

Staying in Touch

April 2009

Message from the Director

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Dear DMH Employee,

I am excited to report that an important initiative is underway that will strengthen our ability to support people with mental illness who come in contact with law enforcement officers.

The Crisis Intervention Officer (CIO) training is the latest of several collaborations between the Metropolitan Police Department and the Department of Mental Health.

The CIO Initiative is based on crisis intervention response best practices from law enforcement jurisdictions around the country. A number of mental health advocates, including members of DMH's Partnership Council, have worked for years to bring this kind of training to the police department.

I want to recognize **Dr. Erika Van Buren**, Director of the Training Institute, and **Jennifer Prince** for organizing the training in a short time. During the 40 hour class, police officers learn to recognize signs of mental disorders, to determine the most appropriate response, and to use the most proven de-escalation tactics and techniques.

Through the involvement of NAMI, DC, officers will hear directly from consumers and family members about the stigma often associated with mental illness and their expectations when they call the police for assistance. The class also builds in field experience as officers will tour CPEP and visit several community-based mental health providers.

We are confident that the CIO Initiative will help contribute to consumer and officer safety and lead to the most appropriate response for people in a psychiatric crisis.

As always, I welcome your comments or suggestions at steve.baron@dc.gov.

Steve

**Join the new
Policy e-Forum!**
(see page 4)

Office of Accountability: On the Move

A critical role for a state mental health authority is to provide ongoing monitoring and oversight of the service system. The Office of Accountability (OA), led by Deputy Director **Anne Weiss**, provides this comprehensive accountability to ensure that the provider network is adequately monitored, provided feedback and trained so that District residents receive services within a well regulated system.

Highlights of their activities included in the Director's testimony at the Council February FY 08 oversight hearing are:

- Regularly conducting Quality Review audits of the providers to ensure that treatment plans are current and that the services meet Medicaid requirements
- Monitoring community residential facilities which has led to the revocation of a license because of concerns about consumer safety
- Conducting monthly chart reviews for Saint Elizabeths patients who have concurrent medical diagnoses with summary reports to the Hospital for needed improvements.

OA is establishing a provider scorecard that rates providers on quality of care and services, internal financial controls, and compliance with District and federal regulations. Scores will be



Picture by Maureen Jais-Mick

OA team at a recent tour of the new hospital (L to R) **back row**- Nicholas Geleta, Yoni Tyberg, Kenneth Hopkins, Sondra Hassan, Carroll Ward, Yoseph Tesfaye, Sheila Kelly, Atiya Shamblee, David Nickens, Dan Byrne (hidden), Mary Campbell (Risk Manager). **front row**- Sylvia Ratliff-Trappio, Janice Ray, Catherine Anderson, Leslie Deveau and Richard Olowomeye.

posted on our website next fiscal year. OA also is conducting reviews of the DC CSA transition to monitor continuity of care.

News from Human Resources

Former DC CSA employees who have moved to other areas in DMH: **Austin E. Uwaeme** and **John W. Waymmann**, mental health specialists, and **Juanika Johnson**, mental health counselor, have joined CPEP.

Tira L. Williams, contract specialist, and **Tedla W. Giorgis**, language access coordinator, are now at the Authority. **Jeremy M. Share** and **Terredell H. Burroughs**, mental health specialists, have moved to the RTC program at the Authority. *Congratulations!*

Summer Youth Employment Program Seeks Mentor. This year, DMH will host 100 students—54 of whom will be at the Authority. This is a great opportunity to introduce young people to the

important work of a mental health professional. The Program is from June 18 -August 21.

In the coming weeks, HR will contact managers to help identify staff to act as supervisors and mentors. Each person must have a completed criminal background check on file and HR will offer mentorship training.

To help make the summer employment program a meaningful experience, HR will conduct developmental training for students, including dressing for success, writing a winning resume, and providing good customer service.

Be a part of the team and volunteer!

Employee Spotlight: Alexis Haynes, Director of Adult Services

There is no typical day for **Alexis Haynes**—every day is different. But, you can be assured that each day she responds to an urgent request for some kind of service, attends at least three meetings, and doesn't leave the office before 8 p.m. And, that's why she likes her job.

