We are exposed to hype and media as well as peoples’ personal beliefs regarding the use of marijuana on a daily basis. I find it easier to talk about marijuana if we break it down into specific topics. Today, let’s look at medical marijuana and what about it is legal and/or illegal.

Since January 2015, there is a new, electronic process that doctors must use in order to issue a certificate allowing someone to use medical marijuana legally. A medical marijuana certificate, sometimes referred to as a “green card” by users, is only good for one year and must be renewed yearly for the use to be legal. In order to be issued a certificate, one must have an approved debilitating medical condition.

Debilitating medical conditions include cancer, Glaucoma, HIV Positive, AIDS, Hepatitis C, agitation of Alzheimer’s, Nail-Patella Syndrome, Dyskinetic and spastic movement disorders, intractable pain, Lou Gehrig’s Disease, Crohn’s Disease, PTSD, Inflammatory Bowel Disease and other diseases causing severe and persistent muscle spasms.

Sharing and/or selling medical marijuana to someone that is not allowed to legally use medical marijuana is illegal. It is also illegal to possess marijuana in any form on a school bus, on school grounds or in a correctional facility. For this reason, a student, even if issued a medical marijuana certificate, cannot use medical marijuana while at school.

Minors, whether issued a certificate or not, are not allowed to grow or assist in the growing and/or manufacturing of medical marijuana or be the caregiver for another person.

Schools, landlords and employers may not penalize or discriminate solely on status as a qualifying patient or caregiver. However, landlords can prohibit smoking if they prohibit smoking of all kinds and this is posted.

Also, an employer does not have to accommodate the ingestion of marijuana in any workplace or any employee working while under the influence of marijuana.

Operating, navigating or being in actual physical control of any motor vehicle, aircraft, motorboat, snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle while under the influence of marijuana is illegal.

This only starts to touch upon the confusing nature of marijuana use in Maine. Please check Maine’s Medical Marijuana laws or talk to your physician about medical marijuana to make sure you follow the legal use of medical marijuana.

Maine’s Medical Marijuana Law: To learn more, please go online to http://www.maine.gov/legis/lawlib/medmarij.html or http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/22/title22ch558-Csec0.html
Re-envisioning mental health care

Thomas McAdam, CEO

It is likely, that when we look back on the decade between 2010 and 2020, we will see the emergence of a very different health care system in the United States. Although there is a lot of difference of opinion regarding the Affordable Care Act, it is probably here to stay. This complex document has hundreds of initiatives and moving parts that affect every one of us. Here at Kennebec Behavioral Health, we are very much in the midst of this transformation because mental health care delivery is very much a part of our overall health care system.

There are three significant parts of the Affordable Care Act that currently affect KBH on a day to day basis; the integration of primary care and mental health care; the rapid adoption of electronic medical records and an ongoing focus around the value of health care purchases.

First, let’s discuss primary care and mental health integration. Currently, KBH is working with our local hospital systems and many primary care practices to share treatment information such as medications, lab results and hospitalization outcomes in order to better serve our patients and reduce duplicative services. The notion of Accountable Care Communities envisions that all health care providers in any given community will work together to streamline care and services in order to provide a better experience for the consumer and create efficiency.

Secondly, electronic medical records are here to stay! KBH was an early adopter of an electronic medical record (EMR) but that initiative is not static. As our technology exponentially improves, better, faster and more secure ways of sharing protected health information in an electronic environment are the order of the day. This requires us to continue to spend significant resources in order to stay ahead of the technology curve. The value of an EMR allows us to better understand where our patients come from, what their needs are and helps us create actionable data in order to improve our services.

Value based purchasing is the new watch phrase in health care. What our government partners and health insurance companies are beginning to focus on is the balance between treatment efficacy and precious dollars spent. At KBH, we have a very robust quality review process that looks at our treatment and our outcomes in order to bring the best value to the State of Maine (Medicaid) and our commercial insurance contracts.

So, our focus at the clinical level and at the management level is to continue to be an active participant in these changes and to be a leader in the delivery of mental health care in Maine. We look forward to doing an increasingly better job serving our patients and consumers, as well the broader communities in central Maine.

