



# mssa

# VOICE

May/June 2008

...shaping Minnesota communities since 1893.

Volume 115 Number 4

#### Special points of interest:

- ◆ Board Retreat Update
- ◆ Student Loan Forgiveness
- ◆ 2009 Conference Update

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## 2008 Conference a BIG Success!

With even more people than last year, we all felt the "success" of the MSSA conference in March. As a result of the continued growth, 2009 will be the last year MSSA's Annual Training Conference & Expo will be held at the Sheraton in Bloomington.

MSSA has signed a contract with the Minneapolis Hilton for 2010, 2011 and 2012. This was a difficult decision for the Board of Directors, however after extensive research and much deliberation, the decision was made to make a change in venue, offering additional meeting space, more parking and food options, and all sleeping rooms in one hotel. The Conference Council will keep you posted as they meet and plan for 2009 and 2010.

The 2008 Conference feedback we received will be very helpful in planning for the future conferences, especially for the upcoming year.

**Parking**—We attempted a carpool lot and incentive for 2008, however with the limited amount of participation, this has been discontinued. This means that parking will be tight in 2009, however there are options. If you cannot carpool from home or work, perhaps you could meet at the Mall of America or Southdale or a local Park & Ride.

**Registration Line** —In 2007 the lines gave me nightmares, and while I did not have pleasant dreams in 2008, I believe the eBadge offering helped significantly. With 500 people

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## Fall Education Forums Being Planned

Watch the MSSA calendar for upcoming education forums this fall. We are currently looking at offering a Mental Health Series featuring institutes on:

- ◆ Hoarding
- ◆ Dialectical Behavior Therapy
- ◆ Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- ◆ Ethical Dilemmas & Mental Health Counseling
- ◆ Mental Health Counselors in Non-traditional Mental Health Settings

The sessions will be held in St. Paul,

October 8 & 9. More information will be published in the Voice and via email throughout the planning session. Registration will begin in August.

If you have any questions or would like additional topics covered, please contact Stephanie Kibler, Director of Program Development/Communications, 651/789-4331 or [stephanie@mnsocialserviceassoc.org](mailto:stephanie@mnsocialserviceassoc.org).



**By Rod Halvorson,  
Executive Director**

## Executive Director's Report

### **A Big Step Toward Success in Congress**

For the last few years, most of the news about human service funding has been very negative. However, during the past two months, it appears the tide is turning in Congress.

The problem started in 2005 with the adoption of the "Deficit Reduction Act of 2005." This legislation gave the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) the power to right rules to curtail the costs to the federal budget for Targeted Case Management. Case Management and TCM services are services that assist low-income individuals and families in gaining access to needed medical, social and educational services.

On December 4, 2007, CMS finally issued proposed new rules that would dramatically decrease TCM services reimbursed by the federal government. According to a Minnesota Department of Human Services estimate, these rules will result in cuts of at least \$60.9 million for Minnesota annually, based solely on the changes to child welfare services. It is likely the total loss to the state could far exceed this number when other services are also included. MSSA, and nearly all of our strategic partner, objected to the new rules and submitted our opposition by the February 4, 2008 deadline. The rules became effective on March 3, 2008.

Several members of the Minnesota Congressional delegation have joined our fight. Senators Norm Coleman and Amy Klobuchar introduced legislation to delay the implementation of these rules until next year. Our supporters in the Senate took action on February 14, 2008 to expedite the delay in these harmful rules by offering an amendment (similar to the Coleman/Klobuchar bill) to the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act. The amendment, by Barbara A. Mikulski, D-Md., Norm Coleman, R-Minn., and Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., would prevent the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) from implementing the rule before April 1, 2009, when there will be a new president. The amendment passed on a

voice vote and **on 2/26/2008, the whole bill, S1200, passed the Senate on a vote of 83-10-7.**

Then the action turned to the US House of Representatives. Last month, our entire eight-member House delegation (5 Democrats and 3 Republicans) sponsored legislation to delay the one CMS rule that negatively affects Minnesota's TCM efforts.

When this issue reached the US House of Representatives' Energy and Commerce Committee, Chairman John Dingell (MI, D) decided to construct a bill that would delay, until April, **all seven CMS regulations** that restricted the use of federal dollars that had been supporting state social service programs. He received bipartisan support and **HR 5613** passed his committee on a vote of 43-0. **That bipartisan support continued on the House floor and the bill passed overwhelmingly on a vote of 349-62 on 4/23/2008.** This is clearly enough votes to override a potential veto by the President. I am happy to report that the entire Minnesota House delegation voted in favor of the bill.

