

MEDIAWATCH 2008

May – July 2008

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NBC

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DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG



National Association of Social Workers

WELCOME TO THE "NEW" MEDIA WATCH

WELCOME TO THE NEW AND IMPROVED MEDIA WATCH

For the past four years, Media Watch has provided a 'snapshot' of media coverage of the social work profession and social work issues from a national and local perspective. Published bi-monthly, Media Watch was created to showcase the presence of social work in the mainstream media.



Media Watch has successfully given us insight into the many ways in which social workers are being portrayed by the media. With this new edition of Media Watch, however, we will now shift our focus to a quarterly trends analysis focusing specifically on media coverage of core social work practice areas: Aging, Mental Health, Children and Families and Health.

With this new approach, we hope to not only track the progress of our Public Education Campaign, but to also better understand who is covering social work and what the key stories are. This will better enable us to proactively build relationships with our media contacts and ensure that our messages are being portrayed accurately.

We hope you enjoy the new and improved Media Watch.

— NASW Communications

AGING



AGING GRACEFULLY

Betsy Wadland • May 5, 2008

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) reports that nine out of 10 Americans age 60 and older wish to remain in their own homes as they age. The fastest-growing segment of the population is the over-85 age group and the senior population is expected to double in the next 30 years. Social worker Frances D. Kerchner, of Kerchner Associates says, “Long-term care has historically consisted of two options for older adults: move in with a family member or move into a nursing home. But today’s seniors are living longer and want the choice and independence they have had all their lives.”



Q&A: BABY BOOMERS FACE CARE CRUNCH

Geoff Larcom • May 10, 2008

As the first of the nation’s 78 million baby boomers reach age 65 in 2011, they will face a health care work force that is too small and woefully unprepared to meet their specific health needs, says a report from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science. Last week The News talked with Paula Allen-Meares, the dean of the University of Michigan School of Social Work, who served on the committee that issued the report.



UNIVERSITY TRAINS SOCIAL WORKERS TO DEAL WITH CHALLENGES OF ELDER CARE

Kathy Black • June 12, 2008

The University of South Florida at Sarasota-Manatee’s School of Social Work is actively involved in numerous efforts to better meet the comprehensive health needs of our community’s older adults. In our educational capacity, students are taught comprehensive geriatric assessment skills as well as interpersonal and professional abilities to provide both compassionate and competent care throughout a variety of settings.



AGING GRACEFULLY: AS BOOMERS AGE, CAREER OPPORTUNITIES ARISE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Dotty St. Amand, MSW • July 22, 2008

Projections indicate that 57.8 million baby boomers will be living in 2030. Of that group, 54.9 percent will be female. In the year 2030, baby boomers will range in age from 66 to 84. Young adults who are exploring careers options should take note. The field of gerontology will offer vast opportunities as baby boomers age and the number of older people requiring health care, financial planning and assistance from social service agencies escalates.

SUMMARY:

- We identified 10 stories specifically related to aging and social work this quarter.
- The majority of coverage (80%) is positive and 20% is neutral.
- All stories address issues related to the aging population.

ANALYSIS

The media coverage of aging over the past quarter has presented a consistent theme: the increase in the elderly population is a pressing issue not only in the social work community, but the community at large. Based on the headlines noted above, issues related to the elderly and elder care are resonating well within the media. Social workers have been particularly proactive in speaking out about these issues. Two of the articles highlighted above are guest columns written by social workers to address the various considerations related to aging. Specifically, the issue pointed out by social workers is the increasing need for training and employment in the field of gerontology. More importantly, this quarter’s media coverage of aging issues demonstrates that social workers are increasingly being looked to as experts on the elderly and elderly issues.

MENTAL HEALTH



9/11 COUNSELORS AT RISK FOR SECONDARY TRAUMA

May 2, 2008

Social workers run the risk of suffering severe psychological stress from hearing too many stories of trauma, according to a new study that looked at people who counseled others impacted by the Sept. 11 terror attacks in New York City.



GEORGIA: LIFE AFTER THE WAR ZONE

Lauren Gregory • June 12, 2008

Once back home, Sgt. Tomlinson found himself trying to interact with others in the same harsh, authoritative tone had had used with Afghans. Such problems are common among troops returning from a war zone, according to Connie Robinson, a licensed clinical social worker in North Chattanooga who specializes in couples counseling for both civilian and military families. Whether a veteran develops Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder — which experts say cannot even be diagnosed until at least a month after his or her return — there always is going to be some sense of post-war culture shock creating a divide among family members, Ms. Robinson said.