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Food Basket Partnership

Many families have to go without during the holidays but KBH partnered with Penney Memorial Church in Augusta to help families in need as they have done in past years.

Pam Cullen, and her assistants from the Penney Memorial Church, coordinated the delivery of 40 Christmas food baskets to Kennebec Behavioral Health on December 22nd. The parishioners from Penney Memorial Church donate food baskets each year, which contain seasonal items to feed a family of four.

The KBH Children’s Case Management Team joined the church to help identify families and distribute the food baskets to their homes.

Kennebec Behavioral Health is honored to partner with Penney Memorial Church to help support the community in this way. This generous act of kindness is heartfelt by our community members who would otherwise go without.

KBH Begins Kudos Program

Kennebec Behavioral Health has developed an Employee Recognition program that will proactively and regularly recognize staff for exceptional customer service and professional or personal achievements. A committee was formed to implement recognition plans such as the addition of ‘Kudos Cards,’ which allow staff and clients to recognize a KBH employee for any reason. Every month a Kudos E-blast is sent out with a program spotlight, work anniversaries, random monthly winner and Kudos card recipients. KBH believes it is important to enhance connectedness to the organization and other employees.

Rob Rogers Wins Award

While attending the Maine Alliance to Prevent Substance Abuse Conference, Robert Rogers, Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator & Counselor, was surprised to be awarded the 2014 Prevention Award as substance abuse prevention provider of the year. He received a plaque that recognized him and Kennebec Behavioral Health. Recently, Rob presented at the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Forum in DC. This forum included presentations from national experts and federal leaders with over 70 training sessions about substance abuse prevention.

Food Basket Partnership

Scott Brown
Director of Case Management Services

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Maine’s Top Docs: Dr. Hermida

Down East Magazine released a 2014 Physician Survey for Maine’s Top Docs. In this year’s survey they asked Maine physicians: “If you or a family member had a problem in a certain area, who would you select as the best specialist in Maine?”

This year one KBH staff member made this list: Teresa Hermida, MD for her excellence in Psychiatry for Children and Adolescents. This top provider of behavioral services for our community is located at KBH’s Winthrop Clinic.

Dr. Hermida exemplifies the critical and personal care KBH provides clients. KBH is very proud to have Dr. Hermida’s important and effective care recognized by members of our community.

Child psychiatry is an important and growing service provided by KBH and Dr. Hermida. Children’s mental health is essential to their overall health and has a significant impact on their physical health and their success in school, in work and in society.

“It has been a true pleasure working with Dr. Hermida. We are very fortunate to have this provider working in our Winthrop clinic, serving the Winthrop area communities,” said Bridget Gray, Administrator of Medical Services and Access at KBH.

Dr. Hermida, raised in Massachusetts, attended Case Western Reserve University for medical school and did her residency at Cleveland Clinic Foundation. She has worked at KBH for almost 12 years and served 302 patients during 2014.

She represents KBH’s mission to promote the well-being of children, adults and families who experience mental illness, emotional or developmental difficulties or behavioral challenges.

Pictures: Dr. Hermida (R) & Winthrop Clinic (L)

Client Satisfaction Rates

617 Client Satisfaction Surveys returned in December 2014

457 surveys for Clinic-Based Services

163 surveys in Community-Based Services (includes Supported Housing, Community Living Services, Clubhouses and Developmental Case Management Services)

“I am most impressed with the respect I am given by every single staff member I interact with. From the billing office to the receptionists, the nurses to the doctors, I always feel like I am treated as a person who is coming into an appointment like any other place. I never feel looked down on or less than like I have at other mental health providers. Thank you!”

- Anonymous Client

I am satisfied with the courtesy and respect with which the following staff have treated me or my child

- Clinical
- Reception/Support
- Business Office/Billing
- Access Center
- Med Records

Agree or Somewhat Agree

Agree
Chad Guimond  
Program Manager- Augusta House

The team at Augusta House, Residential Housing Services, knows that high morale will equal a better workplace for staff which translates into a better environment for clients.