The Bush Administration continues to argue against this Act so that they can use the executive branch rule making authority to aggressively cut federal spending on health and human services. The result of these cuts would be either the reduction of human services to our clients or passing along the costs of these programs on to our state governments. Many in Congress contend that the Administration has overstepped its rule making authority and thus have supported the rule delay legislation.

### **The US Senate is next.**

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) on Thursday, 4/24/2008, granted fast-track status to our legislation ([HR 5613](#)). This allows the House bill to bypass the [Senate Finance Committee](#) and head straight to the Senate floor as early as the week of April 28<sup>th</sup>. US Senator Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said, "These rules are unwise, unvetted and unrealistic," adding,

*(Continued on page 3)*

## President's Report

Once again MSSA has had a successful Annual Training Conference & Expo that we all can be proud of. A big thank you goes out to the Conference planning committee and the many volunteers that made the conference the success that it was. It was impressive to see such a variety in all of the workshops, speakers and of course vendors that were offered this year. Each year this committee seems to "out-do itself" with the quality workshops that they develop and offer our members.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the MSSA staff, Deb Most and Rod Halvorson for their contribution to the conference. Stephanie Kibler has had her day of rest and is already busy preparing for the 2009 Conference. Thank you for your commitment to MSSA.

A big thank you also needs to go out to our Past President John Moline. Though John would like everyone to think that I was anxiously waiting to replace him at the helm of MSSA, I believe it was John that had started and shared with the Board his countdown of how many days he had remaining before he left office. Sincerely, it was the strength of our friendship which allowed John and I to tease each other as a mentor could only do to their apprentice.

I would like to welcome and congratulate the candidates who were voted onto the Board through our new "electronic voting

policy". I look forward to working with you all as you add and contribute your uniqueness to the Board. Don't be shy jump right in.

President-Elect Raeone Loscalzo, are you ready to do some work? Actually Raeone and I have been busy working with the Board and MSSA staff with a Vision Planning retreat. Facilitated by Mia Taney, the MSSA Board projected potential changes to come in the next 5-7 years. It was a worthwhile endeavor which will assist us for our future plans as we grow as an organization. I'll share more with the members on this in our next Voice issue. (This is called a "tickler" to keep your interest until the next issue.)

I personally would like to thank those of you who donated \$5 or more to our MSSA scholarship fund which at last count was near \$700. To those of you who donated prizes to our silent auction that raised \$2845 that will also be used towards our scholarships a big thank you. Way to go members!!

A final reflection, at our conference I witnessed first-hand the networking between a 20+ year social worker veteran and a younger social worker new to the field. If you can, please be a mentor to others in your agency or Region. Reach out and be Proud of Who We Are.



**By Brian Buhmann,  
MSSA President,  
Freeborn County**

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"The Senate is moving closer to joining with the House to make sure these rules never see the light of day." However, some Senate Republicans "are preparing for a fight by circulating a letter to Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.) to reject" the bill, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Though the battle is not yet over, these preliminary victories feel good and with more good work, Congress will delay these punitive and misguided rules.

### MSSA Seeks Scholarship Judges

Please contact Deb Most at  
[deb@mnsocialserviceassoc.org](mailto:deb@mnsocialserviceassoc.org)

or  
651-789-4328



## Scholarships Available

MSSA offers scholarships for Graduate and Undergraduate Students seeking an education in the Human Service Field. Please share this information with students you know.

The MSSA Educational Scholarship is a \$1000 scholarship to a student accepted for admission or currently enrolled in an education program related to the Human Service Field. MSSA gives 2 Educational Scholarships every year. To download the application visit <http://www.mnsocialserviceassoc.org/educational.pdf>

The Marjorie J. Carpenter Scholarship is a \$1500 scholarship for a student accepted for admission or currently enrolled in a graduate education program related to the human service field. Once scholarship will be given. To download the application visit <http://www.mnsocialserviceassoc.org/marjorie.pdf>.

[marjorie.pdf](http://www.mnsocialserviceassoc.org/marjorie.pdf).

The MSSA Diversity Educational Scholarship is a \$1000 scholarship. It was started to assist students from African-American, American Indian, Asian, GLBT, Hispanic and Immigrant cultures in completing their education in the Human Service Field. Applicants can be either undergraduate or graduate students. To download the application visit <http://www.mnsocialserviceassoc.org/diversity.pdf>.

