



MiPSAC

Newsletter of the Michigan Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, Inc., the Michigan Chapter of APSAC.

Volume 11, Issue 1

January - June, 2006

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Rosalynn Bliss, MSW, CSW

It is with great excitement that I take on the role of President for MiPSAC in 2006. As an active participant of MiPSAC throughout these past years, I have been fortunate to witness the work and growth of this multi-disciplinary body. I look forward to continuing the forward direction that was started by previous presidents. This past year, MiPSAC focused on examining our strategic plan. Throughout a number of work sessions facilitated by Charlie Enright, members helped identify MiPSAC's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Action plans were then created based on the information gathered, which will be used as we plan the activities of MiPSAC over the next couple of years. This conversation also led to a number of changes to the by-laws, including one that effects membership.

Recently, MiPSAC amended their by-laws to allow professionals to become members of the state chapter of MiPSAC for \$25.00. In the past, individuals had to become a member of APSAC in order to be a member of MiPSAC – this is no longer mandated. I strongly encourage you to become a member of MiPSAC. In addition to receiving copies of the MiPSAC newsletter, MiPSAC has an active list-serv which allows members to discuss issues/share ideas electronically. More importantly, MiPSAC provides an opportunity to meet and learn from other professionals throughout the state who are working to intervene and prevent child maltreatment.



The need for MiPSAC and your participation is greater than ever. We are faced with the reality that the number of reported child abuse cases in Michigan is increasing and the amount of money that the state has dedicated to child abuse prevention efforts is diminishing. We are far more effective when we work together than when we work in isolation – that is the value of MiPSAC. I am consistently encouraged with our efforts and appreciate the continued dedication and hard work of all of our members. It is a great pleasure to work with all of you.

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MiPSAC Board Meetings

2nd Friday, even months, 12 noon – 2 PM

Michigan Children's Ombudsman's Office, Lansing
Harmonm@michigan.gov

ISPCAN 16th International Congress

'Children in a Changing World: Getting it Right'
York, England. September 3-6, 2006
www.ispcan.org

6th North American Conference SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME

September 13-16, 2006
Park City, Utah
Contact Brenda Crow: 801-627-3399

APSAC Forensic Interview Clinics

December 4-8, 2006
Portsmouth, Virginia
www.apsac.org

APSAC ADVANCED TRAINING INSTITUTE.

January 22, 2007
Town and Country Resort & Convention Center
San Diego, California
www.apsac.org

21st Annual San Diego International Conference. on Child and Family Maltreatment.

January 22-26, 2007
Town and Country Resort & Convention Center
San Diego, California
www.chadwickcenter.com/san_diego_conference.htm

APSAC 15th ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM July 11-14, 2007

Boston Marriott Copely, Boston MA
www.apsac.org

Join the MiPSAC member listserv
(sponsored by Wayne State University)
by contacting Vince Palusci at
Vpalusci@med.wayne.edu

Michigan Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, Inc. 2006 MiPSAC Board of Directors (Board term)

President: Rosalynn Bliss, MSW, CSW (04-06)
Child and Family Resource Council, Grand Rapids
rbliss@childresource.cc

Vice President: Colette Gushurst, MD (05-07)
Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies, Kalamazoo
gushurst@kcms.msu.edu

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Children's Hospital of Michigan, Detroit
vpalusci@med.wayne.edu

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enrightcha@voyager.net

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Carol Siemon, JD, SCAO, East Lansing (05-07)
N. Debra Simms, MD, DeVos Children's Hospital (05-07)
Nancy Skula, Care House, Mount Clemens (06-08)
Mary Smyth MD, William Beaumont Hospital (06-08)

Honorary Members:

Leni Cowling, M.Ed. Bellaire
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MiPSAC was founded in 1995 and incorporated in 1996 as the Michigan non-profit 501(C)3 state chapter of APSAC. The comments expressed in this newsletter reflect the views of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of MiPSAC or the American Professional Association on the Abuse of Children. (APSAC).

MiPSAC's Goals

- To bring together professionals working in the area of child maltreatment
- To foster networking
- To be an information resource
- To sponsor quality training

DR. SIMMS CHOSEN AS 2005 CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN AWARD RECIPIENT

The Michigan Chapter of the National Children's Alliance has selected Debra Simms, M.D., medical director, Child Protection Team at DeVos Children's Hospital, as its 2005 Champion for Children award recipient.

"Dr. Simms is a passionate advocate for the specialized needs of child abuse victims," said Barb Welke, chair, Michigan Chapter of the National Children's Alliance. "Dr. Simms' warm, compassionate demeanor and expertise in the field of child abuse are a couple of reasons why she was selected for this annual award."

