



Connecting

Creating A New Mental Health Service Delivery System for Our City

April 2004

Vol. 2 No. 8

Message from Martha B. Knisley, Director

FY 2005 Budget

At our April 22, we will testify before the Committee on Human Services about the Mayor's FY05 budget for DMH, which is the first budget to bridge the gap between service delivery costs and funding.

Mayor Williams added \$37.2 million to our base budget to help us meet court-ordered expenditures and health and safety requirements without exceeding the local appropriation and other funding sources such as Medicare and Medicaid.

In January we closed the books on a long chapter in our history. KPMG, the accounting firm auditing the District's revenues and expenditures, wrote off \$274 million of the Department's uncollectible receivables dating back 10 years. This action hopefully lifts another cloud hanging over DMH and signifies the hard work of all of our staff to fix these long standing problems. I want to thank the all DMH employees for your contributions on cost reports, revenue generation, billing, auditing, time studies and all the other work we undertook to bill and collect revenue for our services.

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May is Mental Health Month

National Theme to Ring Throughout the District of Columbia

On Tuesday, May 11, NBC4 Morning Co-host Barbara Harrison will emcee the **DMH/DC CINGS (Children Inspired Now Gain Strength)** May is Mental Health Month opening ceremony and awards program at Covenant Baptist Church in Ward 8. Youth and family members, child-serving District government agencies, DMH certified providers and community-based organizations will be honored. Police officers will receive a special youth training award and a reception and multi-agency exhibit round out this event.



Barbara Harrison

DMH Director Martha B. Knisley said, "We're excited to highlight the success of our evolving mental health system of care for children, youth and families during this national observation of mental health issues.

"Our partners in the system of care are family members, District government agencies, community-based organizations and mental health service providers. We have been working very hard and wanted to applaud everyone for their contributions. During May, a full range of activities will demonstrate the significance of a comprehensive system of care for children, youth and their families."

Everyone is invited to participate in Mental Health Month events. For a complete list of activities, visit the DMH Website at www.dmh.dc.gov or call 202-671-4155.

**MENTAL
HEALTH
MATTERS**
*in your
life*

CSA is Moving Around Town to Better Serve Residents

Beginning in April, the DC Community Services Agency is moving several of its services to new sites, including:

- Multicultural Center and Northwest Child and Family Services from 1532 U Street, NW to 1250 U Street, NW. Main number – (202) 671-4010
- Rehabilitation Day Services from St. Elizabeths Hospital CT1 to 35 K Street, NE.
- Assertive Community Treatment teams from 35 K Street, N.E. to 33 N St., NE.

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**Department of Mental Health
Community Services Agency**
Office of Supported Employment
202-576-8704

**Department of Human Services
Rehabilitation Services
Administration (RSA)** assists
persons with differing abilities with
employment and independent living
in the home and community. RSA
provides counseling and guidance,
assessment services, physical
restoration, vocational training, and
job search and placement
202-442-8400
202-442-8600 TTY/TTD

**Department of Employment
Services**
does.dc.gov
202-724-7000
609 H Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

**The Laurie Mitchell Employment
Center**
8794-S Sacramento Drive
Alexandria, Virginia
Offers Microsoft Word & Excel
classes on Mondays and Wednesdays.
703-531-6380

NAMI Urges the FDA to Issue Guidance on the Use of SSRIs to Treat Major Depression in Children

NAMI calls on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to provide clear guidance to families and mental health providers on the safe and effective treatment of major depression in children--after reviewing *all* of the relevant research data.

Following two conflicting reports on the benefits and risks of prescribing certain antidepressants for children and adolescents with depression, the FDA convened a meeting to consider current research data and the need for further research in this area.

Britain's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and the FDA issued warnings last year that stated that increased suicidal ideation and suicide attempts in clinical trials were associated with the use of Paxil—a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) used to treat adolescents with major depression.

However, the link between SSRI use in adolescents with depression and suicide is weak, according to a report released by the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP)—whose special

task force of nationally recognized psychiatrists evaluated evidence from clinical trials and studies.

This analysis led the task force to conclude that SSRI use did not cause increased suicide attempts or ideation in youth being treated for depression. On the contrary, the data reviewed by the ACNP task force demonstrated efficacy in the use of SSRIs to treat youth with major depression.

