

## Health Care Alert

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION PROVIDING HEALTH CARE TIPS FOR PEOPLE WITH  
INTELLECTUAL AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND THEIR SUPPORT TEAMS

### A Breath of Winter Air – What May be Hiding Indoors



*“Shut the door not that it lets in the cold but that it lets out the coziness.” Mark Twain*

During these winter months, when it’s cold and snowy and drizzly outdoors, we may want to do nothing more than stay curled up inside our homes until the weather’s a bit more agreeable. As we turn on the heat and close our windows and doors, our indoor environments keep us cozy and comfortable.

The average American spends about 90 percent of their lifetime indoors. But how often do we think about indoor air quality and what’s lurking in that air we breathe? Sometimes, the air quality inside our homes is actually worse than it is on the outside. The effects of breathing indoor air pollutants can be experienced immediately or even years afterward. Adverse health effects from exposure to toxic air can range from mild to lethal. Those most vulnerable to the consequences of air pollution are developing fetuses, babies, young children, the elderly, and people with chronic health conditions.

Air pollutants can include chemicals, gases and living organisms like mold. Toxic air in the home can originate from cigarette smoke, lead dust, asbestos, wood smoke, carbon monoxide, radon gas, and [formaldehyde](#). Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are emitted as gases from products including paints, paint strippers, cleaning supplies, pesticides, building materials, furnishings, office equipment, moth repellents, artificial fragrances, air fresheners, and dry-cleaned clothing. VOCs evaporate into the air and can irritate the eyes, nose and throat, cause headaches, nausea, and damage to the liver, kidneys or central nervous system. Some of them can cause cancer. For some people, exposure to indoor air pollutants like dust mites, mold, pet dander, tobacco smoke, and cockroach droppings can trigger asthma attacks soon after exposure.

Exposures to toxic substances like [lead](#), [polychlorinated biphenyls](#) (PCBs) and [mercury](#) are documented risk factors for the development of intellectual disabilities. Exposure to tobacco smoke increases your risk of cancer, heart disease and stroke. It can cause or worsen asthma symptoms and respiratory illnesses, and is linked to increased risks of ear infections and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Molds are living organisms that produce spores that float in the air, land on moist surfaces and grow. Inhaling or touching molds may produce symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, red eyes and skin rashes, and can trigger asthma attacks.

Exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) is higher in cold weather. Building up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, this odorless and colorless gas is produced whenever any fossil fuel such as natural gas, gasoline, oil, or wood is burned. It is known as “the Silent Killer”, because the exposed person may not be aware they are being poisoned until it is too late. Symptoms of CO poisoning such as headache, nausea, shortness of breath, and dizziness can be mistaken for the flu. Even exposure to low levels may result in long-term neurological damage including learning and memory impairments, emotional and personality changes, and sensory and motor disorders. If you experience symptoms that could be from CO poisoning, get fresh air immediately. Open doors and windows and turn off stoves, ovens, heaters and similar appliances and leave the house. Call a poison center **immediately** at 1-800-222-1222 and follow their directions.

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## SE PA United Way Resources

### Free Trauma Training

The United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey currently provides Trauma Informed Care training that prepares participants to obtain their certification as a Trauma-Competent Professional through Lakeside Link. The trainings focus on applying information, concepts, approaches, principles, and skills for trauma informed care in real-life situations. If you are interested in receiving training, go to <https://lakesidelink.com/training/> or contact Erin Connolly, LSW, Impact Manager-Trauma Initiatives at [econnolly@uwgpsnj.org](mailto:econnolly@uwgpsnj.org).

### 2-1-1 Helpline

United Way also provides a 24/7, free resource that connects residents to services in crisis situations through their 2-1-1 helpline. By calling 2-1-1 or accessing the website <http://211sepa.org/>, you can get in touch with specialists who are highly trained to provide referrals to the appropriate resources. Language services are available for up to 170 languages and TTY as well.

For access to these initiatives and resources go to: <https://www.unitedforimpact.org/>

## A Breath of Winter Air – What May be Hiding Indoors Cont'd



The good news is that indoor air pollution is a health hazard that can often be prevented. Start by removing or reducing the source of contamination. Have strict NO SMOKING rules inside homes, buildings and vehicles, and outside near open windows and doors. Avoid using harsh cleaning supplies, fragrances and pesticides; instead use

products that are non-toxic. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, install CO detectors near sleeping areas, and have heating systems and fuel-burning appliance inspected annually. Never heat your home with a gas oven or burn

fuels indoors, except in stoves or furnaces made for indoor use. Never idle the car in the garage, even with the garage door open. Test your home with a do-it-yourself radon kit or call a qualified radon specialist for advice. Make sure your home is cleaned often, rooms are well-ventilated and the filters of heating and cooling systems are changed regularly. Some sources recommend using house plants to help absorb toxic chemicals from the air. Sometimes even the simplest measures can improve the quality of air we breathe and provide a pleasant and healthy indoor environment that is beneficial for us all.

