



# monthly MINUTE

mhca's e-Newsletter

Vol. 3, Issue 3  
Published September 2018

## You Really Should Get Out More!

*A guest article from Community Reach Center CEO & mhca Board Chair Rick Doucet*



Spending too much time in the office can be bad for business. Think you can't afford to step away from the office for a few days to attend **mhca's** quarterly conferences? The truth is – you really can't afford to miss one.

With all of the ways we can learn new things, from blogs and podcasts to books and webinars, why is conference attendance so important? In a word – relationships. If we want to stay sharp, we have to interact with other sharp people – it's impossible to “**sharpen the saw**” in a vacuum.

As busy executives with numerous demands on our time, it's easy to overlook the need to invest time in our ongoing development, but we do this to our detriment and the detriment of the organizations we lead. Taking time away to attend **mhca's** quarterly conferences – where learning, networking, and fun converge to leave us informed, refreshed, and reinvigorated – can provide far greater ROI than investing those same hours plugging away at the office where our productivity and creativity will begin to suffer.

If we're serious about innovating, growing our business and strengthening our organization's leadership bench, we need to break out of the office on a regular basis. Sitting in a new space and talking to new people can spark new ideas that we'd never have working in isolation. As an added bonus, stepping away for a few days once a quarter shows our staff we trust them and gives them an opportunity to shine in our absence.

The staff at **mhca** works hard to cut through the clutter to deliver the best new ideas and fresh perspectives to challenge us to learn and grow. Outside of the sessions, talking with other behavioral health executives from across the country who share similar interests and challenges leaves us with a better a sense of the marketplace and where things are going.

Conferences are also a great place to learn about the latest products and services designed to make us more effective and efficient at work, or give us a unique competitive advantage. Visiting with **mhca** exhibitors and sponsors, getting a hands-on demonstration of their offerings and asking specific questions related to our organization's biggest pain points can lead to new solutions and profitable partnerships.

### **Planned Serendipity - Getting the Most out of Your Attendance**

So once we've made the commitment and registered for the next **mhca** conference, how can we make sure we get the most out of our conference experience?

- **Stay at the conference hotel.** I know some of you like to always book rooms with a certain chain to maximize you points; but, you're missing out. When you stay at the conference hotel, you will encounter many more chance meetings with your peers in the elevators, in the bar, at breakfast, etc.

- **Download the conference app.** The app is a paperless conference program, and so much more. In addition to the agenda and conference presentations, you can quickly access up-to-date registration lists, the **mhca** member directory, vendor descriptions, and lots more.
- **Plan to catch up with people you know.** Reaching out to people in advance puts you on their radar and lets them know they are a priority to you. You can plan to meet for coffee or lunch, or even take a tour of the area together before or after the conference. But, don't spend all of your time with people you already know. The more people you speak to, engage with, learn from and laugh with, the more you will gain, both personally and professionally.
- **Plan to meet people you don't yet know.** Review the conference registration list before you leave and make a list of folks you'd really like to meet. Send an email introducing yourself; or ask for an introduction from a mutual friend or colleague. If the person is presenting, tell her that you're going to make it a point to come to her session. If the person is not presenting, invite him to meet you for coffee or an early morning workout.
- **Don't skip out!** Exhausted by day two of the conference and thinking of skipping the afternoon session in favor of a nap? Think again – since many conference attendees skip the second afternoon, it's a unique opportunity to network with a smaller group of those who aren't skipping.
- **Be an active rather than passive participant.** Speak up to ask a question, offer a comment, tell a story, frame a challenge, suggest a solution, or give an example! You could also volunteer to speak or to moderate a panel.

As much as we might like to, we can't delegate the task of sharpening our saw to others. **mhca** conferences provide opportunities, but if we want the benefits of meaningful connections with others and lifelong learning, it's truly up to each of us individually to engage.



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Looking Ahead

Fall Conference



Curious about current trends in behavioral health or how to build a better culture in your organization? Explore these topics and more at our Fall Conference in Austin, Texas, Oct. 30 - Nov.1. Our hotel block is nearly full, so if you don't yet have a room reservation, contact Gena at [gmatthews@mhca.com](mailto:gmatthews@mhca.com) for help.

[Register Now!](#)



## Winter Conference

If you're planning to join us in Clearwater Beach for the 2019 Winter Conference and Annual Meeting, please book your room now. Our room block at the Opal Sands is filling up, so if you can't get the nights you need, please contact Gena at [gmatthews@mhca.com](mailto:gmatthews@mhca.com) for help.

[Hotel Information](#)



## Call for Presentations

Got a bright idea? Our quarterly conferences cater to the professional development needs of C-suite executives in the behavioral healthcare industry. We're currently interested in offering sessions on the impact of technology on behavioral health services and/or organizational sustainability, integrated care and care coordination, financial management, financing and access to capital, building innovation and entrepreneurship as organizational competency, leadership skill development and succession planning/workforce development. If you'd like to present on any of these topics, or on another topic or project that would be of interest to **mhca** members, we invite you to submit a proposal.

[Submit a Proposal](#)

Member News



To stay up-to-date on the latest **mhca** news, follow us [Twitter](#), or read the member news feed on our website.

[Read More](#)

We'd love to hear about what's going on at your organization. If you are interested in submitting an article or advertisement for publication in this monthly e-newsletter, contact Lonnie Parizek at [lparizek@mhca.com](mailto:lparizek@mhca.com).

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