After working for five years as Director of Care Coordination, **Alexis** was promoted last September to Director of the Adult Services Division. In her new job, she oversees the housing and homeless outreach programs, forensic services, supported employment, the ACT teams, and the co-occurring disorders program—all core DMH services.

Alexis has more than 25 years of experience working with individuals with serious and persistent mental illness. Before coming to DMH, she was the Chief Operating Officer for Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area. During her nine years there, she also was responsible for adult mental health service delivery, adoption and foster care services, and immigration and refugee resettlement. A Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, **Alexis** worked as a therapist with children and adults in the District and New Jersey.

Active on a number of boards, she is an ex officio member of the Georgia Avenue Rock Creek East



Alexis Haynes

Collaborative and Vice Chair of the Compliance Committee for the Collaborative Council.

Alexis received her Bachelor's degree from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and a MSW from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She lives in Upper Marlboro, and has two adult children. She likes jazz and loves dancing of all kinds but she is an "old school dancer" from New Jersey who prefers swing and bop. Big on family, she spends as much time as possible with her four grandchildren.

alumni from all walks of life. However, of the group, he is the most recent graduate.

And, that's not all. *The Washington Hispanic* newspaper recently featured Luis and the mobile crisis services.

While **Luis** appreciates the personal recognitions, he sees these as opportunities to highlight the work of the mobile crisis services teams.

Congratulations Luis!



Very Reverend David O'Connell, President of Catholic University, congratulates Luis Vasquez.

Luis Vasquez, director of CPEP's mobile crisis services, received the Catholic University 2009 Alumni Achievement Award at a recent luncheon, called, "A Cardinal Celebration, the Catholic University of America's Alumni Achievement Awards Luncheon." **Luis** was recognized along with six other distinguished Catholic

Join the New Policy e-forum and Help Shape DMH Policies

We are all affected by DMH policies and procedures as implementers, consumers, advocates, and/or payers. Given this reason, it is vital that we become partners in creating an environment where our ideas are encouraged, respected and honored in the process of policy development.

By influencing policy making at all levels, DMH systems can become more responsive, customer friendly, and consumer driven.

Short of a "blog" or "chat-room" on the internet, the Policy Support Division at the Office of Strategic Planning, Policy and Evaluation led by Deputy Director **Anne M. Sturtz** has developed a venue to provide comments, thoughts, recommendations, and critiques on what works and does not work in our service delivery systems.

The new **Policy e-Forum** has its first issue this April 2009 to encourage everyone to contact us on posted policy topics, or suggestions for policies that have not yet been brought to our attention. Since its publication, we have received numerous feedbacks via email and telephone already.

After all, policy development is not only for managers or supervisors. Everyone affected by policies and procedures is entitled to

participate. The **Policy e-Forum** allows us to let someone know what it means to be at the implementing or receiving end of DMH policy and procedures. Do they make sense? Are they helpful? Do they make you do a better job in helping people? What do you think are more efficient and effective ways of doing things?

We believe that it is inherent in each of us to come to work daily with the thought "how can I improve my job today," which is the essence of quality improvement. The intent of doing a better job strengthens our own pride and confidence which lead to self-fulfillment, which, of course, according to well-known studies, minimizes stress, which leads to a "happier life" and so on.

Policies and procedures are not merely manuals shelved in our offices or viewed on the web. These are our daily guide for our behaviors at work. Thus, they must come alive as we serve people, relate with our co-workers, and the community.

The **Policy e-Forum** intends to ignite interest and enthusiasm towards ownership of DMH policies and procedures. The more we feel a sense of ownership, the more we will value them as integral part of our jobs. The more we understand and make use of them, the more we avoid costly mistakes for ourselves and our organization. *Join us at the **Policy e-Forum!***

by **Ana M. Veria, LICSW**
Director, Policy Support Division

Upcoming Events

To include your upcoming event, please contact phyllis.jones@dc.gov

Adult CSRs May 5-15

2009 Conference of Mental Health Association of Washington, DC May 13
more information: www.mhadc.org

8th Annual Mental Health Conference June 26
contact Juanita.Reaves@dc.gov
for more information.

Read the latest *Dixon Status Report* on the website, www.dmh.dc.gov. go to Information, *Dixon Case Information*.

*eNewsletter produced by Phyllis Jones, PIO
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