Augusta House is one of KBH’s Independent Living Programs where clients live in their own apartments, receive a rental subsidy, necessary skills development and support for successful community living.

Communication skills are an essential component of a productive workplace at Augusta House and all KBH programs and services, allowing employees to work together cohesively and professionally. With numerous staff and a diverse client population, staff must be on the same page to provide and improve their services.

That was why Augusta House staff participates in monthly team building activities such as the challenge to replicate a design created using a binder, pieces of paper, a red pen, reinforcement tabs, a cup and a hole puncher.

The point of this activity is to use communication skills between a team. Likewise, there are many details that need to be focused on while working in the Residential Treatment program such as writing notes or passing medications to multiple clients every shift.

This activity strengthened staff’s ability to focus on detail and brush up on important communication skills that are necessary to create a successful program.

Try this activity or a different applicable activity with your staff or develop your own challenge to help optimize skills that need consistent improvement and to promote a team with stronger intra-office communication.

**Does Your Staff Communicate Well?**

**Try this Activity**

Create an original design that must be recreated. Try to include more than 20 details that must be memorized and copied. Here they used a binder, paper, a pen, reinforcement tabs, a cup and hole puncher.

The first team member, the looker, has under five minutes to memorize the design and relay information to the runner who has one minute and one post-it note to remember details.

The builders, one blindfolded, ask the runner yes or no questions and have ten minutes to try and recreate the original design. After one round they change positions and repeat. Compare designs to the original.
Today, there are 322 Clubhouses in 33 countries and approximately 100,000 people living with mental illness accessing Clubhouse services annually. Each Clubhouse has its own personality, however, all accredited Clubhouses have the same 36 standards.

Directors of Clubhouses across the world have formed “a strong network that acts as a forum and referral system,” says Lisa Soucie, Director of High Hopes in Waterville. “We have been able to provide comprehensive and dynamic programs of support together and cohesively."

Stigma is still a very prevalent issue in many countries, including the United States. However, Clubhouses, like KBH’s High Hopes Clubhouse, Capitol Clubhouse and Looking Ahead Clubhouse strive to help promote better understanding of mental illness to help challenge this stigma.

Still, Clubhouses everywhere face obstacles. Money, local beliefs and culture, transportation and lack of education are just a few of the hindrances faced by Clubhouses.

Comforter’s Clubhouse in Uganda began from the perseverance of one woman, Veronica Nakyewe, who developed one of the first Clubhouses in Africa where people with mental illness often faced horrible medical conditions.

The use of witch doctors and chaining such people to trees is still a known practice. Nakyewe started her clubhouse, open only on weekends, with one volunteer and a tent that acted as the building until it was stolen and money was raised to help Nakyewe and her partner rent a building.

Clubhouse International helps bridge Clubhouses with fellowships, seminars and conferences around the world to help unite and educate staff and communities. Like Comforter’s Clubhouse, every Clubhouse has developed in different ways but each director and their supporting staff support the same vision of a world where people living with mental illness anywhere can experience the dignity, hope and opportunity found at member Clubhouses through training, quality assurance, research and advocacy.

““We have no funding from the government, and... no staff other than volunteers. But we have many great members. We are a community that has an identity, and loyalty and care for one another. And we have big plans and dreams.”- Veronica Nakyewe

To learn more go to: www.clubhouse-intl.org/
Waterville Clinic & Administrative Offices
67 Eustis Parkway
Waterville, ME 04901

Augusta Clinic
66 Stone Street
Augusta, ME 04330

Skowhegan Clinic
5 Commerce Drive
Skowhegan, ME 04976

Winthrop Clinic
736 Old Lewiston Road
Winthrop, ME 04364

Family Visitation Center
66 Stone Street
Augusta, ME 04330

Community-Based Service Hubs
16 Caldwell Road
Augusta, ME 04330

High Hopes Clubhouse
26 College Avenue
Waterville, ME 04901
207-877-0038

Looking Ahead Clubhouse
646 Main Street
Lewiston, ME 04240
207-376-1711

Capitol Clubhouse
37 Stone Street
Augusta, ME 04330
207-629-9080

1-888-322-2136