

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to introduce myself as the new IMHCA president. It is an honor to serve you. Thank you for trusting me in this new role. I'm excited to be part of this team and look forward to the future of the mental health counseling profession.

There are a lot of topics to discuss but foremost would be making sure we remember Carol Charles-Rohlf who passed away on November 14, 2010. She was a great IMCHA president, mentor, friend and mother. She will be missed.

A great big thanks is in order for Cindy Boyle who is IMCHA Past President, and who did and is still doing a great job of mentoring and continuing to help

lead our Board. I have some big shoes to fill! Thanks, Cindy, for all of your hard work and effort in the past few years to help lead our membership to where it is today.

Some of the big issues on the horizon that are mentioned in this edition of the newsletter include lobbyist Emily Piper helping IMHCA with reimbursement under Medicaid, as well as being our voice to the Iowa legislature. Welcome Emily and thank you in advance for your efforts.

On that same note, we need everyone's help to offset the expense of hiring a lobbyist. We only have approximately 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the Licensed Mental Health Counselors practicing in Iowa as members. If

everyone would bring a buddy to our annual meeting and conference we would be a lot closer to meeting our membership and financial goals. If anyone has a good marketing strategy, we would like and need to hear your voice and ideas!

We are looking forward to having more people to attend the Board meetings via Skype or ICN. This will help offset traveling costs and time. It is important to keep meeting in person too. I look forward to meeting more of you at our annual meeting and conference in May. Thank you,

*Kelly Wagner,  
MS, LMHC, RPT  
IMHCA  
President*

## WINTER 2011



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*"When we were children, we used to think that when we were grown-up we would no longer be vulnerable. But to grow up is to accept vulnerability....  
To be alive is to be vulnerable."*

*~ Madeleine L'Engle*

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

There have been several developments on the Federal and State level for LMHC's. In Iowa, hopefully most have read the weekly legislative report from Emily Piper, the lobbyist hired by IMHCA this year. Emily has talked with several legislators about our goals of LMHC's being included under Iowa's Medicaid State Plan. As Magellan already recognizes LMHC's, this would specifically add LMHC's under services covered through Iowa Medicaid Enterprises, such as in-home therapy through the Children's Mental Health Waiver. This may open up job opportunities for LMHC's as well as help with recognition by Medicare as we can

then indicate to our Federal Legislators, that LMHC's are providers with Medicaid in Iowa as well as with private insurance companies. As of the first week of February, Representative Renee Schulte (R) and Senator Amanda Ragan (D) had requested bill drafts for language that would include LMHC's as providers under Medicaid. This draft language is the formal language that gets offered in a bill. Representative Schulte had been licensed as a LMHC in Iowa in the past prior to her current work in the House.

Representative Schulte is also drafting legislation aimed at our goal of a fair practice law to ensure LMHC's and LMFT's are included as providers for private insurance companies. This would mean being viewed equally with other providers. It would not guarantee open provider panels with insurance companies though. From talking with legislators, it is clear that there is not an open environment to create mandates for any insurance companies at this time.

There is also an effort through House Study Bill 64 to address concerns from last summer's Iowa Supreme Court's Cashen decision. The goal of this legislation is to help protect mental health records in courts so that consumer's may be further assured of privacy of protected health records.

As the legislative chair for IMHCA, I have had opportunity both on the day on the hill (unfortunately poorly attended due to blizzard conditions) and on a couple other occasions to converse with our lobbyist as well as legislators regarding mental health issues. The legislators consistently have talked about reforming Iowa's Mental Health system, wanting better access to services, and most importantly, wanting consumer's to have services that will work. There is a push to have flexibility in the new system to access services that will be effective and as such, the politicians want to know that clinicians are using evidence based practices. As we move



forward with legislation, it is important that when you converse with your representatives and senators that you explain that you are well trained, have access to quality supervision or consultation, practice research supported methodology, and strive to ensure that our field has the highest quality professionals providing services.

On the national front, AMHCA (American Mental Health Counselors Association), ACA (American Counselors Association), and others continue to work to advocate for further coverage for LMHC's. One of the recent successes has been for LMHC's to be able to practice independently

*Con't. on pg. 3*

*“O love is the crooked thing,  
...There is nobody wise enough  
To find out all that is in it...”  
~ W. B. Yeats*

## 2011 IMHCA CONFERENCE UPDATE



*Gerald Jacobs, PhD*

The 2011 IMHCA Annual Conference will be here before you know it, on Thursday and Friday, May 12 and 13 at the Merle Hay Holiday Inn.

The keynote speaker on Friday, May 13 Gerard (Jerry) Jacobs, Ph.D., Director of Disaster Mental Health Services at the University of South Dakota. He will present on disaster mental health and traumatic grief issues in families.

Thursday morning will feature two—three hour sessions. The first will be on the topic of Counselor Burnout and will be presented by Carol Hinman, Ph.D. The second session will ad-

dress Animal Assisted Therapy and will be presented by Linda Nebbe, Ph.D.

Thursday afternoon will feature one—three hour presentation on Trauma with Children. The presenters are Gladys Alvarez and Becca Robinet.

Conference organizers are also offering four different breakout sessions. The topics include dream catching, working with refugee families, Legislative issues, and Christian counseling. Registration information will soon be available by mail and on the website—[www.imhca.net](http://www.imhca.net). Brochures will be avail-

able at the end of February.

According to Conference Coordinator Christy Johnston, the Merle Hay Holiday Inn made some improvements following the floods of 2010. “The accommodations for the conference will be even better, so we hope to see a lot of professionals and students there,” said Johnston.

*“I hate to be love’s executioner.”*

*~ Irving Yalom*

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE CON’T.

under Tricare, which deals with coverage for those in the military.

However, the language for who specifically will be covered is to be determined. There had been considerable discussion and disagreement over who should be covered (there are different licensing requirements in different

states, not all have graduated from CACREP graduate programs, some have taken the NCE others have taken the NCMHCE). These types of issues and lack of a national standard for mental health counselors has led to this confusion. Ultimately, this decision regarding Tricare

will be made by the Secretary of Defense, likely by July.

The way to continue to influence legislation and provide direction for our field in Iowa is through lobbying and this costs money. Please encourage other LMHC’s to join IMHCA and attend our annual conference as

these dues and fees helps support our associations goals. Look for ongoing updates in your email on our state legislative efforts. Once we have defined bills to support, you will be asked to contact your representatives to ask for support.

*Submitted by Erik Oostenink, LMHC, IMHCA Legislative Chair*



# Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association

A Chapter of the American Mental Health  
Counselors Association  
www.imhca.net

Board of Directors, 2010—2011  
boardmembers@imhca.net

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Kristin O’Conner-Sherrets, PR/Website  
Lisa Turner, Publications  
Christy Johnston, Conference  
Jessica DeBoom, Student Rep.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### IMHCA

#### Board Meeting

Saturday, March 5  
9 a.m.

**Waterloo SKYPE loca-  
tion:** 722 Water Street,  
#407

**Des Moines SKYPE lo-  
cation:** DMACC Urban  
Campus, Bldg. 1 Room  
107

### IMHCA

#### Annual Conference

May 12 & 13  
Merle Hay Holiday Inn,  
Des Moines

### AMHCA

#### Annual Conference

“Power of Partnerships,  
Effective Pathways to  
Mental Health”  
July 14—16  
San Francisco

### IMHCA

#### Board Meeting

Saturday, June 4  
9 a.m.

#### Waterloo SKYPE

**location:** 722 Water  
Street, #407

#### Des Moines SKYPE

**location:** DMACC  
Urban Campus, Bldg. 1  
Room 107

