

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FEBRUARY 2008

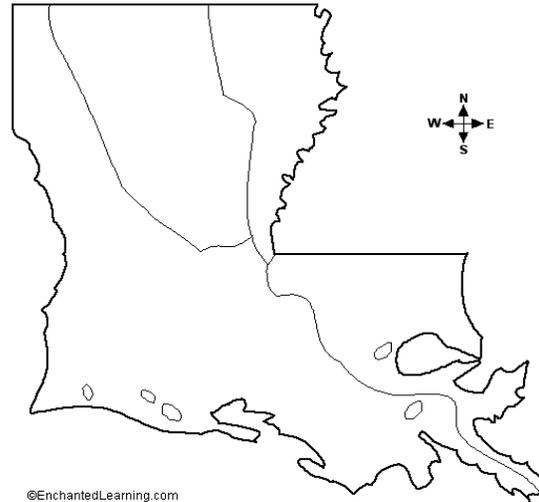
BY CAROL MILES

We need you!

We are looking for a few good social workers! One of the strengths of our organization has been our ability to stay on top of the legislative issues each session, that potentially effect our practice of clinical social work. To do that we have a lobbyist, of course, who does a great job of working with us on these important issues.

In addition, we have a legislative committee, made up of dedicated LACSW members who: look over bills, sometimes go to the Capital and meet with lawmakers or testify in committees.

This committee is crucial to our health as clinical social workers practicing in Louisiana. Please contact me if you are interested in serving in this capacity. You can reach me at lacsw2@hotmail.com or at my office at 985-893-1248.



Our base is Louisiana. Where are all the clinical social workers?

It is a brave new world out there with our legislature and now is the time for you to step up to the plate!

REMEMBER THANKS TO LACSW'S VIGILANCE:

- Medicaid reimbursement approved for LCSWs
- Keeping our law up to date
- Made sure we were not excluded in bills
 - EAP
 - MFT
 - CD

Next Board Meetings :

March 14, 2008
May 16, 2008
10:00 am
Baton Rouge
General Hospital

Members are welcome to attend our board meetings.
We would love to see you there

Have health insurers been systematically cheating patients and doctors of fair reimbursement for medical services? That is the disturbing possibility raised by an investigation of the industry's arcane procedures for calculating "reasonable and customary" rates.

The investigation, by the New York State attorney general, Andrew Cuomo, and his staff, suggests that these procedures — used by major insurance companies to determine what they will pay when patients visit a doctor who is not in the company's network — may be rigged to shortchange the beneficiaries.

When patients visit an out-of-network doctor, insurers typically agree to pay 80 percent of the reasonable and customary rate charged by doctors in the same geographic area. The patient is stuck with the rest, and as any patient knows, that rate always seems to fall short of what their own doctor is charging. If the attorney general's investigators are right, we can understand why.

The numbers are mainly compiled by an obscure company known as Ingenix, which — as it turns out — is owned by UnitedHealth Group, one of the nation's largest health insurers. Ingenix collects billing information from UnitedHealth and other health care payers to compile a database that is then used by the insurers to determine out-of-network reimbursement rates.

This system is an invitation for abuse. UnitedHealth owns the company whose database will affect its costs and profitability, so both have a strong financial interest in keeping reimbursement rates low. Even Ingenix seems unwilling to stand behind its numbers. In licensing its database to insurers, it stresses that the data is "for informational purposes only" and does not imply anything about "reasonable and customary" charges. Yet that is precisely what the health insurers use the data for, as Ingenix knows, according to investigators.

Mr. Cuomo and the American Medical Association, which has a long-standing suit filed against Ingenix and various UnitedHealth companies, claim that the data is manipulated. They claim that health insurers and Ingenix disproportionately eliminate high charges, thus skewing the numbers for customary charges downward.

Mr. Cuomo also says that Ingenix pools the charges for services performed by low-paid nurses and physician assistants with those performed by high-paid doctors. And he says the company fails to account for the patient's condition and type of facility where the service was provided — factors that can drive up costs. He also contends that Ingenix uses outdated information, which would guarantee that reimbursement rates will always lag behind medical inflation.

