

MIPSAC

MEDICAL CONCERNS

by Vincent J. Palusci, M.D.

A letter to Senator Joel Gougeon:

March 25, 1997

Senator Joel Gougeon
Chairman, Families, Mental Health and
Human Services Committee
Senate, State Capitol
Lansing, MI 48913

Dear Senator Gougeon:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Senate Committee on Families, Mental health and Human Services in Pontiac yesterday. As Director of the Child Protection Team of DeVos Children's Hospital at Butterworth, I would like to support the recommendations proposed by Lt. governor Connie Binsfeld's Children's Commission and the Report of the Children's Ombudsman.

As a practicing pediatrician who sees abused and neglected children, I would like to report to you that medical professionals often feel frustrated by our child welfare system.

1. Reports of child maltreatment often do not receive full field investigation. There can be a dramatic lack of communication between CPS and the medical team. After a mandated report is made, previous

medical information may not be available to foster care and adoptive parents. This poses a serious health hazard for children with ongoing, chronic medical needs. CPS field investigations are crucial to adequately investigating reports of child abuse and in determining the kids and types of services which will be helpful for the family. Face-to-face contact with families, interviewing children without the alleged perpetrators being present, and unannounced visits to families allow CPS investigators to determine the real findings in a child maltreatment matter.

Transferring medical information to health care and childcare providers would be expedited through the use of a medical passport. This would also be greatly helped by the identification of a "medical home" for a child, in which there is a constant health care provider. This would allow children to continue with medical care that they had received prior to being into foster or adoptive care and would allow the treatment of illnesses to continue with minimal delay to the child.

2. There is a need for improved knowledge about child abuse and neglect among all professionals. Improved knowledge about child abuse and neglect results in many improvements for the child. Trained interviewers talking to children about child sexual abuse result in more information and more believable disclosures. Improved knowledge of

mandated reporters results in improved reports with more information available for investigation and follow-up. Mandated reporters could also be required to receive such training, although I am uncertain at this time whether training should be mandated through licensing laws. Studies have yielded conflicting results on the benefit of mandating physician training.

3. Serious cases often go without any medical involvement. Community medical resources are not being routinely used for multidisciplinary case review with Child Protective Services. A substantial number of CPS agencies have identified available medical resources; it is important to mandate such involvement. The availability of teams with medical professionals to review cases, particularly termination cases, is crucial to understanding the many facets of families in need.

4. Mental health services for victims of child maltreatment are sorely lacking and require significant funding within our state community health budgets. In the design and provision of mental health services, the use of neonatal drug screens is a significant first step in identifying families using illegal substances. While it would be unfortunate to criminalize such cases, it is important to identify these families to provide them with much needed services.

All of the ombudsman-related legislative recommendations (1-11) should be implemented. Leaving aside the legalities of legislating legal and medical practice, it is imperative that the ombudsman have full subpoena authority and ability to investigate as an independent agency. This may be enhanced under the legislature. Mandated reporters, which are currently left out of the Ombudsman's bill,

should have the ability to refer cases to the Ombudsman.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share these concerns. It was interesting to note that Mr. Bearup used the word "triage" in his report; in a medical context, triage defines the process where one chooses among critically injured individuals to determine the level of services that will be provided. It is an unfortunate but true fact that Mr. Bearup and Lt. Governor Binsfeld's Commission have had to deal with children who are in many ways "critically injured" in the State of Michigan. The recommendations of the Children's Commission and the Children's Ombudsman offer a unique opportunity for Michigan to improve its child welfare system for the benefit of all the children in the state.

Sincerely,

Vincent J. Palusci, M.D.

Director, Child Protection Team, DeVos Children's Hospital

Assistant Professor, MSU College of Human Medicine

(616)391-8799; fax: (616)391-8897



REMINDER!

Please renew your annual membership to APSAC. You need National membership for MiPSAC.



COMING CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

June 3 & 4. "2nd Annual Community Prevention Planning for Children and Families" Conference at Weber's Inn. Ann Arbor. Sponsored by MACA.

June 3-5. Basic Child Abuse. Grand Rapids. Call for information. Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Mich. (517)334-6060

June 3-7, 1997. 2nd World Congress on family Law and the Rights of Children and Youth. San Francisco, CA. Contact: Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. (608) 251-4001.

June 4-7, 1997. 2nd International Conference on Children Exposed to Family Violence. Ontario, Canada. Contact: Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute (903) 534-5100.

June 18-21, 1997. 5th. National Colloquium of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC). Miami Beach, FL. Contact: APSAC (312) 554-0166.

