

Staying in Touch

January 2008

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**Look for DMH on the
NBC Today Show next
Wednesday, January 9,
during the 8:00 a.m.
hour in a segment on
the planned National
Consumer Memorial at
Saint Elizabeths
Hospital.**

Message from the Director



Dear DMH Employee,

Happy New Year! We closed out the year with a terrific Holiday Open House! Congratulations to **Leslie Carson, JoAnn Davis, Linda Foxx, Vicki Whitfield** and **Frankie Wheeler** from the Authority, **Deirdre Fields** at

Saint Elizabeths and all those who helped. Particular thanks to the labor unions who co-sponsored the event as part of the Department's Labor/Management partnership.

In 2008, as our administrative operations stabilize, we can focus on new initiatives to better serve individuals who have not been well served by the District's Public Mental Health System. We are looking forward to

- a new mobile crisis service this spring
- an urgent care mental health clinic at Superior Court targeted at homeless individuals with mental illness brought before the Traffic and Misdemeanor Court
- new mental health services at Franklin Shelter
- new crisis, clinic and intensive wrap around services for youth, and
- strategies to reduce the current census at Saint Elizabeths that include assertive discharge planning as well as new acute care services in community hospitals for involuntarily committed individuals.

It's an exciting time for the Department and it will take each of us to make these new initiatives work while continuing to deliver high quality services. I am confident that we can meet this challenge.

As always, you can email me directly at steve.baron@dc.gov about issues of concern to you.

Steve

New Parking Enforcement at 64 New York Avenue NE

Effective January 1, the Office of Property Management will implement new parking rules at 64 New York Avenue NE and will ticket violators after a two week grace period that ends on January 16. An improperly parked vehicle also could be towed.

According to OPM, parking tickets will be issued to anyone who parks a personal or government vehicle in an "unauthorized area". An unauthorized area is a designated fire lane, handicapped space, and a space reserved for visitors (if you are a monthly parker). From January 1 through January 15, a warning citation will be issued to violators, but starting January 16, a ticket will be issued—with fines assessed by law, for example a \$50 fine for parking less than 10 feet from a fire hydrant.

Keep in mind that the driver of the government vehicle cited will be responsible for paying the ticket.

According to **Marcia Jones**, Chief of Staff, we have asked OPM for written rules regarding parking violations, and the procedures to follow if towed. We will provide you with this information when we receive it.

Meanwhile, please communicate this information to visitors, delivery persons, contractors, and others who may choose to park at 64 New York Avenue, NE...and pay attention to where you park.

Announcements

Erika Van Buren, Ph. D., has been appointed the Director of Organizational Development. She will develop and implement the DMH Training Institute. Most recently, she worked as a Research Analyst at the American Institutes for Research where she conducted training and wrote technical reports in the areas of mental health, cultural and linguistic competence and education. She is a psychologist with six years experience providing individual, group and family therapy.

Julia Maxwell, MSW, LICSW has been appointed Director of Disaster and Emergency Preparedness. She will coordinate DMH's All-Hazards Plan, build a cadre of crisis counselors, and work with District agencies that lead emergency response functions. A DMH employee for 27 years, Ms. Maxwell most recently worked as a program manager with DC CSA. She serves as a crisis responder on the District's Crisis Response Team and for the Red Cross, and was part of the disaster team sent from the District to assist Hurricane Katrina survivors.

"Early Out/Easy Out" Incentive Program Announced

Mayor Fenty recently announced the District will offer eligible employees the opportunity to retire through an "Early Out/Easy Out" incentive program. Incentives will range up to \$25,000.

This program affects employees in both the Civil Service and District Service (hired on or after October 1, 1987), but some employees in critical or hard to fill positions may not be eligible. Further, agencies will be required to submit strategic plans to ensure high levels of service will continue during the transition period. Therefore, your position must be identified as eligible for the program in order for you to participate.