The A.M.A.'s more detailed legal complaint also charges that the database dilutes prices in high-cost locations by combining them with low-cost areas, and includes prices that reflect in-network discounts.

The attorney general's investigators did their own survey and concluded that \$200 is the fair market rate in New York City and Nassau County for a 15-minute consultation with a doctor for an illness of low to moderate severity. Ingenix, the investigators said, calculated the rate as \$77, of which United would pay \$62, leaving the patient to pay \$138. UnitedHealth disputes those numbers, so the attorney general will need to offer a fuller explanation of how they were derived.

Mr. Cuomo has announced his intention to sue UnitedHealth, Ingenix and three other subsidiaries, and has subpoenaed data from 16 other health insurers. Whatever that investigation unearths, it is already clear that the system for calculating "reasonable and customary" charges ought to be reformed by making it truly independent and objective. No consumer can reasonably trust numbers generated by a company whose loyalties and financial interests lie with the health insurers.

--Come to the table--

Join the LACSW and I in New Orleans



Most days there are 5000 miles and an ocean between us, but on **May 9th and 10th** I'll be back in New Orleans to offer this workshop with the LACSW. My Supervision and Ethics Workshops were birthed by the LACSW, so I'm excited to offer them again in a format similar to those offered in France this year. Look for lots of handouts, exercises, fun, and additional information on diversity and measuring success in supervision. Hope to see you in my **audience** in May!

Distance Work—Part Two Long Distance Lemonade

By Laury A. Bourgeois, LCSW-BACS

During our last issue, I raised long distance “lemons” with you. I hope you had a moment to think about creative ways you might squeeze them. This month (in addition to squeezing a few lemons for you) I've put you on notice of the upcoming Supervision workshop I'll be presenting for the LACSW. Hope you'll mark your calendars. Let the squeezing begin:

- *Lemon #1:* There will be no face to face meetings. *Lemonade*-Phone, fax and e-mail become the daily form of client communication. I am also always able to let clients know the next time that I will be in the states. If we must meet face-to-face during that time, the time is highly valued. Everyone is well-organized, prepared, and there is no “meeting to meet”.
- *Lemon #2:* There is a multiple hour time difference depending on where in the states the client is located- *Lemonade*, I am anywhere from 6-8 hours ahead of colleagues in the states and an hour ahead from the UK. Here, it's important to know office and lunch hours so you can get the most out of a day. I know that at 3:30pm in France it's 8:30am in New Orleans and I generally make my calls to CST between 4 and 6. Working with other consultants gives me more flexibility than government or organizations that have inflexible office hours. Generally, all telephone calls are scheduled and coordinated ahead of time by e-mail. It gets tricky a couple times during the year when the time changes and the difference lengthens or shortens. I find I have the illusion of ore time to work on projects because I can promise something to someone at the start of their day which is at the end of the day for me. I've teased my clients: “Isn't it nice to know that you have people working for you even when you're sleeping!”
- *Lemon #3:* All business is conducted by phone, FAX and/or e-mail-*Lemonade*-Limited opportunity to meet face to face makes phone, fax and e-mail the daily means of communicating with clients. Fax and e-mail are less time sensitive than phone calls, so anytime there is a need to schedule a telephone call or conference call it is done via e-mail. I believe that it is important to be as available as possible, so I have purchased a special contract with France Telecom for a flat monthly rate that allows me to talk between France, the USA and Western Europe 24/7 and fast access internet. I make all of the calls to clients so there is no cost to them for doing business with me abroad. It is important here to have an excellent anti-virus program and to have a back-up plan if phone and/or internet service are interrupted for some reason. Fortunately, I haven't been in that position yet, but I have a friend in the village who allows me to send and receive faxes from time to time and have gone to internet cafes in other emergencies.

To be continued next month-lemonade for lemons 4-7 and a summary of the overlying principles that make distance work work-anywhere in the world, not just in France.