June 29 - July 2, 1997. 5th. International Family Violence Research Conference. Durham, NH. Contact: UNH(603)8622525

Aug. 15, 1997 **MIPSAC meeting** 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Petoskey Holiday Inn, 1444 S. US 131. Video sharing.

Sept 1997. Skillman Workshop "Treating Sexually Abused/Abusive Children, Adolescents & their Families". TBA. Sponsored by MACA.

October 15-16. Specialized Child abuse: Investigation & Prosecution of a Physical Abuse Case. Ann Arbor? Call for information. Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Mich. (517)334-6060

Oct 24, 1997. **MIPSAC Annual Meeting** at the Comfort Inn, Mount Pleasant, Mi. Election and business meeting from 11-12:00 noon. **Speakers will present 1 hour educational presentations. from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Oct. 23 & 24. 40th. Annual MACA Conference. EMU Corporate Center. Ypsilanti. Contact: MACA.

Nov 18-20. Child abuse and Domestic Violence. Lansing? Prosecuting Attorneys association of Michigan. Call for information. Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Mich. (517)334-6060



NEXT MIPSAC MEETING

Friday, June 27, 1997. In Lansing location at Carol Siemon's or Rich Bearup's. Board meeting.

Note: The Holiday Inn in Petoskey is holding a block of rooms for us for the August, 15th. training meeting. They will give us a special 20% discount on the rooms for MIPSAC. Please make reservations by July 15th. when they will be released. Use Code MIP when reserving room. Rooms view Little Traverse Bay with two double beds. \$100.00. Call 616-347-6041. This training meeting is to share and view videos which are useful in CSC investigations and treatment. Please bring useful videos which you recommend to share with us. We also will have a taped video of the Wenatchee, Wash. Child Sex Ring Investigation...and the rest of the story. You will find it fascinating!

Thinking Ahead:

We are looking for articles of interest to our membership for the newsletter. Questions or suggestions to consider are always welcome and should prompt good feedback from everyone.

Membership committee
Legislative committee
Conference/Training committee
Newsletter /brochure committee

President: David L. Harrison 270 Wimberly, Rochester Hills, MI 48306. phone: (810) 651-8668

Vice-president: Dr. Vince Palusci, DeVos Children's Hospital, 100 Michigan Ave. Grand Rapids, MI 49503 phone: (616) 391-8799.

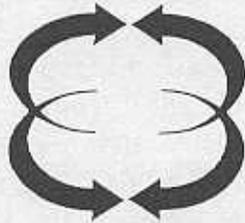
Secretary: Debra Bennett, Gateway Community Services, 910 Abbott Rd., East Lansing, MI. 48823. phone: (517) 351-4000.

Treasurer: Susan Heartwell, 901 Michigan NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Phone: (616) 771-6400.

Goals:

- To bring together Michigan professionals working in the area of abused children
- To foster networking among Michigan professionals
- To be an information resource for Michigan professionals
- To sponsor quality training for Michigan professionals.

Editorial comment



JUST FOR ARGUMENTS SAKE

With all the controversy concerning the Internet pornography, where do we draw the line? While young children may brush it off as silly and older teens may find it fascinating, the group of pre-teens may be the most harmed by the exposure. There is no venue to explain to them the role of human relationships and the need for companionship and support. Sexual activity has become detached from that as an incidental act. Thus, we have babies conceived without "parents". If there are no role models, or appropriate parenting at home, our future "families" are non-existent. While it is true that we can no

longer define families in the old way of mother, father, two kids and a dog, it is also true that we have not defined who is responsible for babies when they are born. Many grandparents have attempted to take on the role of family. As a result, we are chasing deadbeat fathers, and the young mothers are lost in a world of trying to fill their loneliness with one sex partner after another, never forming a family. How should "family" be defined? We cannot reunify what does not exist. We are giving mixed messages to our youth. I suggest that the legal term of Parent comes with the age of 18. If a minor teen has a child and can give it loving care and nurturing, she would gain parenting status upon turning of age. If she cannot care for the child adequately, the child should be removed and placed for adoption. I admit it is a hard lesson, but it would eliminate the huge amounts of tax dollars expended to try to make a family where one does not exist. Do you agree or disagree?