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CSA Makes Major Moves



- Certain children's services will be clustered at 51 N Street, NE – Community-based Intervention services for children and youth, Mobile Urgent Stabilization Treatment services and therapeutic nursery administrative services. Children, youth and family Community Support services teams already at 51 N Street, NE will continue operating there.

Certain administrative staff are moving from 821 Howard Road, SE to 1250 U Street, NW – Chief Executive Officer, Director of Operations, Office of Consumer Advocacy, Chief Clinical Officer, Director of Finance and Reimbursement Services, Quality Improvement and Compliance staff, Community Collaboration and Education staff, and the Staff Development and Training program. Main number is (202) 671-4010.

Loss & Grief Brochure Approved Brochures to Help Youth Deal with Life Issues

The DMH **School Mental Health Program** and the **Youth Advisory Council** have taken the lead to develop brochures to help young people deal with life issues. The first brochure in the series is the Loss and Grief brochure now available.

For more information on how to get copies of the brochure, call Gina Douglas at 673-1931.

1-866-245-6340 Telephone Hotline for Youth to Call — 24/7

Frightening incidents in DC schools and neighborhoods led to the creation of a toll-free DMH youth telephone line— **1-866-245-6340**. The youth line is answered by the **Access HelpLine** staff.

Young people struggling with death, gang violence and other difficult issues are encouraged to call the youth line. **DC CINGS** is printing youth line cards for distribution to schools and youth groups.

Issues



- **April 22**—DMH FY 2005 Budget Request Hearing , 4 pm Council of the District of Columbia, Committee on Human Services . **Contact Linda Grant at 673-1937.**
- **April 22**— “Homelessness to Home Ownership” conference, Renaissance Hotel, 999 9th Street, NW. **Contact Dr. Juanita Reaves at 673-7597.**
- **April 22** —Spring 04 Training Institute Brochure. **Contact Dr. Juan Lovelace at 673-7759.**
- **April 28**—Barney Senior Center Disaster Preparedness, Guest speaker **Dan Byrne**, 504 Kennedy Street, NW. **Contact Gina Douglas at 673-1931.**

DC CINGS/Department of Mental Health

Mental Health Month Activities for May

www.dmh.dc.gov

Consumer Grievance Program Continues to Make Strides

Making sure that consumers are satisfied with the mental health services that they receive is the fundamental reason behind the DMH grievance

program “FAIR”— Finding Answers, Improving Relationships.

This program was implemented for consumers but they are not the only ones pleased by the implementation of a comprehensive grievance program.

Paul Washington, Grievance Manager in the DMH Office of Consumer and Family Affairs, is gratified by the progress the Department has made in implementing a formal process to hear and resolve the concerns of consumers.

“It is rewarding to be part of a system that is meeting its goal to improve consumer satisfaction,” Mr. Washington said.

Mr. Washington added that making the grievance program fair and accessible to all consumers is an ongoing commitment by DMH. The department is testing the Internet-based grievance procedure. After testing is completed, consumers will be able to file a grievance online without worry of privacy violations.



Also, ongoing training with providers is a critical element to addressing the concerns of consumers. Mr. Washington said that the department believes that if providers know how to approach and resolve grievances, then the concerns can be resolved on the provider level.

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HelpLine Links Foster Care Children to Services

The Access HelpLine has mobilized its resources to help improve foster care in the District of Columbia. **Lisa Bullock, Chief of System Access**, said that the HelpLine has implemented a system that links children in foster care to mental health services.

Ms. Bullock said that one of the benefits of including these children into the system, is that even when they age out of foster care they are still part of the city’s system of care.

The HelpLine foster care program is made possible by the \$3.9 million that has been appropriated to DMH by the US Senate and US House of Representatives Committees on Appropriations.

With this funding, DMH will significantly expand its capacity for screening and assessments for children in foster care and build the array of providers with the ability to provide timely and appropriate services to children in foster care, focusing on services that research shows is successful.

Studies profiling the mental health status of children involved in child welfare indicate that children in foster care

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Connecting is a publication of the
Office of Public Affairs
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First Annual Safe Passages-DC CINGS Mental Health Awards



Individuals and groups that have demonstrated outstanding service in mental health are the focus of the 1st Annual Safe Passages-DC CINGS Mental Health Awards. Nominations for the following five categories must be received by Friday, April 23, 2004.

- Outstanding Youth
- Outstanding Family Member
- Outstanding Partner Agency/ Organization
- Outstanding Community Based Organization
- Outstanding Core Service Agency

The awards ceremony will be held during May—Mental Health Month. For more information call Wilma Harvey at 671-4155.



