donnie Clark, the gardening genius behind one of the most potent smoked marijuana strains in U.S. history: Myakka Gold.

Please register HERE if you plan to attend. Seating at the event is limited and the registration deadline is February 4th.

What You Need to Know...... About Marijuana

IF YOU CARE ABOUT OUR CHILDREN, then you should know:
• Research shows an 8% IQ drop at 35 for youth who start smoking marijuana during their teens and become regular users.
• Youth use is correlated to perception of harm and adult attitudes.
• States where marijuana is legal have
The board refined the mission statement (see side column) and implemented two new committees: Parents and Media. Coalition members will have an opportunity to meet the trustees from each sector during 2014. Trustees decided to chair the monthly coalition meeting. Lynn Anderson, Manatee County Community Services, representing the government sector, will chair the February meeting. This change is expected to help all members understand the importance of each and every community sector in the coalition’s mission.

Marijuana Task Force Update

by Nestor Levesque

The Supreme Court decided to put the medical marijuana constitutional amendment on the November ballot. Coalition members are encouraged to educate their friends, families and others about the impact of marijuana use on our children, the economy, workplace, public safety, environment and mental health. The American Medical Association, Florida Medical Association, Florida Sheriff’s Association and Florida Chambers of Commerce oppose legalizing smoked marijuana as medicine.

A petition campaign to legalize medical marijuana in Florida gathered and validated 710,508 signatures as of January 27, enough to force a vote on a proposed constitution amendment to allow for the amendment to allow the growth, sale and possession of marijuana for medical uses. By paying professional collectors as much as $4 a signature, United for Care began dumping hundreds of thousands of petitions in January on beleaguered county election officials, costing John Morgan an estimated $3 Million.

Members should know that the (DEA) Drug Enforcement Agency's clear position is that high youth use rates.

IF YOU CARE ABOUT THE ECONOMY, then you should know:
- Substance abuse costs the U.S. $600 Billion annually.
- Alcohol cost $235 Billion; Tax revenues generate $14.5 Billion or 6%.
- Tobacco costs $193 Billion; Tax revenues generate $25 Billion or 12%
- Illicit drugs cost $181 Billion.
- For every $1 in tax revenue generated by alcohol and tobacco, another $10 is spent in social costs

IF YOU CARE ABOUT PUBLIC SAFETY, then you should know:
- Marijuana is the most detected illicit drug in auto fatalities.
- Colorado legalized medical marijuana in 2000; Fatalities in which the driver was cited for marijuana doubled from 2006 - 2010.

IF YOU CARE ABOUT THE WORKPLACE, then you should know:
- Employees who use drugs impact the bottom line -increased absenteeism, workplace accidents and higher healthcare.
- Employees who test positive for marijuana have 55% more industrial accidents and 85% more injuries.
- According to the Department of Health and Human Services, employees testing positive for marijuana averaged absentee rates 75% higher than those that tested negative.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MEDICAL MARIJUANA:
- Anything smoked is not medical - think tobacco.
- In "medi-pot" states that track conditions under which people qualify, only 3% of marijuana users have terminal or life-threatening illnesses. Most are smoking marijuana for pain (a subjective term that covers medical conditions such as menstrual cramps, headaches, etc.) Floridians are more aware than the rest of the nation about the business model of treatment as
smoked marijuana is not medicine. The document titled **The DEA Position on Marijuana** quotes a statement by the International Narcotics Control Board about the medicinal properties of marijuana, "Cannabis is classified under international conventions as a drug with a number of personal and public health problems. It is not a 'soft' drug as some people would have you believe. There is new evidence confirming well-known mental health problems, and some countries with a more liberal policy towards cannabis are reviewing their position. Countries need to take a strong stance towards cannabis abuse."

Our State Representative Greg Steube recently conducted a **survey** of voters in Manatee County to get a sense of how they may vote, if the "medical" marijuana question makes it to the ballot. The survey shows that only 33.9% of the people responding would definitely answer "Yes" while another 25.2% said they would probably vote "Yes". At first this may appear to be discouraging news... until you consider that in order for the question to become an amendment to the state constitution, as is hoped by its supporters, it **must be accepted by 60%** of voters. We need to educate voters!!