Thank you for your responses to last newsletter's *Just for Arguments Sake* editorial. Your comments were very interesting and noteworthy. With your permission, I will put your comments in the next newsletter. Leni



Please send articles for the newsletter to:
 Leni Cowling
 P.O. Box 892
 Bellaire, MI 49615

MiPSAC

Michigan Professional Society on the Abuse of Children

Board of Directors Meeting

May 9, 1997

Attendance: David Harrison, Vincent Palusci, Susan Heartwell, Tracy Cyrus, Patricia Walsh, Roger Pickering, William Ladd, Leni Cowling. MiPSAC members Harriett Beach, Carol Siemon, and Frank Vandervort were present.

Call to Order: A quorum was declared and the meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by President David Harrison, at the Children's Assessment Center, 901 Michigan Street, Grand Rapids Michigan.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the meeting of 2/28/97 were approved by unanimous vote, with the following corrections: The meeting was called to order by Vincent Palusci (in the President's absence) at Butterworth Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Old Business:

Treasurer's report: Susan reported that the current account balance is \$1087.76. Her attached report was unanimously accepted. Susan reported that MiPSAC will not be required to file a tax return, given its non-profit status and income less than \$25,000.

Membership: Vince reported that there are currently 90 APSAC members living in Michigan. No new state chapter members have been added since our last meeting. Notice was distributed (see attached) announcing that, as of May 1, 1997, APSAC has instituted a \$25.00 dues increase, \$15.00 of which will be returned to the state chapter. APSAC members will, therefore, officially be members of MiPSAC. David Harrison is to contact APSAC regarding official chapter notification, obtaining an updated membership list and schedule of anticipated payments. MiPSAC current members have paid membership fees for calendar 1997. The Board unanimously voted to support APSAC in its current membership drive (10,000 by 2000). Discussion was held regarding asking other organizations to include APSAC information in their organizational mailings. Please give Vince names and addresses of such organizations. To further attract MiPSAC members, Vince will investigate the possibility of a MiPSAC "reception" during the University of Michigan Statewide Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, to be held in Ypsilanti 11/17-18, 1997.

Conference: David and Pat recommended repeating the format for our educational conference and Annual Meeting in October. Anticipated date is 10/24/97 at the Comfort Inn in Mount Pleasant. Carol Siemon and David to make hotel arrangements and report back. Educational content is to be determined; suggestions were made to invite Dr. Debra Pool (CMU) and Carol Siemon to provide 1 hour educational presentations from 1-3 p.m., after a business meeting and election of officers 11-12 a.m. and lunch from 12-1 p.m.

Newsletter: Leni reports that the final version of the latest MiPSAC newsletter will be mailed by June 1, with the help of Vince and Frank Vandervort. Please continue to submit articles to Leni when possible.

Legislative Watch: Bill reported on and distributed a series of bills currently being considered by the Michigan Legislature. Topics include videotaping investigative interviews, school official presence during CPS interviews on school property, modifications in the Juvenile Code to define "child abuse" and "the child's best interest" and implementation of the recommendations of the Lt. Governor's Children's Commission and the Children's Ombudsman. Please contact Bill or Carol Siemon for updated information. The Board moved unanimously to reimburse Bill for \$15 annually to subscribe to APSAC's legislative update service.

Public Relations: No report. Deferred until next meeting.

Articles of Incorporation: David reported that we are currently amending our articles for the 501c3 application. This is in process; letters to be sent out by David and Vince. Of note, a separate filing regarding lobbying is only required if significant financial resources or staff time are to be used to influence legislation.

New Business:

Revised national funding for state chapters will be investigated by David. (see attached APSAC notice received with April 1997 mailing).

Nominations for APSAC Presidential Honor Roll: The Board unanimously voted to nominate David Harrison (David abstained). Vince will complete and fax the nomination form today.

Carol Siemon announced her impending marriage on 8/2/97 to Tom Fruechtenicht, an attorney. The Board expressed its congratulations and hope that this would not affect her attendance at the August meeting.

Adjournment: All business having been discussed, Roger Pickering made a meeting to adjourn at 2:07 p.m. William Ladd provided a second. All present unanimously agreed. **The next Board meeting will be held Friday, 6/27/97 at 11:00 a.m. in Lansing** (location at Carol Siemon's or Rich Bearup's). A meeting date is also planned for Friday August 15, 1997 in Petosky. Please contact David Harrison for further information.

MiPSAC Board Meeting
May 9, 1997
Treasurer's Report

1997 first quarter transactions

Beginning Balance 1/1/97:	\$1,013.76
Deposits or credits:	74.00 APSAC contribution
Checks or debits	<u>.00</u>
Balance as of 3/31/97	\$1,087.76

2.5% interest used to offset bank charges - result is no interest, but no bank charge

Susan Heartwell, Treasurer