1st Annual DMH Community Services Agency Consumer Awards Program

The DMH Community Services Agency will have its 1st Annual Dinner and Awards Program "Victory, Hope and Unlimited Possibilities" on Thursday, May 20 to honor consumers who have made tremendous achievements their lives and in their recovery.

The awards ceremony will be held at Washington Navy Yard. For more information on the nomination process and the awards dinner call **Marlene Graham** at 671-4174 or **John Graham** at 671-4013.

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are three to 10 times more likely to have a mental health problem than children on welfare.

An Alternative Way to Help Kids Who Violate Curfew CURFEW-N-COURTS



Keeping kids off the street after hours was the focus of the "Curfew-N-Courts" event held recently at the Kennedy Recreation Center. Young people from Ward 2 near the Metropolitan Police Third District community were picked up around 9:00 pm on a Friday night. They were searched, hand cuffed and driven to the recreation center—sirens and all. The only thing different about how they were treated on this night was rather than being booked downtown they were brought to the recreation center and given the option of staying in the evening program.

Most opted to stay with the program although parents were called for all underage teens and a couple of parents came to pick up their children. Approximately 60 young men ranging in age from 15 to 27 years old were brought in for the program. Two young women also participated. The Ward Two Neighborhood Services Core Team sponsored the activity.

Michele May, CSA Homeless Services Coordinator/Neighborhood Services Core Two Team Member said, "The program is a great way to reach out to young people in a high risk category." Although she and other core team members agree that the handcuffs should not be used.

A Youth Prevention Counselor from Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration (APRA) provided a discussion about drugs and self esteem. The group also watched a video produced by a young man in the neighborhood. It showed several young men who ended up dying due to drug violence and their funerals.

Many of the program participants were high from drugs or alcohol. Although they expressed their frustration about spending their Friday night in this program, many complained of hopelessness and frustration with employment and other issues.

Soda and chips were provided and at the end of the program the young folks were encouraged to play basketball. There were two games. About 20 of the original 60 stayed to play basketball. The others were provided transportation home.

Employees from APRA, the Department of Mental Health, Department of Employment Services, Metropolitan Police Department, Department of Parks and Recreation and Neighborhood Services collaborated on this event. This was the first of four events already planned. The other dates are Friday, May 7, Friday, June 4 and Friday, June 25 — this time the youth will not be handcuffed.

Anyone at DMH interested in participating in the upcoming event is encouraged to call Ms. May at (202) 698-5263. We need someone who is interested in providing a motivational talk to this special group of kids and who might be able to link folks up with mentorship or counseling services within their program.

New Senior-Level Appointments Ensure DMH Strength and Success



Jocelyn Alleyne is the Director of Certification for the Office of Accountability in the Mental Health Authority. She is responsible for ensuring that providers meet all requirements to deliver Mental Health Rehabilitation Services. Certified providers are the most critical component of the District's mental health system; therefore, the work Ms. Alleyne and her staff perform — site surveys, compliance

inspections, and preparation and monitoring of corrective action plans and progress reports for stated deficiencies — is crucial to the systems' providing quality services.

Ms. Alleyne also collaborates with DMH managers to ensure that community-based services are monitored for compliance with certification standards. Ms. Alleyne has been with the Department since November 2003. She brings over 15 years of certification experience to the Authority.

Vivian Nunez is the Attorney Advisor in the Division of Human Resources. She is responsible for providing advice on human resources legal issues, laws and policies pertaining to labor and employee relations, providing legal analysis of contracts, and responding to legal inquiries.

Ms. Nunez also advises the DMH Director and General Counsel in negotiations of labor management agreements, contract renewals, arbitration disputes and grievance resolutions.

Ms. Nunez joined the Authority staff in April. She has over 12 years of experience.



Anne Sturtz serves as the DMH General Counsel. She is the principal legal advisor to DMH and functions in an attorney-client relationship with the Director. In her position, Ms. Sturtz advocates vigorously for the Director's position on legal issues. She advises the Director on questions of law or administrative policy involved in the operation of the Department and in its contacts with private and professional associations, state and local

government and the public.

She also manages legal affairs to ensure that programs and practices are consistent with established laws, standards, policies, and procedures. Ms. Sturtz has almost 15 years of experience in legal compliance, including risk management, certification and licensure and Medicaid. She came to DMH in April.

