

**Testimony of Stephen T. Baron, Director, Department of Mental Health
on the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request
before the
Committee on Health, David A. Catania, Chair
March 30, 2009**

Good Morning, Chair Catania, Members of the Council and Committee Staff.

I am Steve Baron, Director of the Department of Mental Health. I am here to present the Department's Fiscal Year 2010 budget request and to respond to any questions from the Committee. With me is Dr. Patrick Canavan, Chief Executive Officer of Saint Elizabeths Hospital. We very much appreciate the Committee adjusting its schedule to accommodate the Department of Justice visit to the Hospital today. With the Committee's agreement, I will give a brief overview of the Department's budget request and then focus on the Hospital's request and answer questions from the Committee.

Our Fiscal Year 2010 budget request reflects Mayor Fenty's ongoing commitment to serving District residents in need of public mental health services while the Department takes steps to become more efficient and better able to serve more residents. The Mayor's budget request supports the Department's strategic goals and initiatives while achieving necessary and significant cost savings. At the same time it protects resources for the most vulnerable residents in need of mental health services and allows us to complete two major operational undertakings—the transition of the DC Community Services Agency and the opening of the new hospital.

The Department's proposed budget is slightly more than \$216 million dollars (216,752,307) with 1,387 full time equivalent positions. The Department's budget funds a range of comprehensive mental health services to approximately 13,000 residents of all ages and supports the operations of Saint Elizabeths Hospital, our public psychiatric facility.

The proposed budget will allow DMH to:

- Continue important initiatives that expand available services;
- Complete the transition of DC CSA consumers to private providers;
- Move into a new state-of-the-art Hospital facility that will support quality patient care;
- Fully fund a new initiative to help people who are ready to leave Saint Elizabeths successfully transition to the community;
- Strengthen accountability in service delivery, and,
- Continue to meet the requirements of the *Dixon* court order and the Department of Justice Agreement.

As I said earlier, I will describe in more detail our budget request and the services it supports when I complete my testimony later today after the public witnesses. I would now like to present the Hospital's budget request.

Improving patient care at Saint Elizabeths and meeting DOJ requirements

Saint Elizabeths Hospital provides inpatient care to a little less than 400 patients at any one time, about half of whom are forensic patients. The budget request for Saint Elizabeths Hospital is about \$99 million dollars (\$99,447,000). The budget request protects direct care and clinical positions and recognizes that there will be reduced need for certain support functions in the new Hospital. With the Mayor's support and the support of this Committee, we have resources at Saint Elizabeths to continue to recruit high quality clinical staff and to train staff on best practices in patient care. The budget request also provides the necessary resources to complete the construction and build out of the new hospital facility, to move into the new facility and to properly close vacant buildings. We are delighted that our scheduled move in date is just about a year away.

In summary, resources continue to be targeted at improving patient care and enabling the Hospital to be in compliance with issues raised by the Department of Justice.

We are now ready to respond to any questions from the Committee.

Pick up Testimony after public witnesses

Good Afternoon Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee and Committee Staff

I am ready to complete the presentation of the Department's FY 10 budget request. With me are Michael Neff, Chief Administrative Officer, and Joyce Jeter, Agency Fiscal Officer. Other senior staff is in the audience and will come to the witness table as needed.

As I said earlier today, the Department's Fiscal Year 2010 budget request is \$216 million dollars. I will now describe our request in more detail starting with the Mental Health Authority which is now at \$70 million dollars. As you know, the Mental Health Authority is the administrative, monitoring and program development arm of the Department. The majority of the proposed budget supports critical direct service programs: emergency psychiatric services including mobile crisis teams and 8 new extended observation beds through the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP); our jail diversion initiative; the school mental health program, and homeless outreach services, and our housing subsidy and housing development programs.

The funds to complete the transition of DC CSA consumers by March 31 and funding for government functions that remain are included in this budget. The programs that remain with government are: multicultural services and programs for the hearing impaired; the pharmacy which provides medications for consumers who cannot afford them; the psycho-educational program in partnership with the Public Schools; court-ordered competency evaluations, and, a new government operated psychiatric practice group.

