

148TH CONGRESS OF CORRECTION OVERVIEW

All Conference Overview photos courtesy Lovestruck Images



Conference Overview

ACA's 'best of the best' meet in Minneapolis!

If there was ever any doubt that the American Correctional Association still sets its standards high after being in existence for more than 100 years, then the world need look no further than what transpired the week of Aug. 2–7 in Minneapolis at the 148th Congress of Correction.

Attendees from all over the world gathered to learn, discover, connect and reconnect in Minneapolis, a city that offered the perfect backdrop to what has been hailed as one of the most popular corrections-related events on the planet.

From the very beginning, ACA provided “Congress-goers” a smooth and organized passage through the Congress with the increasingly popular ACA Conference Mobile App, along with the ever-useful program book. Together these tools provided everyone with two options to plan for what turned out to be a very exciting and eventful week.

The Committee on Performance-Based Standards Meeting marked the official start of the

Congress on Thursday, Aug. 2, but it was the next day’s opening of the attendee and exhibitor registration, and the opening of the Resource Center that let everyone know that the 148th Congress of Correction was fully underway. Friday’s night’s Health Care Network Reception, sponsored by Correct Rx Pharmacy Services, featured a room full of food, refreshments and fun. This was a time to catch up with old friends and make a few new ones. ACA Executive Director James A. Gondles Jr. gave a warm welcome to everyone and introduced Dr. Ellen H. Yankellow, president and CEO of Correct Rx Pharmacy Services, whose well-received remarks kicked off everything the week ahead had to offer.

Early Saturday morning, before the long serpentine registration line had fully formed, much-anticipated excitement took place around the ribbon-cutting ceremony opening ACA’s Health and Wellness Expo. The ACA Wellness Committee hosted the three-day Champions for Life, Commit to Be Fit Health & Wellness Expo and, like last

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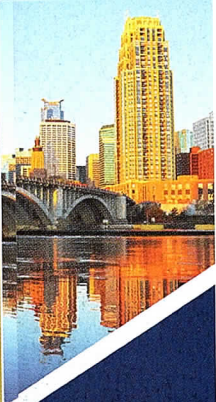
year's expo, it was a tremendous success. Sponsored by Corizon, CoreCivic, Union Supply Group and Aramark, the ACA's expo featured free health screenings, stress-reducing massages, exercise machines, healthy snacks, giveaways and a place to come and learn about the important intersection of wellness and corrections. This year, a proclamation, to uphold staff wellness, was signed by ACA President Dr. Lannette Linthicum, M.D. as she set a precedence going forward, as part of the proclamation read, "Now, therefore, I Lannette Linthicum, M.D., 105th President of the American Correctional Association, do hereby declare that an annual staff wellness event be held at the Congress of Correction. I encourage all of corrections, both public and private, to support staff wellness in every way possible." ACA honors this proclamation and will uphold it at every Congress henceforth.

As attendee after attendee grabbed their spot in the registration line, securing their badges, tickets, conference bags, program books and other



Congress paraphernalia, it was quite clear to all present that the 148th Congress of Correction had begun in earnest. The halls and corridors of the





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multi-levelled Minneapolis Convention Center were abuzz with energy and excitement. Committee meetings, workshops, panels and professional development opportunities seemed to occupy every designated room of the convention center. Truly, this is the one place on Earth where corrections professionals can gather together to earn valuable CMEs, CEs and CEUs from more than 100 exclusive workshops hosted by top professionals in our field!

This was a time to catch up with old friends and make new ones.

The Health Care Special Session and Luncheon, sponsored by MHM Correctional Services and Centurion, featured a very special guest. Damon West, former NCAA college quarterback, spoke to a packed room about his personal battle with addiction and his second chance after receiving a life sentence for engaging in organized criminal activity. While on parole he started his



program of recovery that provides opportunities for growth for those who are incarcerated.

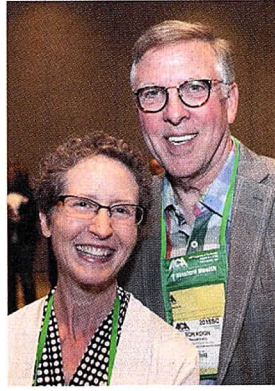
Sunday saw the continuation of a plethora of workshops this congress had to offer, including topics on mental health, medical effects of synthetic drugs, trauma-informed care for women in corrections, handling transgender care in corrections, offender-led programming practices and more. In the afternoon, the Exhibit Hall Open House Reception displayed aisles of resources, products, technologies and much more in the large auditorium.

During the days that attendees participated in correctional facility and institution tours, workshops and exhibitor booths, there was also time to stop at ACA's Resource Center to browse through books, manuals, t-shirts and other knickknacks, as well as information regarding professional certification, professional development, e-learning and facility or system accreditation. ACA also offered the chance



to win the “Gondles Bear,” a large carnival-sized teddy bear, which has always been a fan favorite.

There was anticipation for Monday’s General Session as Greg Gumbel, Emmy-winning,



sports caster for CBS Sports, took the stage and gave the packed crowd a hilarious history of all of the sports personalities that he’s met over the years, along with anecdotes from both college and professional athletes and coaches. Gumbel spoke highly of the inspirational people in his life who represent the importance of finding figures to admire and esteem.

Not only was there a General Session that Monday, but there was also a Special General Session on Drugs From the Border to Inside the Fence: Interdiction and Treatment. The U.S. Surgeon General Jerome M. Adams, M.D., M.P.H. and Deputy Chief of Operations Paul Knierim of the Drug Enforcement Agency spoke on the growing

public health crisis of misused drugs that enter communities, jails and prisons through the United States borders affecting thousands of Americans. Dr. Elizabeth Gondles served as moderator for the session and was introduced by President Linthicum.

Tuesday brought the final event as many won prizes and awards to take home as a very memorable souvenir from this year’s Congress of Correction. The grand prize drawing included winners of a brand-new iPad, and one lucky winner drove home in a 2018 Ford Focus. The evening commenced with the highly prestigious E.R. Cass Banquet, sponsored by CoreCivic and The GEO Group. President Linthicum announced Michigan’s former Director of Corrections



Patricia “Pat” Caruso and Davidson County, Tennessee Sheriff Daron Hall as the winners of the association’s highest honor for their service that went above and beyond the call of duty.

ACA’s Congress of Correction always holds up for all who attend and is evident in those who return and those who discover it for the first time. As always, corrections professionals left with an arm full of books, products and goodies, along with memories that will carry on until next year. We hope to see you at our 2019 Winter Conference Jan. 11–15, in New Orleans!

— MOLLY LAW