EXPERTS: STRESS REMAINS LONG AFTER DISASTERS

Will Higgins and Shari Rudavsky • June 15, 2008

Natural disasters such as tornadoes or floods can leave victims feeling a profound sense of loss, experts say. Faced with the prospect of rebuilding their lives, some may stop sleeping or eating or in other ways fail to resume their daily routines. For many victims of a natural disaster, the stress may not hit right away. Once the immediate crisis has passed, people may begin to require help. “It’s been eerie quiet,” said Roger Brinkman, a licensed clinical social worker in Columbus who has been visiting shelters there. “We’re sort of bracing ourselves. Right now people are in that survival mode.”



PRESCRIPTION FOR ADDICTION: ABUSE OF PAINKILLERS FASTEST-GROWING DRUG PROBLEM IN MONTANA

Tristan Scott • July 22, 2008

Melody Barnes, a licensed clinical social worker, meets recently with Todd Havelka, a recovering addict of opiate painkillers recently in her Missoula office. “The same social problems we attribute to meth have been happening all along with prescription drugs,” says Barnes. “I just don’t think there’s a lot of awareness about the extent of the problems.”

SUMMARY:

- We identified a total of 13 articles specifically related to mental health and social work this quarter.
- The majority of coverage was generally positive (60%) with no negative coverage observed.
- Headlines typically related to stress related illnesses and addiction.

ANALYSIS

This quarter’s media coverage of mental health topics appears to focus on the effects of stress in both social work practitioners and the population at large. With our country in the middle of two wars, mental health issues have been prevalent in the media, especially as it relates to war veterans. Most notable is the sense that social workers are increasingly being referenced as experts on mental health. A theme seen among many of the articles referenced above is the effects of disaster and post traumatic stress on a person’s mental health, and how that stress has a daily impact on lives.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The New York Times

DE-EMPHASIS ON RACE IN ADOPTION CRITICIZED

Ron Nixon • May 27, 2008

Minority children in foster care are being ill-served by a federal law that plays down race and culture in adoptions, a report released on Tuesday said. The report, based on an examination of the law's impact over a decade, said that minority children adopted into white households face special challenges and that white parents need preparation and training for what might lie ahead. But it found that social workers and state agencies fear litigation and stiff penalties under the law for even discussing race with adopting couples. As a result, families often do not get the counseling they need.

The Washington Post

D.C. CHILD AGENCY TO BORROW STAFF, HIRE WORKERS

Michelle Boorstein • July 18, 2008

With the recent deaths of several children and a major backlog of cases, the District's child welfare agency will "act on an emergency basis" by pulling in social workers from other city offices and hiring more staff, a top city official said yesterday. "Number one, we have to have a heightened sense of urgency in terms of getting rid of the backlog," said Peter Nickles, the city's acting attorney general. "We need a temporary influx of social workers," he said. "We're going to detail folks...like putting cops on the street."

The Jackson Sun

DAUGHTERS THANKFUL FOR THEIR SINGLE DAD'S LOVE, HARD WORK

Ashley Anthony • June 10, 2008

*As Father's Day approaches, Calvin is grateful he still has his girls. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 2.5 million single fathers in 2006, up from 400,000 in 1970. The number includes unmarried, divorced, separated and widowed fathers. **Jim Jones**, a licensed clinical social worker with Pathways Behavioral Health Services in Jackson, thinks society focuses more on single motherhood than single fatherhood. "Single fathers face similar challenges and emotions as a single mom," he said. "They feel stressed, feel like they have to be perfect, play two parenting roles or there's not enough time in the day," Jones said.*

THE SUN

SEEKING A FEW GOOD MEN

Rona Marech • June 15, 2008

*"In finding homes for children, workers sometimes look at whether a household includes a father," said **Sandra Stewart**, a supervisor at the Baltimore County Department of Social Services. "With older youth coming from an environment where they've seen drugs, for instance, or men who were not working or participating in things thought to be positive in the community - then you would want the youth in a household with a positive male figure," she said.*

SUMMARY:

- We identified a total of 46 articles related to children and families and social work this quarter.
- There was an even split between negative and positive coverage (36% respectively) and 23% were neutral stories.
- Headlines varied from child welfare agency issues to feel-good family stories to foster care issues.