The contracted budget request for our community mental health partners is nearly \$18 million dollars. The private providers provide prevention, treatment and emergency services to children and adults. In addition, this program funds a range of supported and supervised housing options for adults with a serious mental illness and supported employment for 500 individuals.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, we are in the midst of transitioning consumers from the government operated DC Community Services Agency to private providers. This process is underway and this

budget supports this transition and ensures that adequate capacity exists among community mental health providers to absorb new consumers.

The remainder of our proposed budget is agency management administrative support funded at \$22 million dollars (\$22,166,124,000)—an increase of about 5 million dollars to support additional administrative and management functions from the DC CSA—and \$1.6 million (\$1,627,000) for financial operations managed by the government’s Chief Financial Officer.

Let me talk now about our goals and initiatives for next fiscal year.

Fiscal Year 2010 Goals and Initiatives

Expanding Services and Increasing Access to Care

The Mayor’s budget request allows us to fully fund major initiatives started this fiscal year that broaden the range of available services and increase access to care. We testified in some detail about these services at our performance oversight hearing in February so I will just highlight a few.

- **Mobile crisis services**

The adult mobile crisis services has significantly expanded our ability to respond to individuals experiencing a psychiatric or emotional crisis who cannot or will not come in for treatment. And the emergency mobile crisis service for children has allowed us working with CFSA to strengthen support for foster children and their families. Both the adult and child crisis service can be reached by calling our 24 hour Access Helpline at 1-888-793-4357.

- **Urgent Care Clinic**

The urgent care clinic located at the Superior Court—opened nearly a year—is reaching people that otherwise would not be receiving services. We see a high percentage of homeless individuals primarily from misdemeanor and traffic court and the Clinic also sees walk in for services.

- **Ida Mae Campbell Wellness and Resource Center**

The consumer focused Ida Mae Campbell Wellness & Resource Center opened last summer and is filling a much desired and needed option for consumers to get support from their peers and learn new skills.

- **Integrated Care Project**

We talked earlier today about the new initiative to reduce the census at the Hospital. Our new integrated care project will focus on is on helping 30 long term patients who are ready to leave the Hospital move into the community with the full range of services. This contract has just been awarded to Washington Hospital Center.

- **School Mental Health Program**

Our School Mental Health Program continues to be a strong partnership with the Public Schools. In the budget request, we proposed moving the staff to a 10 month schedule to correspond to the Public School calendar. However, at this point, this change will be voluntary and any proposed reductions to that budget will be restored.

Continued operational improvements and increased accountability

In FY'09 we strengthened Office of Accountability in the areas of stronger auditing and more vigorous oversight by adding 8 new FTEs and we strengthened contracts and procurement by the addition of addition of 3 FTEs.

Exiting Dixon

As you are aware, under the terms of a lawsuit dating back to 1974, a Court Monitor evaluates the Department's progress in meeting 19 defined performance measures—called the “Dixon Exit Criteria.” The Court Monitor testified at the February performance hearing that he has moved six of the 19 Exit Criteria to inactive status. We have targeted an additional seven Exit Criteria to focus on meeting this year and we have identified staff and have the resources in place to make it happen.

Those criteria are:

- Exit Criterion 1 – Consumer satisfaction
- Exit Criterion 2 – Consumer functioning methods
- Exit Criterion 5 – Services to Children and Youth
- Exit Criterion 6 – Services to Children and Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance
- Exit Criterion 7 – Services to Adults
- Exit Criterion 14 – Services to Children and Youth in Natural Settings
- Exit Criterion 15 – Services to Children in Own or Surrogate Homes

Fiscal Year 2010 will be a transformational year for the Department as we better focus the Mental Health Authority on monitoring service delivery, implement the new initiatives described above, and make progress on meeting the external requirements. We are confident that this budget moves us toward our goal of building the most responsive public mental health system possible better able to serve more people.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for this opportunity to present the Department's budget request and I am available to answer any questions.