What's Up DMH?

Wilma Harvey, DC CINGS represented DMH at an ANC 7E meeting.

Steven Steury, MD co-edited the *State Mental Health Authorities' Response to Terrorism* for the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Medical Directors Council.



Victoria TenEyck, CSA, CBI, provided an inspirational message and important information to drama students at Paul Junior Public Charter School.

Paul Washington, Office of Consumer and Family Affairs, answered some tough questions from students at Assumption Catholic Elementary School.

Joyce White, DC CINGS met with officials of the DC Boys and Girls Club to inform them of the system of care network within the city.

The **DMH School Mental Health Program** is providing an array of services to the Terrell Junior High School community in response to recent critical incidents.

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Consumer Grievance Program

Since the grievance program began in January 2004, 10 external review cases have been forwarded to Mr. Washington. Eight of the ten cases were mediation where a non-DMH employee reviews the case and tries to help all parties reach a solution. External review cases are those that are resolved beyond the provider level.

The other two cases have been referred for a hearing. During this process the reviewer listens to all involved and files a report for a final decision by the Director of DMH.

School Success Story



Building a System of Care for Children School Program Provides Support for Parents & Teachers

For **Monica Woodard, DMH mental health clinician**, and Miner Elementary School Principal Angela Tilghman, students are a part of the equation to build healthy families. They realize that parents and teachers need help, too!

During Mental Health Month, Ms. Woodard will offer the following parent-support programs at the school, 601 15th St., N.E. from 4-6 pm on Thursdays—

- 5/13—Depression
- 5/20—Children & Grief
- 5/27—Impact of Drug Abuse

For more information call Ms. Woodard at 724-4573.

For a complete list of school mental health activities during May and June visit www.dmh.dc.gov.

School Intervention Helps Student, Parents & Teacher

Constant crying in class, sadness, extremely clingy to adults, withdrawal from peers were some of the behaviors exhibited by a five-year old student. After a clinical assessment from a School Mental Health staff member, it was determined that a number of factors at home and school were contributing the child's behaviors.

During regular sessions with the adults, the clinician, parents and teacher developed and implemented recommendations that led to a positive outcome for this child.

By the end of the sessions, the student overcame his difficulties and received an award for leadership, compassion and friendship.

Editor's Note: The work DMH clinicians perform to assist children and youth with building resiliency has a profound effect throughout their lifetime. In future issues of DMH Connecting, we will highlight other examples of the positive effects intervention has produced.

Some Frequently Asked Questions about Lead in DC Water

Q. How can I get my water tested if I live in an apartment or condominium?

A. Ask your building manager or owner to contact WASA at (202) 787-2688. WASA will determine if testing of the water in your building is warranted. If it is, WASA will send a test kit to the manager or owner.

Q. Can I have my tap water tested by an independent lab?

A. WASA sends its water testing kits to an independent laboratory. For a list of these labs, visit the WASA website at <http://www.dcwasa.com/lead/faq.cfm>

Q. What other steps can I take to reduce the amount of lead in my drinking water?

A. All consumers should flush water lines that have not been used for more than six hours by running cold water ("flush") for 60 seconds prior to using the water from a faucet for drinking or cooking. Periodically, remove and clean the strainer/aerator device on your facet to remove debris. Also, use cold water only for drinking or cooking; hot water will contain higher levels of lead. Heat cold water on the stove for making hot beverages or cooking. **Boiling your water will not remove lead!**

Q. Where can I get more information about the health effects of lead or where free blood lead testing is being offered?

A. Visit the Department of Health website at www.dchealth.dc.gov or the DC government website at <http://dc.gov>.

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Earlier this month, I briefed public child-serving agencies and provider network members about preliminary results of the March 2004 Community Services Review on the status of children receiving mental health services and the performance profiles of the agencies that served them. We also discussed various DMH/Partnership initiatives and the guiding principles for expanding service capacity within the children's system of care.

We also discussed the Multi-Agency Planning Team, our commitment to youth involvement, the DMH/CFSA Foster Care Mental Health Initiative, and the expansion of the school-based mental health program. We are doing great things for our children, youth and their families. With families and providers as our partners we can help make life so much better for our next generation of youth. Thanks again to all of our staff, family partners and Youth Advisory Council for your hard work and dedication.

What do you
need to know about the
Department of Mental Health?
Inquiring Minds Want to Know
Let me know at
gina.douglas@dc.gov