

From the CEO

Overcoming Disparities

by E. Clarke Ross, D.P.A.

as CHADD increases its advocacy efforts | to build a social movement for all persons with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), we are becoming more involved in addressing disparities faced by persons from the African American and Hispanic/ Latino communities.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences defines disparity as a significant difference among populations. 1 At this point in time, CHADD's strategic priorities are to remove policy and professional barriers faced by all persons with AD/HD and to address the special and unique needs of the African American and Hispanic/Latino communities.

The 2002 IOM report was followed in July 2003 by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) issuing its first National Healthcare Disparities Report² and a second annual report the following year.³

In August 2001, the U.S. Surgeon General issued Mental Health: Culture, Race and Ethnicity—A Supplement to Mental Health: stated that "striking disparities in access, quality and availability of mental health services exist for racial and ethnic Americans." The report concluded, "While effective, welldocumented treatments for mental illnesses are available, racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to receive quality care than the general population." The report also stated, "A critical consequence of this disparity is that racial and ethnic minorities bear a disproportionately high burden of disability from untreated or inadequately treated mental health problem and illnesses."

The July 2003 President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Report, Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America, 5 identified six goals as the foundation for transforming mental health care in America. The third goal states, "Disparities in mental health services are eliminated." To understand the goal, Americans need to recognize that "minority populations are underserved in the current mental health system," that "minor-A Report of the Surgeon General.⁴ The report | ities face barriers to receiving appropriate

mental health care," and that "cultural issues also affect service providers." The Commission declared that "culturally competent services are essential to improve the mental health system."

Agencies of the federal government have documented the scope and seriousness of the mental health care dis-

parities within the United States. CHADD is engaging in activities to address these

E. Clarke Ross

will deliver a keynote

address on AD/HD

Challenges and the

CHADD during CHADD's

Annual Conference in

Dallas, Texas, October

Strategic Role of

27-29, 2005.

CHADD's Efforts

At the October 2000 annual conference, CHADD began its journey toward diversity and cultural competence by establishing and convening its M-PACT (Minority Participation and Community Outreach) work group. This work group has always had an active leadership. CHADD's current strategic priorities involve engaging in meaningful outreach and public education targeted to the African American and Hispanic/ Latino communities and building cultural competence throughout the organization.

CHADD works in a variety of Washington, D.C.-based coalitions advocating expansion of health insurance coverage. Our most meaningful work has been in offering public education about health challenges and treatments and developing communitybased collaborations and coalitions.

In the area of public education, for example, all CHADD fact sheets as well as information and resource sheets are available on the Web site in Spanish. Every issue

of Attention!® magazine contains an article in Spanish. CHADD's National Resource Center on AD/HD (NRC), funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is working with the National Alliance for Hispanic Health (the Alliance) to prepare a bilingual introduction to AD/HD and bilingual materials on the rights of children and families under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The NRC also employs a Spanishspeaking information specialist.

CHADD is working with the National Medical Association (NMA), Section on Psychiatry and Behavioral Health, to develop a consensus statement on the assessment and treatment of AD/HD in African Americans. A national consensus conference was convened and financed by CHADD, and CHADD supported forums at the NMA annual conference. Additionally, CHADD has exhibited at the annual conferences of the National Urban League (NUL).

CHADD has co-hosted with the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, two briefings on AD/HD for the U.S. Congress. The August 2004 issue of Attention!® detailed the Congressional Black Caucus briefing, and an article in the October 2005 issue will include highlights from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. For a brief summary, see the sidebar on page 8.

Community collaborations are models

CHADD Convenes African American Leaders to Discuss Disparity Issues

and not known about AD/HD in African American children. The group reviewed

for improving health care. CHADD has participated with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) in an effort to educate pediatricians, psychiatrists, educators and families on how to implement the AAP AD/HD evidence-based assessment and treatment guidelines. While the AAP and NICHQ collaborations have not been targeted to underserved populations, these programs have taught us important lessons about community partnerships.

CHADD has sponsored chapterorganized community public education forums targeted to the Hispanic/Latino communities in Dallas, Texas, and San Jose, Calif., through collaboration with the National Latino Behavioral Health Association. In Detroit, CHADD will be sponsoring a public education forum with CHADD Detroit and the Black Psychiatrists of America (BPA).

We have previously convened chapter public education forums targeted to the African American community in Atlanta, Ga.; Baltimore, Md.; Chicago, Ill.; Denver, Colo.; Detroit, Mich.; New Orleans, La.; and New York, N.Y. Similar community forums have been conducted for the Hispanic/Latino communities in Nassau County, N.Y.; New York, N.Y.; Phoenix, Ariz.; and Tampa Bay, Fla. The more successful of these forums (Baltimore, New Orleans and Nassau County) had the active collaboration of existing

On the heels of the successful CBC brief-

ing, CHADD convened more than 20

well-known African American leaders

in pediatrics, psychiatry, psychology,

education and social work, along with

prominent scientists and mental health

researchers to review the state of the

science as it applies to what is known

community organizations working in targeted neighborhoods. These collaborations have continued. CHADD's NRC is planning a pilot program of an African American community speakers bureau in late 2005.

CHADD is now moving beyond organizing community forums and attempting to strengthen community collaborations and coalitions. The establishment and operation of support groups is a current CHADD focus. These efforts have been challenging to CHADD. Neighborhood groups desire assertive community and individual advocacy activities, while CHADD's historic role has been public education, public information and public policy systems advocacy and training in the area of special education. Personal advocacy has not been a historic CHADD role.

As the Bronx, New York, Community Health Program observes, "Establishing trust through collaboration and coalition building is essential."6 CHADD has begun a journey. We recognize the challenges. As with the society at large, we have a huge distance to travel. Our success in this area will help CHADD build a social movement for persons with AD/HD. ■

- 1 B.D. Smedley, A.Y. Stith, and A.R. Nelson, Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care,
- 2 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (July 2003). National Healthcare Disparities Report. Pub. No. 04-0035; (www.qualitytools.ahrq.gov/disparitiesreport/archive/2003/ download/download_report.aspx, accessed 6/13/05).
- 3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (December 2004). National Healthcare Disparities Report. Pub. No. 05-0014; www.qualitytools.ahrq.gov/disparitiesreport/documents/ nhdr2004.pdf, accessed 6/13/05)
- 4 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity—A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services; (www.mentalhealth.org/ cre/default.asp, accessed 6/13/05.)
- 5 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2003). New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, Achieving the Promise Transforming Mental Health Care in America. Final Report. Pub. No. SMA-03-3832; www.mentalhealth commission.gov/ reports/FinalReport/toc.html, accessed 6/13/05).
- 6 Coleman, N. (March/April 2005). Making health equality a reality. Health Affairs, 24(3): 491-498.

CHADD Briefs Congress on AD/HD in the Hispanic/Latino Community



On May 25, CHADD sponsored a Congressional briefing on AD/HD in the Hispanic/Latino community. As part of CHADD's National AD/HD Education Initiative, the briefing featured a panel of two parents, a clinician and representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The speakers explained the science around AD/HD, the disorder as a public health concern and the many barriers Hispanics/Latinos face in seeking treatment. Thirty-three leading health care and education professional organizations and patient advocacy groups joined CHADD as partners for the briefing. Pictured is U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano (D-CA).

For more information about the CHADD National Education Initiative, including current and upcoming events, please visit www.chadd.org/webpage.cfm?cat_id =10&subcat id=77 ■

common misperceptions about the disorder and drafted a statement to set the record straight. Approved by the National Medical Association's Section on Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, the statement is expected to be adopted by the full organiza-

tion during the next year.

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