ANALYSIS

Media coverage of issues related to children and families varies quite a bit this quarter, as can be seen in the headlines above. Child welfare issues are frequently at the forefront of media coverage, and this quarter is no exception. However, there was a relatively good balance of articles highlighting progress that has been made in the foster care system and recognizing notable foster parents for the impact they are having among children in foster care. The repeal of the Multiethnic Placement Act is especially notable, as NASW issued a statement in response to this action, expressing support for the adequate training of adoptive parents in trans-racial adoptions. There is also a timeliness in coverage highlighting fathers, attributable to the observance of Father's Day in June.

HEALTH

HealthNewsDigest.com

STRESSED ‘SANDWICH GENERATION’ MOTHERS MUST CARE FOR THEMSELVES

May 8, 2008

Today’s mother often juggles full-time employment, household chores and parenting, but a growing number of women are taking on yet another responsibility—caring for an aging loved one. Of the 22 million Americans caring for both children and parents or older relatives, nearly two-thirds are women. In a survey of “Sandwich Generation” mothers conducted by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM), only 20 percent said they were “very happy,” and almost 1 in 5 said it was directly due to the stress of caring for both parents and children.

Gloucester DailyTimes

HEALTH BEAT: DOMESTIC ABUSE’S IMPACT ON OLDER WOMEN

Elizabeth Eddy • May 23, 2008

Arthritis and high blood pressure aren’t the only problems that affect older women — domestic abuse is sadly and all too frequently a physical, emotional and spiritual health challenge that many women face each day. Older women are often the forgotten victims of domestic abuse, says **Katie Galenius**, director of the Older Battered Women’s program at Greater Lynn Senior Services.



NAVIGATORS HELP PATIENTS OVERCOME BARRIERS TO TREATMENT

Debra Anscombe Wood • June 2, 2008

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming emotionally, physically, and financially. To better help patients during their battles with cancer, the American Cancer Society (ACS) created a patient navigator program. Navigators listen to patients’ concerns, provide resources, and extend support to overcome barriers to treatment and ease the shock of a cancer diagnosis. “I provide information and help patients organize and put first things first,” says **Lillian Coleman**, one of two ACS navigators at John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County in Chicago.

Chicago Tribune

AUTISM TRAINING HELPS POLICE TAILOR RESPONSE

Tara Malone • July 20, 2008

On Jan. 1, Illinois joined a growing number of states that require autism-recognition instruction for new officers. Several local police departments are extending the training to all first-responders, from beat cops to commanders. Visual cues are vital, said Buffalo Grove police social worker **Lisa Fowler**. Bright lights, loud noises or a cacophony of voices may prove overwhelming for an autistic person. Simple, straight-forward questions work best, she and other experts said.

SUMMARY:

- We identified a total of 14 stories specifically related to general health and social work this quarter.
- The vast majority of articles (98%) had a positive slant with 2% neutral.
- Article topics varied among various health issues and did not follow a consistent pattern.

ANALYSIS

This quarter’s media coverage of health issues does not follow any specific theme and the topics are diverse. This reflects the wide range of expertise that social workers contribute to the health care industry. Most notable this quarter is the coverage of the “Sandwich Generation” women based on the survey issued by NASW and the New York Academy of Medicine last year. This report continues to be an evergreen topic with the media, as issues related to “Sandwich Generation” women become a major topic when discussing women’s health. There was not a great deal of mainstream coverage related to social workers and health, however, based on the headlines above, it is clear that social workers are being recognized, to some extent, as healthcare experts.

PITCHED MEDIA HITS

NASW Communications is constantly working to ensure that social work and social work issues are addressed and recognized in the media. Here is a look at some of the media hits we've acquired through actively pitching social workers as experts on a broad range of topics.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette®

A PLACE FOR GRIEF

Erin Gibson Allen • May 8, 2008

Some 150,000 children and young adults in the United States die from accidents or illness every year, according to a survey done by the support group, the Compassionate Friends Inc. When such a tragedy occurs, family, friends, neighbors — even compassionate strangers — are often moved to help the grieving family, but wonder what to do. Deborah Bowen, a social worker and co-author of “A Good Friend for Bad Times: Helping Others Through Grief,” said in a phone interview this week from her Wrightsville Beach, N.C., home that receiving help and encouragement from others is often vital to those struggling to deal with an overwhelming loss.



