

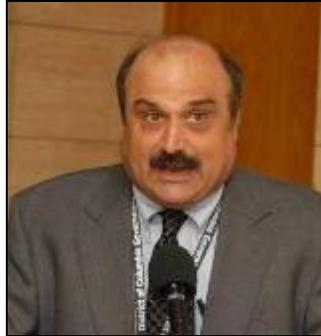
Staying in Touch

Message from the Director

December 2008

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Dear DMH Employee,

As we near the end of 2008 and take a moment to reflect on our work during the last year, we can be proud of several initiatives that can make a difference in the quality of life for people who receive mental health services.

The urgent care clinic at Superior Court has linked or relinked more than a hundred people to mental health providers which, hopefully, will help keep them out of the criminal justice system revolving door. The new mobile crisis services has attracted a topnotch team of mental health professionals and created excitement in the community. We are confident that the new crisis service for children will help minimize disruption in the lives of foster children.

Construction began on two new DMH housing projects which will help us meet the growing need for supportive housing. The long awaited renovation at CPEP is nearly complete and we are looking forward to the additional stabilization beds to help reduce the need for hospitalizations. And, at Saint Elizabeths, the reforms underway there are creating a culture of person centered treatment and accountability, and the magnificent new hospital building which is nearly 80% complete will provide a physical environment that promotes healing and recovery.

At the same time, we continue to try to do what we do every day even better. An energized, efficient Office of Accountability has put in place a high level of auditing and monitoring. These are all good signs that together we are building a more robust mental health system.

On the other hand, the economic downturn is affecting the District's budget, and, in turn, will decrease funds available for mental health services. While difficult, the closure of the DC CSA will provide savings that can increase the number of people eligible to be served and expand the range of services. We are planning to submit the implementation plan to the Council on December 31. I encourage you to share your comments with me at steve.baron@dc.gov.

Steve

**Make your pledge
now to the
2009 DC One Fund!**

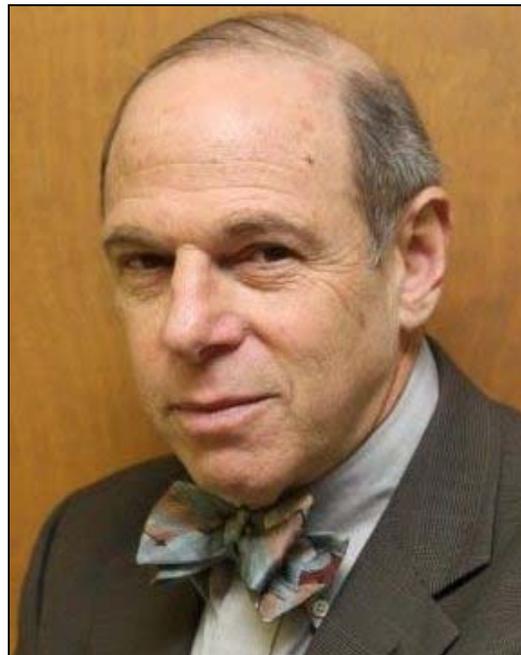
Dr. Bernie Arons appointed Medical Director at Saint Elizabeths

Dr. Bernie Arons, a nationally recognized mental health advocate, administrator and professor, rejoins the staff of Saint Elizabeths Hospital as the Director of Medical Affairs.

“We are honored to have Dr. Arons back at Saint Elizabeths. His experience and expertise in the field of mental health adds a wealthy magnitude of knowledge to our team of talented professionals,” said **Dr. Patrick Canavan**, CEO, at a welcome ceremony held for Dr. Arons.

Dr. Arons previously served in a number of positions at Saint Elizabeths, including Chief Clinical Advisor. He has held executive management positions both in the government and the private sector. While he was director, the Center for Mental Health Services at SAMHSA became a leading voice on mental health issues—from studies on parity in mental health coverage to initiatives on school violence, under his leadership. As Senior Science Advisor to the Director at NIH, he provided direction for the country on improving mental health services and mental health financing.

Dr. Arons worked closely with former Surgeon General David Satcher to publish the first-ever Surgeon General’s Report on Mental Health. He also served as mental health and substance abuse advisor to Mrs. Tipper Gore and co- chaired with her the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Working Group for the President’s Task Force on National Health Reform.



Dr. Bernie Arons

Dr. Arons received his bachelors degree with honors from Oberlin College and the Doctor of Medicine degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. He also is a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Georgetown University School of Medicine, The George Washington University School of Medicine, and Howard University. He is an Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at the Dartmouth College Medical School.

Human Resources News: Open Enrollment Ends December 8

Open Enrollment Season ends on Monday, December 8, 2008. This week is the last opportunity for District government employees under both the Federal and District health benefits programs to select, change or update benefits for the 2009 plan year.

