

# Newsletter



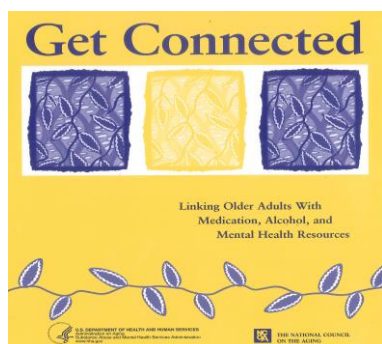
EMASS



Funded by the County of San Diego

May 2014

## Train the Trainers Launches at EMASS



Get Connected: Linking Older Adults with Medication, Alcohol and Mental Health Resources was developed by NCOA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the US Administration on Aging (AoA).

This Program is designed to enable service providers to undertake health promotion, advance prevention messages and education, and provide screening and referral for mental health problems and the misuse of alcohol and medications. The kit includes a coordinator's guide and program support materials such as education curricula, fact sheets, handouts, forms, and resources. See more at: <http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging/content-library/get-connected-toolkit.html#sthash.5FMPbKuT.dpuf>

Eleven (11) EMASS Community Health Workers and Positive Solutions Senior Outreach Worker completed the 3-day workshops. Viviana Criado developed and facilitated this 3-day workshop adopted from the abovementioned tool kit.

Within the 3-week duration of the workshop, EMASS CHWs were able to facilitate the workshop and reached out to 60 program participants. CHWs translated the materials in four languages, including: Arabic, Filipino, Spanish, and Somali and delivered this workshop in their respective languages. Since some of the screening tools recommended in the toolkit are not available in the four threshold languages of EMASS, CHWs also worked on translating and providing assistance to those participants who are unable to read and write.

CHWs returned to the workshop and reported the result for coaching and problem-solving. The outcomes of this training amazed everyone. Some program participants who regularly attend EMASS activities opened up about using alcohol. A handful of them walked out of the workshop after learning that the topic for discussion was alcohol. CHWs were trained on how to approach different scenarios using role plays. By the end of the workshop, 100% of the trainees reported that they are now confident facilitating this workshop and able to handle difficult situations. This initiative is intended to be used by EMASS CHWs for the next fiscal year for the purpose of



outreach, engagement, and educating their respective senior community. Get Connected will be translated and delivered in four different languages to five ethnic populations.

## EMASS Participates in Innovation Exchange



The February 26, 2014 issue of the [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\) Innovations Exchange \(www.innovations.ahrq.gov\)](#) profiles an innovative program co-directed by Agnes Hajek, ACSW, Program Manager, UPAC-EMASS.

The Innovation Profile, [Community Health Workers Known as Promotores Enhance Access to Culturally Tailored Services for Elderly, Low-Income Racial/Ethnic Minorities, Leading to Improvements in Mental Health](#), describes the program's development, results, and lessons learned. Please contact Ms. Hajek for more information at [ahajek@upacsd.com](mailto:ahajek@upacsd.com).

The [Innovations Exchange](#) is a comprehensive program designed to increase the development and adoption of innovations in health care delivery and policy. The [Innovations Exchange](#) contains more than 825 searchable Innovation Profiles, 1550 searchable Quality Tools, and numerous resources to support the Agency's mission — to improve the safety, effectiveness, patient-centeredness, timeliness, efficiency, and equity of care — with a particular emphasis on reducing disparities in health care and health among racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

To learn more about the [Innovations Exchange](#), please visit the [About](#) page. For questions about the Innovations Exchange and to subscribe to biweekly issue updates, please send an email to [info@innovations.ahrq.gov](mailto:info@innovations.ahrq.gov).

## El Cajon EMASS...A Year After

On April 5<sup>th</sup> of last year, San Diego County Supervisor Dianne Jacob came to visit the EMASS El Cajon Community Center through the facilitation of

former Director of Health and Human Services (HHSA)-Aging and Independence Services (AIS) Pam Smith. Director Alfredo Aguirre, HHSA-



Behavioral Health Services Administration and his staff also joined the visit.

They saw how the EMASS program beneficiaries coming to the community center grew exponentially in numbers. The participants were clamoring for a bigger space where they can have their social and educational activities. As a result of this visit, EMASS program was granted additional funding for expansion of the space.

Since the property nearby the original location has been rented, EMASS resumed its daily social and recreational activities for Arabic speaking seniors. The original office space continues to operate as intended for structured activities such as: weekly health literacy session in partnership with the Cuyamaca College's Project SHINE; English as Second Language (ESL) tutorial for seniors; women's arts and crafts; health education; computer tutorial; and individual case management services by the Community Health Workers.

