

D.C. Department of Mental Health Connecting



March 2004

Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Our City

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Neighborhood Services Team Helps Elderly Couple

The one thing about being on the Neighborhood Services Core Team is that any thing is likely to happen. While residents are most often concerned about safety or health problems, in many instances social service or mental health issues are at the core of their concern.

Linda Kaufman, DMH Neighborhood Services Core Team Leader, explained

said Ms. Kaufman.

In Ward 1, there was an elderly lady who caught the eye of one of the core team members. She was seen frequently roaming the neighborhood in clothes that were not in season and carrying lots of bags.

The Metropolitan Police Department core team representative had estab-



Mission Award winners: L to R-Alemayehu Haile, Director Knisley, Venida Hamilton, Jocelyn Ekpo, Gertha Pollard and Jim Zinn. Michele May is seated.

lished a friendly relationship with the lady but was unclear about her ability to care for herself. The core team turned to DMH member **Jocelyn Ekpo, Office of Programs and Policy**, for assistance. They wanted to know if DMH could do anything to help the elderly lady.

"Problems are likely to recur if we don't get to the root of the problem,"

Continued on page 4

Message from the Director

The Department's recent oversight hearing before the DC Council went extremely well thanks to all of the staff that worked diligently to consolidate our information. I am pleased to report that we successfully demonstrated the progress that we have made in meeting the requirements of the Court-ordered Plan and much more. Go to www.dmh.dc.gov to read my testimony at the March 3 oversight hearing on FY 2003/FY 2004 Spending and Performance.

Here are a few DMH highlights:

- The CSA and St. Elizabeths to implement new practice management information systems that provide the ability for clinical reporting and management, and billing functionality.
- During FY04, the Division of Licensure has visited the 148 community residential facilities. Each facility has undergone a six-month inspection.
- Increased services for children by 136 percent over the previous year.
- For the first time St. Elizabeths patients leave their units everyday for a myriad of constructive activities and ancillary treatment provided on the Treatment Mall.

Keep up the great work!

Martha B. Knisley
Director

DMH First Quarter Award Honorees

Access Award—Ismail Korme, LICSW

Nominated by Green Door Director Judith Johnson for outstanding services to a consumer who was experiencing problems at the Green Door. In addition, Mr. Korme provides outstanding, dedicated and culturally-competent services to the CSA's Multicultural Community Support Program.



Director Knisley, Ismail Korme,
Dr. Telda Giorgis



Director Knisley, Leola Jenkins and Dr.
Richard Gontang

Celebration Award—Richard Gontang, Ph.D.

Nominated by Leola Jenkins for continued outstanding services to the children and families of the Northwest Family Center. Dr. Gontang provides clinical services to a multicultural population. Along with his clinical duties, he provides supportive services to students and teachers at an inner city elementary school. He provides extensive supervision to predoctoral interns and postdoctoral residents. He is widely respected for his clinical proficiency and administrative skills.

Customer Service Award—Beth Gouse, Ph.D.

Nominated by Paul Montalbano for her unwavering commitment to serving the consumers in the Pretrial and Posttrial Ward at the St. Elizabeths Hospital John Howard Pavilion. Dr. Gouse is being recognized for her initiative, flexibility, teamwork and her exemplary and tireless work ethic as well as for the optimism, warmth and caring she invariably demonstrates despite the rigorous demands of her position.



Dr. Paul Montalbano, Director Knisley
and Dr. Beth Gouse



Director Knisley, Yvonne Smith and Frances Priester

Support our Services Award-Yvonne Smith

Nominated by Frances Priester, Office of Consumer and Family Affairs. Ms. Smith coordinated the 2003 Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program (MHSIP) survey that resulted in more than 800 surveys. She is to be commended for her continued work in recovery education.

Mission Award Winners—Page 1



March—The Training Institute schedule is available. **Contact Dr. Juan Lovelace at 673-7759.**

March 13th—100 Black Men of Greater Washington, DC Inc. Health Fair at Emery Recreation Center, 5801 Georgia Ave. NW. DMH to participate. **Contact Gina Douglas at 673-1931.**

April 17th—Walker Jones Health Fair, 1100 First Street, NW. DMH CSA will have an information table. **Contact John Graham at 698-2386.**

April 22—The DC State Mental Health Planning Council Judge Aubrey E. Robinson, Jr. Memorial Mental Health Conference. The event will focus on housing options for persons in recovery from mental illness. It will be held at the Renaissance Hotel, 999 9th Street, NW. **Contact Dr. Juanita Reaves at 673-7597.**

April 9—Deadline for submitting nominations for the Second Quarter Awards. **Contact Lois Calhoun at 671-4031.**

May—Mental Health Month—Please provide calendar of events to Gina Douglas at gina.douglas@dc.gov.

Holland Appointed to Hospital Association Council

Joy Holland, CEO St. Elizabeths Hospital, is a newly elected member of the Governing Council of the American Hospital Association (AHA) Section for Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Services. She represents the following states: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and the District of Columbia.

