

# THE MPHP LINK

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Supporting healthcare professionals while  
safeguarding the public for over 30 years

## *A message from the Director-Guy Cousins*

As you will read, our MPHP Newsletter will discuss some challenging issues that are in front of us as a profession. It is our perspective is that difficult does not mean impossible and these (and other) issues be identified and discussed candidly from all perspectives.

Heidi Wright, Clinical Coordinator writes about the reality of the Risk of Physician Suicide and the data to demonstrate its prevalence across the nation and in our state. It is critical we examine and explore all of the risk factors that exist for Physicians and Health Care Providers so we can respond in a more effective manner.

Amy Tardy, Clinical Coordinator discusses medical marijuana (and CBD products) and how Maine and others states operating Physician/Medical Professional Health Programs address its utilization and the inherent challenges with it.

You will also read that September is recognized as Recovery Month by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). SAMHSA operates from four core beliefs:

- Behavioral Health is essential health
- Prevention Works
- Treatment is effective
- People Recover

We always hear of the damage and carnage behavioral health problems create for individuals, families and communities. We often overlook what recovery and wellness brings to our communities and society as a whole. September celebrates Wellness and Recovery in a variety of ways. The saying, "think globally, act locally" is pertinent here. You will see a number of different recovery rallies occurring across the state. Consider attending one or more of the events to support all of those individuals, families, and communities and support the solution; recovery and wellness.

## *The Risk of Physician Suicide*

In the United States, physician suicide rates have drastically increased over the last decade. Research presented by Dr. Deepika Tanwar at the 2018 APA annual conference, showed that physicians have the highest suicide rate of any profession, including those who work in the military. Let that sink in for a moment...

Consider the following facts:

\*Nationwide, 400 physicians die each year- we are losing more than one doctor a day to suicide.

\*Physician are more than 2x as likely to follow through with suicide as opposed to the general population.

\*Female physicians are at a greater risk as they are more than 3x as likely to follow through than their male counterparts, placing them at a 4x greater completion rate than the general public.

In trying to understand this epidemic, it is widely believed that many factors are involved; family life, stress/burn out from employment, and underlying mental health conditions, with the most common being mood disorders, substance abuse and alcoholism.

MPHP is committed to working with physicians, hospital staff/management and mental health providers bring awareness to this crisis. We will continue to work collaboratively with our partners to help our physicians.

'Suicide doesn't end the chances of life getting worse, it eliminates the possibility of it ever getting any better' -unknown.

If you or someone you know needs assistance, please reach out to MPHP or the following resources:

National Crisis hot line 1-800-273-8255

State Wide crisis hot line 1-800-568-1112

NAMI- 1-800-464-5767 (non-emergency)

2-1-1 for a list of local providers in your area

-Heidi Wright, LSW

*"My decision to end it all  
was 100% work-related."*

*~ Emergency physician*

## Medicinal Marijuana and CBD Products

The use of marijuana for medicinal purposes is a hot bed topic in our country. People remain on either side of the controversy- some believe the benefits outweigh the risks, while others are firmly in the other camp.

In recent years, a lot of media attention has been given to the effectiveness of the use of medicinal marijuana. Proponents link its use in a myriad of conditions including the reduction symptoms resulting from chronic pain, depression and social anxiety, and even cancer. But the FDA has not granted approval because they suggest that of a lack of sufficient clinical research exists.

Taking this one step further, some caregivers have started to create and market CBD (Cannabidiol) oils- and other products- for treatment of physical ailments as well, and it has been particularly enticing for individuals who have wanted to avoid ingestion of THC. It is not widely known that all CBD products contain at least a small amount of THC because the compounds come from the same plant and cannot be fully separated. Thus, CBD products are considered schedule I and federally prohibited.

The Medical Professionals Health Program (MPHP) - along with many PHP programs across the nation- has taken the stance that use of marijuana, even for medical reasons, is not considered acceptable and violates the terms of total abstinence. Further, given the content of THC in the CBD products, the MPHP likewise prohibits use of CBD products by program participants.

Why did MPHP take this stance? Research tells us marijuana is a highly addictive drug and is considered the “gateway drug” to other, even more serious, ones. It has the potential to change your brain chemistry, negatively affecting logic, reasoning, and reaction speeds.

Amy Tardy, Ph. D



JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY  
invest in health, home, purpose, and community

National  
Recovery Month  
Prevention Works • Treatment is Effective • People Recover  
september 2018



**Every September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) sponsors Recovery Month to increase awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders and celebrate the people who recover.**

Recovery Month highlights the achievements of individuals who have reclaimed their lives in long-term recovery and honors the treatment and recovery service providers who make recovery possible. Recovery Month also promotes the message that recovery in all of its forms is possible and encourages citizens to take action to help expand and improve the availability of effective prevention, treatment, and recovery services for those in need.

The 2018 Recovery Month theme, “Join the Voices for Recovery: Invest in Health, Home, Purpose, and Community,” explores how integrated care, a strong community, sense of purpose, and leadership contributes to effective treatments that sustain the recovery of persons with mental and substance disorders. The observance will work to highlight inspiring stories to help people from all walks of life find the path to hope, health, and wellness.

There are a couple of Recovery & Wellness Rallies happening in Maine to commemorate Recovery month:

Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC) is holding a Rally 4 Recovery on Sunday September 9<sup>th</sup> from 10-2 pm at Deering Oaks Park in Portland.