## Scrapbooking Project: *Our Internship Experience*

by Shilpa Kachgal & Rachel Zhang

We began the Scrapbooking Club in February 2014 for the EMASS Escondido Latino and Filipino seniors. The purpose of this club is to engage participants in what we

consider to be a valuable aspect of recall therapy. This type of therapy allows for individuals to use memory-enhancement skills in order to produce positive emotions. Throughout the course of the club, we have emphasized the importance of highlighting what the participants believe they would want to be reminded of when picking up their scrapbooks, whether through pictures, drawings, or souvenirs. The Scrapbooking Club has allowed participants to share with each other their personal memories and stories. As facilitators, we have seen that the participants have really enjoyed sharing stories with each other, as they have come to learn more about the individuals who they spend time with at EMASS. The club draws upon the creative skills of each individual as well, leaving them with the freedom to design their scrapbooks however they choose. We hope that this type of artistic interpretation continues to be used in the future.

This project was originally conceptualized by Dr. Jong Min's (Professor at San Diego State University-School of Social Work) students in one of his classes. EMASS has the privilege to try and test this project with its two senior ethnic groups. The result will be compiled and reported by the end of internship semester.

## My Practice Experience in “Get Connected” by Maria Ayala

I find that Get Connected: Linking Older Adults with Medications, Alcohol, and Mental Health Resources Train the Trainers is a wonderful program. I believe this would be very beneficial for many older adult participants. I was able to practice my facilitating skills with 12 Latino senior

participants at EMASS Community Center for our practice teaching assignment. The translation of materials from English to Spanish is one of the challenges I faced during this process. Luckily, I have my fellow Latina CHW, including my husband who help in editing my translation. Rosa, my co-facilitator and I had our first experience facilitating the sensitive topic of alcohol use and abuse in our culture. I was uncomfortable in the beginning to use the screening tool and open the topic. In the end, I realized that majority of our participants appreciated this type of awareness education. I also challenged myself to appropriately approach people who walked out of the room for fear of embarrassment about the alcohol use and abuse topic.

The last day of class was very helpful to reflect about myself. I believe that this “Get Connected” workshop has a lot to offer to help identify, educate, and empower our senior Latino community.

## My Participation in “Get Connected” Workshop by Lumeng Quitaned



I am Iluminada Quitaned. I am known as “Lumeng” by my co-participants and friends. I am 82 years old, Filipina, and have been attending EMASS program since 2011. I met Lolita Gatmaitan, EMASS Filipino Community Health Worker, at the event of Filipino American Cultural Group of North County in Camp Pendleton.

I am so delighted that I found this program. It offers me a lot of educational opportunities. Recently, I was one of



the participants of Get Connected: Linking Older Adults in Alcohol, Medications, and Mental Health Workshop. I found out that alcohol cannot be taken with medication. I admitted that I drink one shot of vodka twice a week. In this workshop, I learned that I should not drink any alcohol when I am taking medication for high blood pressure. Looking back, it might be the reason that after I drink, I feel discomfort on my chest. I realized that there are other things to do when I feel down and tired. I believe it is not too late to change. I increased my days to go to EMASS community center. I started breathing and relaxation exercises, drinking more water, and listening to music when I feel tired and down.

## Town Hall Meeting with Acting SSA Commissioner



Ms. Yolanda York, the Social Security Public Affairs Specialist, invited EMASS Community Health Workers from different partner agencies to participate in the Town Hall Meeting with Acting SSA Commissioner, Carolyn W. Colvin (middle person in olive green suit). One of the discussion points was the changes in Social Security Administration offices in line with the SSA new Strategic Plan that include: increasing the use of self-service options.

Find out what you can do online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). Beginning October 1, 2014, the Social Security Administration will no longer provide benefit verification letters in its offices. How to get a

benefit verification letter: You can still get a benefit verification letter online instantly with a **My Social Security account**. To create an account, please visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount). You also may call SSA toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213 to request your benefit verification letter by mail.

With the participation of UPAC-EMASS CHWs from different partner agencies e.g. Somali Family Service, Urban League of San Diego, and NAMI San Diego in this Town Hall Meeting, the Acting Commissioner was very thankful and wrote a letter, as stated:

*Dear Ms. Hajek,*

*I want to personally thank you for attending our recent Town Hall meeting held in San Diego, CA. I was so pleased to see so many organizations represented. Your presence at the meeting is evidence of your ongoing commitment to those we mutually serve.*

*I greatly appreciate the candid feedback and recommendations presented during the meeting. Please be assured that we will carefully consider the points raised and recommendations offered. I am fully committed to working with the advocacy community to improve outcomes for our customers.*

*Again, thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to join us for the town hall meeting. Your attendance and contributions to the discussion were invaluable.*

*With kind regards,*

*Carolyn W. Colvin  
Acting Commissioner  
Social Security Administration*



**Respecting Diversity....Building Communities**

UPAC-EMASS Program  
**Escondido Office: 760.233.1984**  
200 N. Ash St. Ste. 100, Escondido, CA 92027  
**El Cajon Office: 619.749.5560**  
343 E. Main St. Ste 201, El Cajon, CA 92020