Applicants do not have to be a member of MSSA to qualify. The scholarships applications are due by June 1, 2008 and will be awarded for the Fall Semester.

If you have any questions, please contact Deb at 651-789-4328 or [deb@mnsocialserviceassoc.org](mailto:deb@mnsocialserviceassoc.org)

## Student Loan Forgiveness for Nonprofit Employees

You heard correctly! The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (HR2669) established a loan forgiveness program for individuals working for nonprofit organizations or in government.

How does this work?

- ◆ If you work for the government or a 501(c)3 nonprofit and you make payments for ten years, the balance of your debt will be forgiven if you made less than \$65,000 annually for the entire ten year period.
- ◆ If you made more than \$65,000 during any of those ten years, you will receive loan forgiveness equal to one-tenth of the remaining debt for each year you were below that income threshold.

- ◆ If you have existing student loans which you are currently making payments.

In addition to loan forgiveness for public service, it includes:

- ◆ Interest rate reductions on subsidized student loans,
- ◆ Caps on required repayments based on available discretionary income,
- ◆ Increase in Pell Grant amounts and eligibility.

For more information visit [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) or call 1-800-USA-LEARNS or 1-800-4FED-AID.

## 2009 Conference Already Underway

The 2009 Annual Training Conference & Expo, *How Do You Like Us Now?*, is already underway. The conference, being held March 24-27, 2009 at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel, will feature excellent speakers--both locally and nationally recognized.

The committee is looking at making a few changes to the agenda--one keynote speaker, additions to the special events and brown bag lunch series, more workshops on Friday morning, and more! Stay tuned for more information on these changes.

We have several new faces on the conference committee this year, including Andrea Loken Schmidt and Patty Benson, Program Chairs; and, Jenelle Hagen and Marsha Wood, Silent Auction Chairs. These new additions along with Chairs Amy Thier, Dawn Smith Wright and Nadine Marzolf, Char Graff (Volunteers), Carole Iten, David Holewinski and Meeghan Burnevik (Arrangements) will provide you with a top-notch conference for 2009.

**116th Annual Training Conference & Expo  
March 24--27, 2009**

**HOW DO YOU  
LIKE  
US  
NOW?**





## Two Tribal Nations to Provide Full Array of Child Welfare Services

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and White Earth Band of Ojibwe are strengthening tribal child welfare services for hundreds of American Indian children and their families, following the recent signing of two Minnesota Department of Human Services grant contracts. The contracts, part of the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative, transferred authority and responsibility for responding to reports of child abuse and neglect from neighboring counties to the tribes. The tribes will provide a full continuum of services that conform to tribal customs and traditions, including:

- ◆ Family preservation
- ◆ Child abuse and neglect prevention, and child protection
- ◆ Foster care
- ◆ Children's reunification with parents, transfer of custody to relatives,

customary tribal adoption and guardianship to provide stability and safety for children.

"Through the work of the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative and these historic contracts, we recognize the unique status of American Indian tribes as sovereign nations and support building tribal infrastructure to provide child welfare services for tribal members living on reservations," said Chuck Johnson, assistant commissioner of Children and Family Services for DHS.

White Earth Band of Ojibwe Chairwoman Erma J. Vizenor and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Chairman George Goggeye, Jr. are excited about the initiative.

"This is an historic endeavor between the



## Why Does Abuse in Later Life Occur?

Abusers of all ages believe that they are entitled to use any method necessary to get what they want and to dominate or punish their victims. They use a pattern of coercive tactics to gain and maintain power and control in relationships.

Caregiver stress, the popular notion that abuse in later life is primarily caused by stressed caregivers who abuse frail dependent elderly, is NOT supported by the research. (Phillips 2000, Reis 1998)

In addition, the theory of caregiver stress absolves the abusive party of responsibility for their behavior and suggests that if the victim was not dependent there would be no stress and therefore no abuse. Also, a belief in caregiver stress may prevent more helpful interventions from taking place and put the victim in greater danger.

What is abuse?

Abuse is defined as a physical maltreatment, an unjust or wrongful

practice, or insulting or coarse language (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (4th Ed.), 2000).