Except under limited circumstances, this is the only time that employees can choose a health care plan, enroll in the short-term disability insurance program, and set up flexible spending accounts.

And, for this year only, District employee benefits participants can change life insurance elections. HR encourages all eligible employees to use ESS (Employee Self Service) to make open enrollment selections and changes. ESS is fast, easy, convenient and paperless.

You can visit www.dchr.dc.gov and click on “[Employee Benefits](#)” to learn more about Open Enrollment Season.

Employee Spotlight: Marcus Berry

It is no surprise that **Marcus Berry** was chosen by the Patient Advisory Council at John Howard as the first recipient of its “Respect” award given to employees for excellent clinical care and demonstrated respect in their interactions at work. That’s the attitude that **Marcus** brings to the job. He says when you give people respect, they give it back to you.

Marcus has been a supervisory certified therapeutic recreation specialist at John Howard for more than 10 years. But, he grew up around the Hospital. Throughout his high school and college years, he worked during the summers in the recreational therapy department at the Hospital. He remembers working at Camp Happyland in Virginia—a recreational therapy facility operated by the Hospital during the 1980s. After 15 years in the private sector as a recreational therapist, he came back.

Marcus plans and coordinates recreational activities for the more than 200 patients at John Howard. Activities range from in house programs like arts and crafts to cookouts and talent shows. His department also organizes the annual Field Day held in conjunction with the popular summer concert series. He says he enjoys his job and looks forward to coming every day. Plus, he has the satisfaction of knowing that his job makes a difference in the lives of the patients.



Marcus Berry

A native Washingtonian, **Marcus** attended DC public schools, including Anacostia High School, and graduated from the University of the District of Columbia. He loves bowling and spending time on outdoor sports with his children. He says he likes working with people and appreciates people who appreciate him.

And, in the midst of overwhelming burgundy and gold, **Marcus** is an unrepentant Dallas Cowboys fan.

Congratulations! Luis Vasquez honored by Catholic University

Luis Vasquez, director of CPEP’s mobile crisis services, recently was selected to receive the 2009 Alumni Achievement Award by the Board of Governors of the Alumni Association of Catholic University. Each year, the prestigious Alumni Achievement Award is given to no more than 7 alumni who have distinguished themselves as leaders in their respective fields.

The award will be given at a ceremony during the University’s Founder’s Day activities next April.

In addition to a BA from Catholic, **Luis** has a master of social work from Howard University.

Luis is racking up the recognitions. He is featured in the upcoming issue of *Washington Hispanic*.

Luis says he appreciates these opportunities to spread the word about the new mobile crisis services which kicked off last month.

The new mobile crisis teams will respond to adult throughout the District who are experiencing a psychiatric crisis and are unable or unwilling to travel to receive mental health services.

Make your contribution now to the DC One Fund

The 2008 DC One Fund annual giving campaign is now underway! This year, a new paperless process will make giving quicker and easier.

DMH employees helped the DC One Fund raise more than \$1 million last year for charitable organizations, and this year everyone's help is need to meet our \$1.3 million goal!

For the past 54 years, District government employees and retirees have stepped up to support more than 1,000 nonprofit organizations through the DC One Fund. This campaign is an opportunity for you to show support for your favorite causes through workplace giving.

With help from the United Way and the United Black Fund, the District has created a [new paperless process](#) for collecting pledges and donations. It allows donors to make contributions in a variety of forms including credit and debit card payments, as well as checking accounts. In addition, this online portal will allow

each agency to track individual giving and monitor agency goals.

The DC One Fund campaign will continue until Tuesday, March 31, 2009, so there will be plenty of opportunities to give. [Click here](#) today to learn how your contribution can make a difference for an organization in need and to make a pledge!

You can make a lump sum donation before the end of the 2008 tax season or arrange for bi-weekly payroll deductions. A donation of only \$4 per pay will make an impact on your charity of choice.

To learn more about the DC One Fund call **202-724-8641** Monday-Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm for questions or support, or email dconefund@dc.gov. Or you can contact our DMH representative **JoAnn Davis** at 673. 1934 or email JoAnn.Davis@dc.gov.

Upcoming Events

Please let me know about your upcoming event at phyllis.jones@dc.gov

DMH Training Institute December Courses:

Certificate Course Screening & Assessment of Co-Occurring Disorders	December 9
Community Residential Facility (CRF) Training	December 15
COSIG Stages of Change	December 16
System of Care Basic Training Community Residential Facility (CRF) Training	December 17
Dixon Court Monitor Visit	December 17-18

Best Wishes for a Safe and Joyful Holiday Season!

*eNewsletter produced by Phyllis Jones, PIO
Paul Davis, Photographer*