The Louisiana Association of Clinical Social Workers (LACSW) is a voluntary association of clinical social workers whose mission is “to define, represent, promote, and protect clinical social work as a knowledge-based, client-centered profession which provides quality mental health services to the general public.”

LACSW offers its members the following benefits:

- A Board of Directors with state - wide representation to oversee the concerns of clinical social workers across the state of Louisiana.
- The only active presence in the Louisiana legislature through a full-time lobbyist who promotes clinical social work issues for the consumer and the social work practitioner.
- Discounts for workshops on clinical social work skills sponsored by the Continuing Education Committee within the Association.
- A clearinghouse for concerns of clinical social workers that are beyond the influence of the individual practitioner.
- Listing in a membership directory made available to health care companies and consumers to market the clinical social work services of the members.
- A Bi-monthly newsletter to keep members informed of the actions of the Association on their behalf.
- Staying abreast of national concerns via LACSW's membership in the Council of Social Work Organizations created in 2006 by the American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work.
- Representative interaction with managed care companies in Louisiana to assure high clinical practice standards and appropriate fee structures.

LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND REFERRAL DIRECTORY INFORMATION

MEMBERSHIP YEAR: July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION: Please list the information you wish to be used in the Membership Referral Directory for members and the

public and as a marketing tool for approaching managed care companies.

NAME: _____

(Last, First, Middle Initial or Nickname) - Please Print

CREDENTIALS: (Please circle all that apply) GSW LCSW Diplomate Bd. Approved Supervisor

Other Certifications: _____

PHYSICAL ADDRESS: _____

(Street, City, State, Zip)

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

if different from above (Street, City, State, Zip)

E-MAIL: _____ Website: _____ OFFICE PHONE: () - _____

FAX: () - _____ HOME PHONE : () - _____ List Home In Directory: Yes No

How do you prefer to be contacted? ___ Mail ___ Fax ___ Email ___ Office Phone ___ Home Phone ___ Any listed

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION: Please use your Voter Registration Card to complete the following:

State Senator: _____ Senator District Number: _____

Representative: _____ Representative District Number: _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES: Please make payable to LACSW c/o Connie Konikoff, Treasurer, 110 Nathalie St., Laf., LA 70506

_____ Student Membership _____ \$ 20.00 \$ _____ Ck # _____

_____ GSW/MSW Membership _____ \$ 75.00 \$ _____ Ck # _____

_____ LCSW Membership _____ \$195.00 \$ _____ Ck # _____

_____ Retired Membership _____ \$ 50.00 \$ _____ Ck # _____

_____ Agency/Corp. Membership _____ \$300.00 \$ _____ Ck # _____

CONTRIBUTIONS:

_____ Clin-Pac (Political Action Committee) - Please make payable to Clin-Pac \$ _____ Ck # _____

_____ Donation For Lobbying Efforts - Please make payable to LACSW \$ _____ Ck # _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Credit Card: . Visa . Mastercard

Account # _____ Exp. Date ____/____ Signature _____

Group Name or Place of Employment: _____

Practice Setting: ___ Private Practice ___ Agency Setting ___ In Patient ___ Clinic Consultation Services: Yes No

Work Schedule: ___ Full-Time ___ Part-Time ___ Days ___ Evenings ___ Saturdays

Populations: ___ Children ___ Adolescents ___ Adults ___ Geriatric

Cultural Issues: ___ African American ___ Asians ___ Hispanics

Modalities: ___ Individual Therapy ___ Couple Therapy ___ Group Therapy ___ Family Therapy

Specialty Groups: _____ Therapeutic Models: _____

Please list clinical specializations (Maximum 6): _____

Are you interested in participating in the Speaker's Bureau? _____ If yes, please list topics below: _____

Check with your C.P.A. for your particular tax situation regarding business expense deductions. Dues used for lobbying are not tax deductible. The LACSW uses the vast majority of dues every year for legislative lobbying expense in order to protect your vendorship law and the Licensed Clinical Social Work credential. We are an all volunteer organization here to protect your profession. Please join! Thank you!