FORECLOSURES TAKE AN EMOTIONAL TOLL ON MANY HOMEOWNERS

Stephanie Armour • May 16, 2008

Half of Americans identify housing costs, such as rent or mortgage payments, as significant sources of stress, particularly on the East and West coasts, a 2007 survey by the APA says. “The problem affects the whole spectrum, not just people losing their homes,” says LeslieBeth Wish, a psychologist and social worker in Sarasota, Fla. “The stress exacerbates what is already there. It brings to the surface problems that were often already there, like marital problems. There is so much blaming people for the situations they’re in, and that adds to it.”

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette®

UGLY SELF-IMAGE HAS MANY UNABLE TO FUNCTION IN SOCIETY

Elysia Nest • July 20, 2008

[Carley] Finn is one of millions of people suffering from a condition known as body dysmorphic disorder — described as an excessive preoccupation with a slight or imagined defect in one’s physical appearance. The disorder affects about 1 to 2 percent of the population, or three to five million people, and it is known to affect men and women equally, according to Scott Granet, a licensed clinical social worker who works at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation in California and is an expert on the topic. He has co-authored “Ten Steps for Treating Body Dysmorphic Disorder.”



MOTHER OPENS LEE COUNTY’S ONLY SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER

Jason Wermers • July 12, 2008

Virginia Cervasio, 48, has been on a mission to prevent other families from experiencing her pain after her 24-year-old son, Angelo Cervasio, killed himself in his Cape Coral apartment on Jan. 17, 2006. Three months later, she and close friends formed an organization called Lee County C.A.R.E.S., which stands for Community Awareness in Recognizing and Educating on Suicide. That organization started conducting support groups for adult and adolescent survivors of suicide. “Survivor of suicide” is the term for someone who has had a loved one die by suicide. C.A.R.E.S. has teamed up with Tara Moser, licensed clinical social worker with Delta Family Counseling, and Cheryl Buss, licensed clinical social worker with The Back Door. Both agencies are next door to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center.

SPOTLIGHT ON SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers are often recognized by the media for their many accomplishments and contributions to society. Here is a brief look at this quarter's top headlines in recognition of social workers.

MAY 2, 2008:

South Bend Tribune, South Bend, IN – “Social Worker Thrives on Empowering Others”

MAY 5, 2008:

Lock Haven Express, Lock Haven, PA – “Social Worker turns loss into positive plan”

MAY 10, 2008:

The Suburbanite, Coventry, OH – “Coventry resident named Social Worker of the Year”

JULY 1, 2008:

AFP, Washington, DC – “Obama backs faith based Social Work”

JULY 9, 2008:

The Idaho Statesman – “Will Rainford is Idaho Social Worker of the Year”

JULY 18, 2008:

The Indianapolis Star, Indianapolis, IN – “GOP picks social worker to face Carson”

NASW MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Kudos to NASW members who were featured in the media this quarter.

MICHAEL BRENNAN –

“Congressional candidates square off”; *KeepMEcurrent.com* - Scarborough, ME

CLAUDIA SCHWEITZER –

“Gloucester survey shows high anxiety”; *Gloucester Daily Times* - MA

JILL SPIVACK AND JENNIFER WAULDBURGER –

“Two Clinical Social Workers Give You Ways to Reinvigorate Yourself”; *ABC News*

TRACYE POLSON –

“Taming of the potty mouth”; *SheKnows.com* - Scottsdale, AZ

ANDRA DEVAIAH –

“Teen’s self-perception more important than popularity”; *KSL-TV* - Salt Lake City, UT

SUSAN FINERAN –

“Summer Harassment”; *Bangor Daily News* - Bangor, ME

LINDA BROCKWAY –

“Something blue: Post-nuptial letdown”; *Philadelphia Inquirer* - Philadelphia, PA

DANIEL POTTER –

“Help that goes the distance”; *Vernon Hills Review* - Vernon Hills, IL

MELISSA WEBSTER –

“The trouble with when they get into trouble”; *Chicago Tribune*