The National Elder Abuse Incidence Study estimates that over 85% of the reported cases of abuse of older persons were perpetrated by a spouse, partner, other family member or trusted loved one. (National Elder Abuse Incidence Study, 1989)

Forms of Abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Psychological or Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Sexual Assault
- Neglect
- Abandonment
- Homicide
- Financial Exploitation

(National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life and Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2002)

*(Continued from page 1)*

utilizing this system, MSSA has decided to expand this offering. Details will be in the conference materials, on the conference website and forthcoming in future newsletters.

**Workshops Overcrowded**—We will be contracting with the Hotel Sofitel for meeting rooms on Wednesday and Thursday of the conference—we will hold institutes and plenary sessions. We will no longer be splitting the Veranda rooms up, which will give us more seating, but will eliminate some of the workshops.

#### **On the fun side!**

We awarded a “traveling trophy” to

Habilitative Services, Inc. for the Best Overall Cabana. The trophy will be displayed at their agency and will return in 2009 for the next recipient. Other cabana winners included Mains’l for Best Food, (cotton candy) MSSA Region 11 for Best Theme (Princess Fay of the Metro Milky Way), and honorary mention to J&J Holmes (Pig Barn).

We will keep you posted as we advance on the ideas and more. Thanks for attending the conference and for your participation in the feedback process--our goal is to make this a positive experience for you and your co-workers.

*(Continued from page 6)*

state of Minnesota and a tribal entity,” said Vizenor. “We are pleased to see this child welfare goal come to fruition. The White Earth Band of Ojibwe is excited to undertake this child welfare initiative, because it provides us with the means to fully exercise jurisdiction over child welfare matters on our reservation. We believe we have a highly competent and culturally appropriate program to best meet the needs of our Native people.”

Added Goggleye, “For years, we could identify things we did not have in common or find the reasons to disagree but today we have a wonderful opportunity to work on a common issue in all societies: the welfare of our children. The initiative allows the tribe, our people, to take an active role in raising our children.”

According to the department’s 2006 child welfare report, American Indian children in Minnesota are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system. They were:

- ◆ Over eight times more likely to be reported as abused or neglected than white children
- ◆ Five times more likely to be determined victims of maltreatment than white children
- ◆ Eleven times more likely to be in out-of-home placement than white children
- ◆ More than four times more likely to enter state guardianship than white

children.

The goal of the initiative is to explore how child welfare services provided in a culturally meaningful way will improve child safety, well-being and permanency outcomes for children and families living on these reservations.

Now, families on the Leech Lake reservation will receive child welfare services previously provided by Beltrami, Cass, Hubbard and Itasca counties; and families on the White Earth Reservation will receive child welfare services previously provided by Becker, Clearwater and Mahnomon counties. Tribes will receive direct access to programs on a state-government-to-tribal-government basis.

*Supported by state and federal funds, this initiative will include data collection and evaluation to assess child safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for the children and families served. A review of the program will be conducted by the department within two years. The department will use the outcomes of this initiative to inform best practice with all Minnesota tribes to support and enhance the development of tribal child welfare infrastructure.*

“The initiative has created a strong partnership among tribal, state and county governments,” said Johnson. “These governments have developed a new model for working together to best meet the needs of Indian children and families.”



**Minnesota Social Service Association**  
 125 Charles Avenue  
 St. Paul, MN 55103

<http://www.mnsocialserviceassoc.org>

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.....impacting Minnesotans since 1893.



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## VOICE

*Our mission is to provide leadership to enhance the lives of Minnesotans by supporting diversity, impacting public policy, educating, and communicating among human service professionals.*

### MSSA Officers

**President**, Brian Buhmann  
**Past President**, John Moline  
**President Elect**, Raeone Loscalza  
**Secretary**, Paula Katzenmeyer  
**Treasurer**, Val Mersch  
**Nominations**, Amy Long

### MSSA Staff/Contractor

**Executive Director**,  
 Rod Halvorson  
**Director Member Services**,  
 Deb Most  
**Director Program Development & Communications**,  
 Stephanie Kibler

## MAY

**27** **Legislative Council**  
 10:00 AM, DHS

## JUNE

**4** **Public & Private Agency Council & Legislative Council**, Rep. Tina Liebling (Rochester), 1:00 PM, MSSA

**13** **Membership/Diversity Council**, 9:30 AM, MSSA  
**Administrative Council**, 11:30 AM, MSSA  
**Board of Directors**, 12:30 PM, MSSA