To receive an incentive, an employee must be willing to leave no later than December 31, 2008. Plus, an employee who retires under this program will not be able to return to District Government employment for five years.

Details are still being finalized. Upon approval of the program by the Council, you can contact the Office of Human Resources to get information about your particular situation or with any other questions.

Employee Spotlight: Harriett Jones Bennett

Harriett Jones Bennett has worked at the Department of Mental Health since 2002 as a consultant with the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs. She assists with public education and outreach—setting up information stands at community events and passing out brochures about available services. She also performs support functions with the Licensure Office, and has worked with the DC CSA 5K Race for Mental Health during four events.

Ms. Bennett was raised in Northwest Washington and attended District public schools. She talks openly about her recovery—the pitfalls and the successes. She says her recovery is based on her spirituality and being delivered from mood changing chemicals.

She connected with the Department through Saint Elizabeths' outpatient services in 1973. After 34 years, she still easily recalls the names of her therapists, case manager and work assignment supervisor who she says believed in her and gave her the strength to continue in her recovery. She points with pride to a certificate of outstanding service received for her work at the Hospital. Also, she started an AA group at Assumption Church in southeast in the early 80s, and is now a sponsor for others in recovery.

A mother, grandmother and great grandmother, she suffered the unexpected loss of her oldest son almost one year ago. Ms. Bennett evangelizes in the community and sees this calling as essential to her recovery and a hope for the recovery of others.



News from Human Resources

AETNA Open Access Plan replaces CIGNA. DCHR recently announced that the CIGNA Open Access Plus health benefit plan is no longer available to District employees effective December 31, 2007. Employees now enrolled in CIGNA and those who selected the plan during Open Enrollment 2008 will be transferred to the newly offered AETNA Open Access plan. If you do not want to be enrolled in AETNA, you have until February 28 to waive or select another health benefit carrier. If you do not make any changes, you will remain in the AETNA Open Access plan.

The AETNA plan is similar to that of CIGNA as it does not require a Primary Care Physician (PCP) or referrals to specialty physicians. For your convenience, you can call AETNA on a toll free number, 1-888-238-6258 for more information about this plan.

If you have questions, please contact **Louisa Buadoo-Amoa** in the Human Resources on (202) 673-3652.

Office of Risk Management Points Out Safe Lifting Techniques

Keep in mind several basic rules of lifting and moving to help prevent back injuries:

- ❖ Lift with your legs, not your back. Your legs muscles are larger and better positioned over the hips and knees to support this activity.
- ❖ Do not twist. Instead, always position your hips and feet toward the object you are lifting or moving.
- ❖ Maintain the natural curves of the neck, upper back and lower back while lifting, moving, and even sitting.
- ❖ Keep objects close to your body at waist level to reduce the leverage on your spine.
- ❖ Push, rather than pull when possible. Pushing naturally places your legs in a position to do the work whereas pulling naturally places your back in a forward bent position.

For more information, contact **Dr. Mary Campbell**, Risk Manager on (202) 673.7690 or mary.campbell@dc.gov

Saint Elizabeths Selected for National Guitar Giveaway Program

As part of a national campaign, Saint Elizabeths recently received a donated guitar for therapeutic and rehabilitative use by patients at John Howard from the Prisons Foundation.

The guitar giveaway initiative is modeled after the Jail Guitar Doors program in Great Britain started by well-known English singer-songwriter Billy Bragg. Ron Kemp and Dennis Sobin, two former jail house guitarists who have recorded CDs and appeared at the Kennedy Center, presented the guitar to Director **Steve Baron**, **Dr. Patrick Canavan** and Mr. **Joseph Henneberry** from the Hospital.

This gift was made possible by the work of **Crystal Robinson**, MT-BC, Program Manager, for Forensic Rehabilitation Services at John Howard. Great job!

Upcoming Events

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

Court Monitor Visit	January 9-10
Children/Youth Community Service Reviews	March 3 – 14
Adult Community Service Reviews	June 2 – 13

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