National Children's Alliance (NCA) is a nationwide not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote and support communities in providing a coordinated investigation and comprehensive response to victims of severe child abuse. NCA provides services to Children's Advocacy Centers, multidisciplinary teams and professionals across the country.

"Dr. Simms is an important addition to the Child Protection Team at DeVos Children's Hospital," said Bob Connors, M.D., president, DeVos Children's Hospital. "In addition to her role at our hospital, she is also the only full-time physician providing medical examinations for children suspected of abuse or neglect in Kent and 36 surrounding counties. She is impacting countless children."



The Child Protection Team at DeVos Children's Hospital (CPT) is a multidisciplinary hospital-based program providing services for physically and sexually abused and neglected children on both an inpatient and outpatient basis. The Child Protection Team provides comprehensive medical evaluations facilitating prevention, identification, diagnosis and treatment of child abuse or neglect in West Michigan through education, clinical practice and research. The team is composed of 40 members from a variety of disciplines.

DeVos Children's Hospital is West Michigan's largest children's hospital, serving children and families throughout a 37-county region. Our team includes more than 100 specialists uniquely skilled in providing medical care to children, in over 40 outpatient clinical settings. DeVos Children's Hospital is committed to caring for children and families with compassion, excellence and innovation.

Websites of interest:

www.apsac.org ;

www.firststar.org

www.preventchildabuse.org

www.michiganschildren.org

www.nationalcalltoaction.com

www.cwla.org

www.childtrauma.org;

www.childrensdefense.org

A Look at the State Court Administrative Office- Child Welfare Services Division

By Carol A. Siemon, JD

In 2003, the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), under the direction of the Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, created a Child Welfare Services division (CWS). The Director of Child Welfare Services, Kathryn O'Grady, is a former child welfare attorney, Wayne County juvenile court referee, and Director of the Michigan Child Welfare Law Resource Center at the University of Michigan Law School. Carol Siemon, Deputy Director, is a former assistant prosecuting attorney, training attorney for the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, legal counsel with the Michigan Legislative Service Bureau, and investigator with the Office of Children's Ombudsman. Combined, O'Grady and Siemon have almost 50 years' experience in child welfare law.

Child Welfare Services' goal is to help courts expedite permanent placement for children through programs such as the [Court Improvement Program](#) and the [Foster Care Review Board Program](#). CWS helps courts implement the recommendations from the Child and Family Services Review which include safety and permanency goals. CWS has also helped courts prepare for the pending federal Title IV-E audit. In addition, CWS monitors the special dockets that track children who are absent from their foster care placements without legal permission ([AWOLP](#)). CWS also encourages family courts to participate in Michigan Adoption Day, a joint effort of the Michigan Supreme Court and the Department of Human Services.

A growing part of Child Welfare Services is training and conferences generously funded by the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice. On March 10-11, 2005, a 2-day conference entitled "Addressing the Educational Needs of Children in Foster Care" was held for lawyers, judges/referees, DHS and private agency caseworkers, school personnel, and others who are critical stake-holders when considering the educational needs of foster children. Child Welfare Services worked with the Department of Human Services, Office of Children's Ombudsman, Department of Education, and Children's Charter to develop and implement this training opportunity.

On March 23-24, 2006, Child Welfare Services, Department of Human Services, Department of Community Health, Office of Children's Ombudsman, and Children's Charter held a conference for over 500 participants on "Mental Health Needs in Child Welfare: Addressing the Needs of Children and Families." A total of 30 workshops were offered, covering a variety of topics, including, "Infant Mental Health- Attachment and Bonding Issues," "Navigating the CMH System," "Adolescent Brain Functioning," "The Effects on Children Raised by a Mentally Ill Parent," "Moving Toward Evidence-Based Practice," and many others. In the next few months, most of the conference notebook materials will be made available on the SCAO-Child Welfare Services website (<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/services/cws/cws.htm>).

Preliminary planning for next year's spring 2-day conference has begun. This conference will focus on "Addressing Substance Abuse Needs in Child Welfare" and will be held April 3-4, 2007 at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing.

This summer, CWS is offering "Summer Series on Child Welfare Interviewing and Communication Issues" trainings. The first of three in this series of trainings was held June 30th at the East Lansing Kellogg Center on the topic of "Motivational Interviewing: Increasing the Readiness to Change for Parents Court-Ordered to

Participate in Services.” Michael Clark, MSW, LMSW, a consultant and presenter on child welfare, mental health, addictions, and juvenile justice issues, was the speaker.

The second training in this series is planned for July 25th in Sterling Heights. This training, “Communicating with Foster Children” will focus on communication with children at the time of removal and placement, and implementation of some basic steps that will help attorneys, CPS workers, and foster care workers reduce the trauma caused to children during the removal and placement process. Rosalind Folman, PhD, will discuss her research, the research of others, and the implications for improving how we work with children at this critical juncture.