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**The Stigma Surrounding Addiction**

A therapist recently told me, "I love working with addicts. They're smart, strong, and sensitive. **We need them.**"

"Wow!" I thought. "Most people would say just the opposite." And then I wondered, "Why

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**VetCorps Update**

**by Kelli Pond**

POTENCY HAS GREATLY INCREASED: TODAY'S THC IS 2-7 TIMES GREATER THAN IN 1970 AND VARIES WIDELY IN POTENCY FROM LESS THAN 1% to 20% THC.

Data from [www.UnmaskingMarijuana.org](http://www.UnmaskingMarijuana.org)
don't more people recognize the potential in addicts?" Perhaps it's because all they can see is the disease. And it's this failure to separate the person from the disease that perpetuates the stigma surrounding addiction.

Stigma is a mark of disgrace. It creates a tendency to blame and shame, and sets people apart. Stigma results in prejudice and discrimination.

Addicts face stigma from all sectors of society - family, healthcare, law enforcement, and even other addicts. Alcoholics look down on addicts; addicts who inhale their drugs look down on IV drug users.

We promote stigma with labels like drunk and junkie, and even with the term substance abuse. "To refer to people who are addicted as substance abusers misstates the nature of their condition and calls for their social rejection and punishment," says addiction specialist William White. "There is no other medical condition where the term abuse is applied."

Dr. John Kelly, director of the new Recovery Research Institute at Massachusetts General Hospital agrees. "We don't refer to someone who has anorexia or bulimia as having a "food abuse" problem. We say they have an eating disorder. So why do we refer to someone who is addicted to alcohol or pain pills as having a "substance abuse" problem?" He recommends instead the term "substance use disorder."

Stigma is cited as a major barrier to treatment, and may help explain why only 10% of addicts seek treatment. Stigma also jeopardizes recovery. Coping with an addiction can be overwhelming. Additionally, people in recovery often face physical, psychological, social, employment, and legal problems. Stigma adds a significant burden to these struggles.

Addiction affects one out of every four American families. The consequences of this baffling disease affect everyone in the family. And all too often stigma prevents family members from reaching out, leaving them to suffer in silence.

Great things are happening with VetCorps! Both Congressman Buchanan and Rep. Steube sent representatives to the December meeting along with Manatee and Sarasota Housing Authorities and numerous community partners. One of our current initiatives is working to obtain HUD-VASH vouchers in Manatee County, so we asked Carrie Meo-Omens from Veteran's Affairs to present information on the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program to help us all to understand this issue and how the VA program works.

The vouchers provide homeless veterans with housing subsidies plus case management. Paula Scruggs from the Sarasota Housing Authority discussed how Sarasota, who is issued vouchers, uses them and the data they have collected as well as the process to get them. As a result of the meeting, Congressman Buchanan wrote the US Department of Housing and Urban Development encouraging them to consider issuing vouchers for Manatee.

VetCorps has also combined forces with the Rapid Results Institute's 100,000 Homes initiative! Their goal is to find permanent homes for at least 22 chronically homeless veterans each month. We will be working together to help increase the number of veterans housed. At our January 27 meeting we explored the idea of sponsoring a landlord fair to bring in possible housing opportunities for veterans. If you or someone you know has property or housing available, please contact me.

A Sincere 'Thanks' from Rita Chamberlain
Substance use disorders affect 23 million Americans. Many are young people. We need these people. And they need our support. At the very least they deserve to be seen as people, not defined by their disease.

Ways You Can Address Stigma:

- **Learn the facts.** Substance use disorder is a disease, not a moral failing that can be overcome through sheer willpower.
- **Speak out** when you notice misinformation or stigma.
- **Avoid labels** (e.g., junkie). Such terms cause shame, guilt and embarrassment, creating barriers to treatment.
- **Don't generalize.** Not all people with substance use disorders are the same.
- **Be supportive.** Outcomes improve with kindness, support, empathy and an absence of judgment.
- **Keep hope alive.** People do recover.

