A Message from Our President/CEO

Sincerely,

Roberta J. Cook
President/CEO

Cover story
VSAAC Changes Name to Alliance for Prevention & Wellness

Your support, commitment and donations have helped The Greater Valley Substance Abuse Action Council (VSAAC) evolve to cover much more than substance abuse issues and reach far beyond the Valley. As of August 1, VSAAC will become the Alliance for Prevention & Wellness (APW). We foster positive mental health by preventing substance misuse and other health-risk behaviors and by building resources that promote wellness.

“We felt it was necessary for the organization’s name to reflect all that we do,” said Pam Mautte, Director of VSAAC. “VSAAC has a long history of substance abuse prevention activities and continues to expand its programs to address substances of abuse, suicide, risky behaviors and to promote good mental health. Our service area continues to grow throughout the Lower Naugatuck Valley and Greater New Haven areas. The Alliance for Prevention & Wellness is a direct result of our donors and community partners commitment to improving our communities,” Pam continued.

VSAAC was formed in 1990 as a result of a community retreat held by the Valley United Way with concerned citizens to address substance abuse issues in the Valley. It operates as one of 13 Regional Action Councils across the State of Connecticut.

For 25 years, VSAAC has engaged churches, schools, businesses, human service agencies, neighborhood organizations, government offices, law enforcement, and concerned citizens of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds in prevention activities. The organization maintains strong collaborative relationships with area police departments, the local prevention councils, social service agencies, and youth service bureaus and has an extensive repertoire of culturally competent substance abuse/high-risk behavior prevention programs.

Your support over the past 25 years helped more than 150,000 youth and adults in our communities. Thank you continuing to make a difference.
Mental Health and Mental Illness Across the Lifespan

In the year 2000, the Surgeon General of the United States, David Satcher, M.D. issued a groundbreaking report on mental health and mental disorders. One of the key aspects of the report was examining mental health and mental illness across the entire span of life. The report looked at four periods of life; childhood, adolescence, adulthood and later adult life. The report also looked at how gender and culture influence diagnosis and treatment in addition to the age on the client. The report recognized the importance of genetics interacting with life experiences.

With the addition of PCRC to the BHcare family, we are moving towards the goals set by the former Surgeon General. We are now in better position to integrate assessment and treatment from childhood, through adolescence, adulthood and late adulthood into old age. It is much the same as passing a baton in a relay race. It represents a continuation of a natural process rather than an artificial age demarcation. The process of growth and development is a continual one and one stage builds upon the previous stages for both better and worse. To effectively treat a client requires an understanding of where they have been, where they are now and how did they arrive at their current state. It is important to integrate their culture, genetics, life experiences, gender, sexuality, interpersonal relationships, work history, medical history, in addition to their symptoms and course of illness.

As opposed to the recent Brexit vote in England to withdraw from the European Union, we at BHcare are moving to integrate ourselves more fully in areas of improved coordination with primary care, expanding our substance abuse services, working closely with our hospital systems to keep people in the community, in addition to expanding the age range of services we provide to the people we serve.