In August, CWS is planning the third training in the series to focus on the topic of “Interviewing Children with Disabilities.” Nora Baladerian PhD, a psychologist noted for her expertise in this area, and author of Interviewing Skills to Use with Abuse Victims with Developmental Disabilities, will present on August 21st at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing, August 23rd at the Best Western in Gaylord, and August 25th at the Best Western in Sterling Heights.

On September 8, 2006, in collaboration with the Michigan Judicial Institute (MJI), CWS will hold a best practices forum on “Children Absent from Court-Ordered Placement Without Legal Permission” at the Hall of Justice Conference Center in Lansing. This forum will provide an opportunity to hear both Michigan and national perspectives on the issues and practices involving children missing from care in our child welfare system and provide forum participants with information and strategies to improve delivery of services to these children and families.

If you wish additional information about SCAO-Child Welfare Services, please contact Carol Siemon at siemonc@courts.mi.gov.

Office of Children’s Ombudsman (OCO)- Update

By Verlie Ruffin
Michigan Children’s Ombudsman

New Children’s Ombudsman appointed and investigator hired - Verlie Ruffin was appointed as the new Children’s Ombudsman by Governor Granholm on January 30, 2006. She replaced Lynne Martinez who left to run for Mayor of the City of Lansing. Prior to this appointment, Ms. Ruffin was the Associate Director of the Michigan Federation for Children and Families, a statewide membership association that represents private, nonprofit child welfare agencies, coordinating organizations, and individuals serving children in Michigan. Ms. Ruffin was unanimously confirmed by the Senate and is the fifth person to hold the position of Children’s Ombudsman since the office was created by the legislature in 1994.

On July 3, 2006 Tobin Miller, formerly with the Michigan Judicial Institute was hired at the OCO to fill the vacant Investigator/Legal Specialist position. Mr. Miller holds a law degree from Thomas Cooley Law School and has extensive experience in law and policy governing child protective proceedings. The office is now fully staffed with 12 full-time employees, including the Ombudsman.

Independent State Agency - The Office of the Children’s Ombudsman is an independent state agency with the statutory authority through the Children’s Ombudsman Act to receive and investigate complaints that citizens have about children involved in child protective services, foster care, adoption services, and juvenile justice.

The OCO has oversight responsibility over the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) and private child-placing agencies involved in these programs.

Mission - The mission of the office is to promote public confidence by ensuring the safety and well-being of the child welfare system. This is accomplished by investigating complaints, advocating for abused and neglected children, recommending changes in law, rule, policy, and practice and working to improve the system for the benefit of current and future generations of children who enter the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

The OCO collects data and provides an overview of the office activities through an annual report. The 2005 Annual Report (to be released this summer) contains information on 107 case investigations involving 411 children in 37 of Michigan's 83 counties. Five annual reports have been submitted to the Governor, Legislature, and DHS since the office began operating in 1995.

In 2004, the **Children's Ombudsman Act was amended** to allow for more information to be available to the public regarding cases of child abuse and neglect. As a result, the OCO has new authority to:

- Receive complaints from people who are "mandated reporters" under Michigan's Child Protection Law and provide them with a report of the OCO investigation.
- Release investigative findings to a complainant listed in the act.
- Receive a complaint from any person not listed in the act and report the recommendations resulting from an investigation.

In addition, the amended act mandates the Ombudsman to educate the public about the agency, receive and investigate complaints on juvenile justice cases, receive information on child death cases in Michigan that may have resulted from abuse and neglect and requires the Governor to appoint an Ombudsman with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Verlie Ruffin stated in a presentation at the 2005 May conference on "Mental Health Needs of Children in Child Welfare" that she and her staff will continue to advocate and work with legislators, public administrators, private agency leaders, and others to look for ways to improve the system for vulnerable children in Michigan.

For more information about the Office of Children's Ombudsman visit the website at www.Michigan.gov/oco or contact the office at (800) 642-4326.

MiPSAC Membership Information

There are two ways to become a member of MiPSAC, the state chapter of APSAC in Michigan:

1. Join APSAC. Joining APSAC and paying your annual dues also makes you a member of MiPSAC if your membership address is in Michigan. A part of your annual dues is sent to MiPSAC to cover your membership. MiPSAC hears periodically (but not often enough) about new APSAC members, so please let us know if you think you are an APSAC member so we can make sure you receive MiPSAC communications.
2. Join MiPSAC directly. Our changed bylaws have created an in-state membership category to join MiPSAC. This does NOT include APSAC membership. Please contact the membership chair at vpalusci@med.wayne.edu for more information on this option.