For more information go to the [Resources page on our website](#) > Browse by Subject > Stigma

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**Rx Drug Disposal**

The Rx Drug Task Force is planning a "Spring Cleaning" initiative in **March** to remind residents to dispose of unused/expired drugs.

[Rx Drug Disposal Site]

- **Manatee County Sheriff's Office/Substation**
  - 60031 Blvd W, Suite 202 • 24 hrs/7 days a week
  - 104 Blvd W, Suite 202 • 24 hrs/7 days a week

- **City of Bradenton Police Dept**
  - 5001 Main St • Mon-Fri, 7am-4pm

- **Bradenton Police Dept**
  - 5001 Main St • Mon-Fri, 7am-4pm

- **Palmetto Police Dept**
  - 5001 Main St • Mon-Fri, 7am-4pm

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I want to thank all members of the Coalition for the comfort and support they offered during my recent surgery and recovery in November/December. Special thanks to the Board and my colleagues for efforts "above and beyond" in accommodating my changing work schedule and making sure I was fed! The texts, notes, cards, food and prayers were and are very much appreciated.

I am proud to be a part of this wonderful group and pleased to be back in the trenches with you again.

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**Welcome**

Susan Carrigan, Consultant

MCSAC is pleased to welcome Susan Carrigan, MPA to Manatee County. Susan will be working as a consultant to the Coalition on the Community Snapshot, Substance Abuse Response Guide (SARG) process and other projects while Rita is on a limited work schedule.

Susan is the Executive Director of Community Coalition Alliance, a Regional Alliance of 23 coalitions in Northeast Florida.
The Manatee County Youth Commission (MCYC) has started off the New Year with exciting changes. The Bullying Committee was integrated into the newly formed Education Committee. This newly established group has already hit the ground running by attending the Manatee County School District’s Code of Conduct revision meeting and invited Manatee County School Board member Karen Carpenter to the last MCYC meeting. At the meeting, the Education Committee, headed by MCYC treasurer Lacey Sanchez provided constructive and helpful insight to our local education leader.

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Committee has already begun planning for Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month in May. Working with Healthy Teens Coalition, they are spreading awareness on the significant issue of teen pregnancy in Manatee County. Plans include presenting proclamations to the local government entities and creating a campaign for Teen Pregnancy Prevention in Manatee County Schools.

The Substance Abuse Committee is busy planning to implement the Parents Who Host Lose the Most campaign in Manatee County Schools and is also attempting to collect data.
on K2/Spice usage and availability in our community.

We are very excited to hear from different guest speakers at our meetings and continue to give youth a voice in local government!

Find MCSAC on Social Media!

The MCSAC Alcohol Task Force believes that the use of ID Scanners where alcohol is sold is a big step in helping to secure the safety of our youth as well as our community at large. An ID Scanner is a device used to verify a patron’s age, thus eliminating minors’ access to alcohol. When a driver’s license or other state issued ID is run through the scanner, immediately the age of the patron is verified as 21 or under. The use of ID scanners dramatically reduces the risk that alcohol that will be served to someone under the age of 21.

Retailers also benefit from insurance and liability reductions when they use ID Scanners. The Manatee County Substance Abuse Coalition purchased seven ID Scanners and offers them, at no charge, for use at alcohol retail locations and community events. The Desoto Heritage Society has made use of the ID Scanners a requirement at all community events they host and recently, Realize Bradenton received three ID Scanners on permanent loan from the Coalition.

"The use of the ID Scanners is fail-proof way to be sure alcohol is not sold to minors," said Monica Johnson, Chair of the Alcohol Task Force. "We are so pleased that our community partners and local businesses are taking advantage of this free service and hope others will follow."

For more information and to request the use of the MCSAC ID Scanners, contact Rita Chamberlain at (941) 748-4501 x3477.

Contact Us

Sharon Kramer, M.Ed., CPP
Executive Director
941-748-4501 x3491