### Resources:

<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/inside-story-guide-indoor-air-quality#why-booklet>  
<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/health-energy-efficiency-and-climate-change>  
<https://cfpub.epa.gov/roe/chapter/air/indoorair.cfm>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/healthyhomes.htm>  
<https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showDevelopmentalDisabilitiesEnv>  
<https://factor.niehs.nih.gov/2017/3/papers/dementia/index.htm>  
<https://cfpub.epa.gov/roe/chapter/air/indoorair.cfm>  
<https://www.cpssc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Home/The-Inside-Story-A-Guide-to-Indoor-Air-Quality>  
[Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Fact Sheet - EPA](#)  
[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015.../pcmp\\_english\\_100-f-09-001.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015.../pcmp_english_100-f-09-001.pdf)

## Updates

### PCHC Behavioral Health Department Update

Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care (PCHC) has recently hired a new Director of IDD Mental Health Supports. The team is currently revising the Integrated Health Clinical Review (IHCR) Process to better help the individuals we serve. PCHC is actively looking at the people on the waiting list and reviewing their current status. We are reaching out to teams for updates and scheduling visits. Please feel free to call Ms. Shani Jackson at 215-546-0300 ext. 3206 if you have anyone on the waiting list or have questions.

If someone you support is in need of help and needs our assistance, please fax your [Team Agreement Form](#) (TAF) request to 215-790-4976.

### Dual Diagnosis Support Curriculum Training Update

*The Dual Diagnosis Support Curriculum for Direct Support Professionals* will be available online in the near future. Please check "<https://www.myodp.org/>". In the meantime, continue to check our website at [www.pchc.org](http://www.pchc.org) for regional in-person Dual Diagnosis Support Curriculum Trainings scheduled throughout the upcoming year.

### Improving Behavior Mental Health Resources and Knowledge with the local ASERT

PCHC met with PA's Eastern ASERT (Autism, Services, Education, Resources and Training) in November 2017, and has now provided a link to their helpful webpage and training schedule. ASERT's mission is to work to improve the lives of PA residents with autism by providing education and training to professionals, family members, individuals with autism and members of the community who may have interaction with people who have autism. Click here to visit ASERT: [www.paautism.org](http://www.paautism.org).

## Depressive Disorders

Depression is a very common mental health challenge. There is more than one type of depression, but all forms of depression have a negative effect on an individual's capacity to carry on normal activities. The presence of a sad, empty or irritable mood is present. Often the affected individual complains of body pain and has difficulty concentrating. The cause, duration or timing of symptoms is different in the various forms of depression.

For more information please visit the NAMI website at: <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Depression>

### Accessing Behavioral Health &/or Substance Use Services in Southeastern PA

Many people experience mental health challenges and/or substance use issues in Pennsylvania. This includes people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care (PCHC) knows how difficult it can be to find the support, but fortunately help is available. We have created a brochure "*Accessing Behavioral Health and/or Substance Use Services in Southeastern PA*" that provides resources to help you connect services within your county. The brochure highlights:

- General insurance information
- Services that may be offered and how to access them
- Billing facts and,
- Contact numbers for local BH-MCO's, county offices, and crisis hotlines

Services vary from county to county. Please be sure to check with the appropriate BH-MCO for the specific services that they may provide. For more information or to print the brochure, please click here "[Accessing Behavioral Health and/or Substance Use Services in Southeastern PA](#)".

## PCHC Dual Diagnosis Curriculum and Regional Trainings 2018

01/18/18	DDX: Naming It	Willow Grove Giant
01/18/18	DDX: Mental Health Wellness and Recovery	Willow Grove Giant
02/15/18	DDX: The Role of Everyday Lives and Recovery	Delaware County Intermediate Unit
02/15/18	DDX: Communicating with the Psychiatrist	Delaware County Intermediate Unit
03/01/18	Adaptive Equipment and Communication Devices	Montgomery County Intermediate Unit
03/21/18	DDX: Signs & Symptoms of Physical Illness	Delaware County Intermediate Unit
03/21/18	DDX: Older Adults and Dual Diagnosis	Delaware County Intermediate Unit

## Announcements

### Regional Nurse Network Meetings

An opportunity for developmental disabilities nursing education and discussion.

*\*\*If you are not on our e-mail list, or have changed e-mails, please contact Patty Graves at [pgraves@pmhcc.org](mailto:pgraves@pmhcc.org).*

### Special Needs Unit (SNU) Meetings

The 2018 SNU Meetings will be held at the Falls Center located at 3300 Henry Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19129 from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm. Please contact Briana Downs at [bdowns@pmhcc.org](mailto:bdowns@pmhcc.org) for more information about the SNU Meetings or to be added to the SNU Meeting email list.

### Regional Nurse Network Meetings

April 4, 2018  
Future Dates TBD



### Special Needs Unit Meetings

January 17, 2018  
April 18, 2018  
July 18, 2018  
October 17, 2018



Learn more at [www.pchc.org](http://www.pchc.org)



### Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care

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215-790-4976 PCHC is a core program of PMHCC, Inc.

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