The Governing Council is comprised of 15 health care leaders from across the country. The Council serves as an advisor and sounding board for member service strategies, provides advice and recommendations, and reviews policy positions.

In her new appointment, Ms. Holland will meet with congressional leaders to discuss policy and legislative and regulatory issues on behalf of all behavioral health care providers. The AHA Governing Council represents over 1,600 behavioral health providers and professionals who are members of the American Hospital Association. Ms. Holland will serve in this position until December 31, 2006.

Employees who have professional information that they want to share with others should email it to gina.douglas@dc.gov.

May is Mental Health Month!

What are you doing during mental health month? Curious minds want to know.

Please email gina.douglas@dc.gov with your plans so that we can include them in the DC Mental Health Month Calendar. That means we want to hear from consumers, providers and staff.

The national theme is "Mental Health Matters in Your Life." For more information check out the NAMH website at www.nmha.org.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS in your life

Lovelace to Serve on Board of New Adult Group Home

Dr. Juan Carlos Lovelace, Training Coordinator of the Office of Organizational Development, was recently accepted as a member of the advisory board of the Azure House, LLC. The Azure House is a new adult group home for people with mental retardation opening in Southeast, DC. He will serve as a private citizen representing the areas of mental health, health & workforce development and organizational development.

What's Up DMH?

Joyce White, Technical Assistance and Training Coordinator for DC CINGS, recently discussed the joy and pain of single mothers raising sons at a workshop in Ward 8.



Dr. Anthony Ng, a CPEP psychiatrist, has just been published in this month's Journal of Psychiatric Practice. The title of his article is "Outreach to the Homeless."

Frances Priester, Office of Consumer and Family Affairs, shared her story on the impact of depression on women at a church in SE. Also, she discussed social work in mental health settings with Howard University students.

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Mental Health Conference to Explore Housing Options

Safe, affordable housing is an important issue for most people. For persons with mental illness, **Dr. Juanita Reaves** says that the issue can be compounded. Housing is such a critical concern that mental health professionals and advocates will take a close look at the issue during the 4th Annual Judge Aubrey E. Robinson, Jr. Memorial Mental Health Conference on Thursday, April 22nd.

Conference participants will explore housing options for persons in recovery from mental illness — from homelessness to home ownership. The conference will focus on four elements of housing for persons with mental illness: what other states are doing; the District of Columbia perspective; examples of housing programs that work; and how to help consumers find and maintain housing.

“It’s not just brick and mortar,” Dr. Reaves said, about finding housing for mental health consumers.

Employment, budgeting skills and a support system are all critical elements in sustaining housing. Public perception is also among the more difficult factors in finding housing for persons recovering from mental illness.

Dr. Reaves explained that generally society does not look at people with mental illness as capable of independent living. Even though there are many

examples of consumers who have successfully integrated into the community, many residents still practice “not in my neighborhood.”

In the Dixon Decree, Judge Aubrey E. Robinson’s said that persons recovering from mental illness have a right to treatment in the least restrictive environment. For mental health consumers, advocates and professionals, finding the right environment is an ongoing challenge.

To register for the housing options conference, call Dr. Juanita Reaves at 202-673-7597. The registration deadline is March 31.



Continued from page 1

Without hesitation, Ms. Ekpo called the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) and coordinated with **Kevin Elphick, CSA Director of Crisis and Emergency Services, Ale-mayehu Haile, Gertha Pollard, and Jim Zinn of the CSA Homeless Outreach Program** were called upon to evaluate the situation. After meeting with the elderly woman and her companion at their residence it was recommended that they both be admitted to St. Elizabeths Hospital for further evaluation and treatment. Their home had no running water, electricity, or heat. The home has been condemned.

The entire DMH team was recently acknowledged by the Executive Office of the Mayor and received the DMH First Quarter Mission Award for providing support to this elderly couple.

OOPS!

Thanks to these CSA employees for supporting the DMH NBC 4 Expo exhibit:

Betty Palmore
Dallas Williams
Madeline Foreman
John Robb
Steve Tilman
George Vincent

Bipolar Support Group

The second Thursday of each month 7 pm - 8 pm

Howard University Mental Health Clinic, 530 College Street, NW, Room 219

The purpose of the bipolar peer support group is to provide a supportive environment for African Americans who are recovering from this illness. Through the support of the Howard University Department of Psychiatry, the first consumer-led support group for African Americans with bipolar disorder is being formed. This group will provide a milieu, which allows group members to discuss the full range of issues relating to the environmental and behavioral triggers that make bipolar illness more difficult to manage. Drawing upon the rich cultural heritage of African Americans, the group’s mission is to instill hope and confidence in group members and to help regain control of their lives. Facilitators are **Yvonne Smith** and Clinical Advisor Dr. Jermaine Robertson.