Maine Alliance For Addiction Recovery (MAAR) will be hosting a Recovery & Wellness Rally on September 15<sup>th</sup> from 10-2 pm at Mill Park in Augusta.

Recovery & Opioid Addiction Resources (ROAR) is hosting a Recovery Rally & Candlelight Walk on September 17<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at Coburn Park in Skowhegan.

Recovery Month began in 1989 as Treatment Works! Month, which honored the work of substance use treatment professionals in the field. The observance evolved into National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in 1998, when it expanded to include celebrating the accomplishment of individuals in recovery from substance use disorders. The observance evolved once again in 2011 to National Recovery Month (Recovery Month) to include all aspects of behavioral health.

### *Voices of Recovery!*

*Please visit the SAMHSA website to read and watch individuals share their stories and celebrate their success*

<https://recoverymonth.gov/personal-stories>

SAMHSA creates a Recovery Month toolkit to help individuals and organizations increase awareness of the power of recovery. The kit provides media outreach templates, tips for event planning and community outreach, audience-specific information and data on behavioral health conditions, and resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. These resources help local communities reach out and encourage individuals in need of services, and their friends and families, to seek treatment and recovery services and information. Materials include SAMHSA's National Helpline 1-800-662 HELP (4357) for 24-hour, free and confidential information and treatment referral as well as other SAMHSA resources for locating services (<https://recoverymonth.gov/about>).

Guy R. Cousins, LCSW, LADC, CCS

The Medical Professions Health Program (MPHP) assists professions who suffer from mental health/behavioral, substance use/abuse issues. We assist with individuals who are experience issue with their health that have potential to impact/compromise their personal lives and the lives of their patients. We do not provide a diagnosis or treatment.

For more information, log onto [www.mainemphp.org](http://www.mainemphp.org)



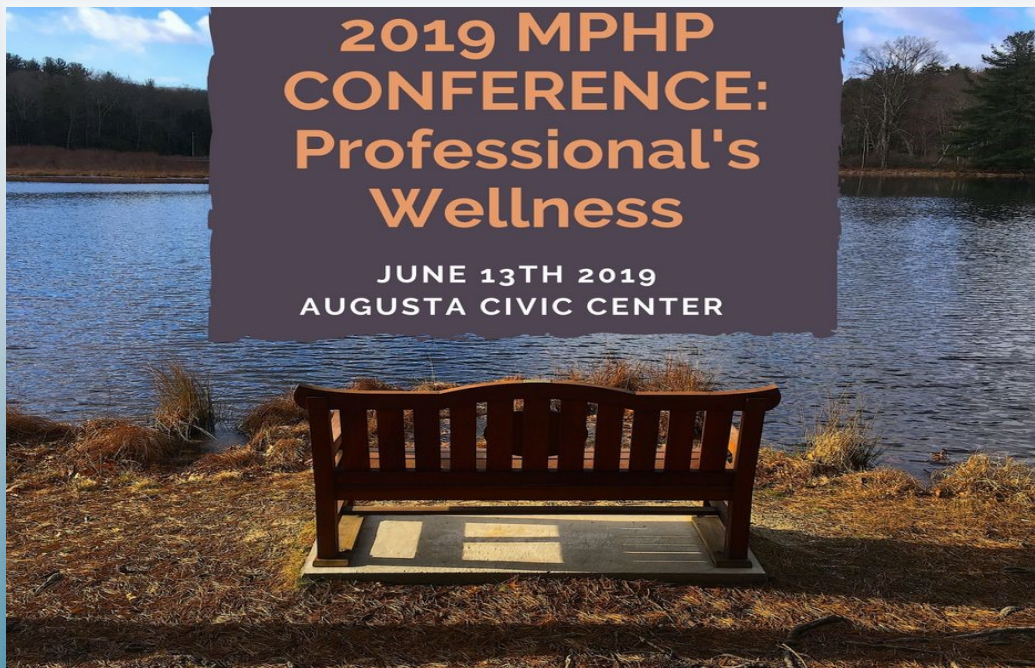
*MPHP moves to a compliance monitoring solution that is a more secure, reliable option for case management of healthcare professionals in recovery.*

Beginning on **August 27th**, the MPHP will contract with **Affinity eHealth** to provide monitoring services, selections, process toxicology, and to collect and store data.

Affinity is a highly respected provider whose focus is on providing a user-friendly, state-of-the-art platform as an effective monitoring tool. Importantly, Affinity will adhere to current toxicology pricing, so there will be no increase in cost to participants. Though this transition means a substantial change for everyone, the MPHP believes that participants, monitors, and the program will benefit from this service with heightened ease of use and many more offerings to make monitoring more convenient, efficient, and responsive.

Heidi LaMonica— Operations Manager

***Save the Date!***



**More information to come!**

## Resources



**Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)**

1-800-834-4357

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

**Narcotics Anonymous (NA)**

1-800-974-0062

[www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

**Smart Recovery**

[www.smartrecovery.com](http://www.smartrecovery.com)

**NAMI Maine Helpline**

1-800-464-5767

[www.namimaine.org](http://www.namimaine.org)

**Maine Statewide Crisis Hotline**

1-888-568-1112

**Maine Alliance for Addiction Recovery**

207-621-4111

[www.maineallianceforaddictionrecovery.org/](http://www.maineallianceforaddictionrecovery.org/)



**211 Maine**

[www.211maine.org](http://www.211maine.org)