Lifespan Integration Workshops

Registration Form

To register, fill out the information requested below and mail this form with your payment to:

LACSW
c/o Maureen Powell, LCSW
548 Kenmore Ave.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Name: _____ Degree _____ State/License # _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail Address (for confirming registration): _____

Please check which workshops you would like to attend and note appropriate tuition fees:

Beginning Lifespan Integration Workshop

Early registration (before April 1):

First-time participants: LACSW members--\$324; Non-members--\$360

Repeating participants: LACSW members--\$225; Non-members--\$250

Late registration (April 1 or later):

First-time participants: LACSW members--\$360; Non-members--\$400

Repeating participants: LACSW members--\$261; Non-members--\$290

If you are repeating, list the month/year and location of the previously attended workshop: _____

Tuition for the beginning workshop includes the cost of the Lifespan Integration book and shipping to the above address. Reading the book prior to the workshop is recommended.

I already own the book and am reducing my tuition by \$25.

Advanced Lifespan Integration Workshop

Early registration (before April 1):

First-time participants: LACSW members--\$292; Non-members--\$325

Repeating participants: LACSW members--\$175; Non-members--\$225

Late registration (April 1 or later):

First-time participants: LACSW members--\$337; Non-members--\$375

Repeating participants: LACSW members--\$202; Non-members--\$250

If you are repeating, list the month/year and location of the previously attended workshop: _____

Please choose a payment method:

I have enclosed a check for \$ _____ [US dollars] made payable to LACSW

OR

Please charge my VISA _____ Mastercard _____

Amount paid by credit card: \$ _____ [US dollars]

Card Number: _____ Expires _____

Name on Card _____ 3 digit security code* _____

Credit card billing address _____ Zip _____

* The 3 digit security code can be found on the back of the credit card at the top right end of the signature bar.

Cancellation Policy: Tuition will be refunded in full if notice of cancellation is received prior to April 1. For cancellations after April 1, 75% of tuition will be refunded with three weeks notice, 50% with two weeks notice, and 25% with one week notice. Cancellations within one week of the workshop will not be refunded, but may be applied to a future workshop.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Beginning &/or Advanced Lifespan Integration New Orleans, LA

Presented by Peggy Pace Thursday – Friday, May 22-23, 2008 8:30 to 5:00
Advanced continuing thru Saturday - Sunday, May 24-25, 2008 8:30 to 5:00

Workshop Tuition includes Peggy Pace's book: *Lifespan Integration: Connecting Ego States through Time* Contact Person: Maureen Powell : (225) 939-3883

February 29, 1:00-4:00

'Using the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Inventory in the treatment of couples and in career counseling' Presented by Peggy Salley, LCSW

Shreveport, LA LACSW Members \$50, non-members \$75

March 21, 9:00-12:00

Master Class – "Attachment Stories: Systemic Case Studies from Literature and Film"

Presented by Andrea E. Sheele, LCSW, LMFT

New Orleans, LA

Registration is open to LACSW members and one guest per member

LACSW Members \$50, non-member guests \$75

May 9-10, 8:30-5:00

Supervision Workshops for continuing and newly applying BACS

Presented by Laury Bourgeois, LCSW

River Oaks Hospital, New Orleans, LA

Further details to be announced at a later date

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATED INFORMATIONS

ON ALL WORKSHOPS AT: [www. Lacsw.org](http://www.Lacsw.org)

Or email at lacsw2@hotmail.com

Center for Clinical Social Work
the national voice of the profession, guardian of its values, and champion of its rights

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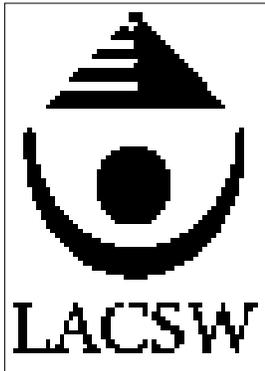
LACSW

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