

Staying in Touch

May 2008

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***Committee on Health
Votes Full Support for
the Mayor's FY 09
Budget Request for
DMH!***

Message from the Director



Dear DMH Employee,

Spring is a busy time for the Department as several initiatives are coming to life. I am very excited that through our work with

DHCD, 97 new housing units for the exclusive use our consumers are in the pipeline—and the first tenants could move in next May. You can read more about this initiative on page 2.

And, for the first time in the District, a community based, consumer focused activity center is scheduled to open, and we look forward to the Open House Ceremony early this summer. After a competitive bid process, the Ida Mae Campbell Foundation was selected to operate the center. In her first days on the job, Vivi Smith, our new Director of the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs, made this project a major priority. Please take a moment to welcome Vivi to DMH.

We expect that the Urgent Care Clinic at Superior Court will open within the next several weeks. This will make a big difference in our ability to link people who have been involved in the judicial system and unable to access mental health services in a timely fashion. The Psychiatric Institute of Washington has been selected as the operator.

We are close to making a decision about our choice providers for children and expect the program to be operational in June or July.

With these initiatives, we are addressing gaps in services and moving toward our goal of establishing the most responsive public mental health system possible.

Please let me hear your comments and ideas for how to make the Department even better at steve.baron@dc.gov.

Steve

Mayor Fenty Joins Director Baron to Announce New Supportive Housing



SOME Director Richard Gerlach, Mayor Fenty, Councilmember Alexander, Directors Baron and Edmonds, and Ward 7 Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners celebrate the planned housing.

Mayor Adrian M. Fenty joined Director Baron on May 1 to announce a new initiative to create 300 units of affordable housing for the exclusive use of DMH consumers. DMH will transfer \$14 million to DHCD to help finance the creation or renovation of new affordable housing units over the next three years.

Mayor Fenty, Director Baron and Leila Finucane Edmonds, DHCD Director, announced the partnership at the site of a new housing project that will be developed by SOME. Ward 7 Councilmember Yvette Alexander also attended.

"We are committed to ensuring that District residents in need of public mental health services receive the support they need," said Mayor Fenty in a statement.

700 people with mental illness now receive a housing subsidy from DMH according to **Edith Makenta**, Director of Supportive Housing. The partnership with DHCD will increase the number of residents receiving housing support by 50 percent.

"We've heard over and over that access to affordable housing is the number one desire for individuals with mental illness, said Director Baron. "This partnership with DHCD will help us address access, and we will continue to provide flexible mental health services and support when wanted or needed."

Some DMH consumers could move into new homes as soon as May 2009 as DHCD will approve funding for 150 supportive units this year. Funding for the remaining 150 units will be put in place within two years which would allow consumers to occupy those units within 36 months.

Photographs thanks to Lateef Mangum, the Mayor's Audiovisual Producer.

Congratulations!

JoAnn Davis, Special Assistant to the Director, received her Master in Christian Counseling this week. **JoAnn** is a 20 year employee of DMH.

Linda Henderson, Home and Community Based Services Manager in the Office of Policy and Planning, will receive her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Howard University later this month. Linda has worked at DMH for over two years.

Congratulations **JoAnn** and **Linda**!



Director Baron speaks at the press conference. He is joined by Mayor Fenty, Ward 7 Councilmember Alexander, DHCD Director Edmonds and an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner.

Employee Spotlight: Harriett Sesay, Justine Njafuh, and Roxanne Froneberger

Three nurses on the night shift at Saint Elizabeths Hospital are piloting a major reform initiative taking place at the hospital—trauma informed care. And, they are making a difference in the quality of patient care.

Ms. Harriet Sesay, Ms. Justine Njafuh, and Ms. Roxanne Froneberger have a combined total of 41 years at the Hospital. While they came to the Hospital from different paths, they share a common passion for helping people. All three said they enjoy working with the patients and value their relationships. Ms. **Njafuh** makes a point of wearing bright colors because the patients like it.

Each nurse helps a patient develop a safety plan, identify triggers that might traumatize her (whether situations or emotions) and make sure staff is aware of them so they don't do anything to retraumatize the patient.

Ms. Froneberger who has worked 13 years at the Hospital said that she sees the changes that are taking place, pointing out recent upgrades and hiring new staff.

Ms. Njafuh added that supplies are now adequate and maintenance is much improved.



Ms. Harriet Sesay, Ms. Justine Njafuh, and Ms. Roxanne Froneberger are leading the way on trauma informed care at Saint Elizabeths Hospital.

Ms. Sasay, a native of Sierra Leone, came to the Hospital after taken a medical training course. She chose the night shift because it suits her family schedule.

"We are going to become a trauma informed hospital," CEO Dr. Canavan said emphatically. "We recognize that the majority of people who have been psychiatrically hospitalized have experienced trauma. These three nurses have a unique ability to help people plan for difficult situations and help prevent them. They are consistent in how they manage situations and demonstrate care and competence in all they do."

News from Human Resources

Performance Management Training. The HR office has scheduled the final Performance Management Program training classes for MSS managers and supervisors. Attendance is **mandatory** as all training will be completed this month. If you have not completed the training, please contact HR.

Revised Performance Evaluation System. As for June 30, all DMH career service employees, union and non union, will be evaluated using a revised performance evaluation system. Evaluation tools have been updated in line with a performance driven culture. For example, the "+, √, or —" ratings have been replaced with numerical ratings and narrative justifications. And, the top rating of "**outstanding**" is now called "**Role Model**".

For more information, you can contact HR on (202) 673.4411 or go to the intranet site <http://sdmhdweb>.

DC Nurses Association and Saint Elizabeths Sponsor Nurse Training

The District of Columbia Nurses Association (DCNA) and Saint Elizabeths Hospital are sponsoring a leadership training conference for nurses on Thursday, May 8, 2008, in the Hospital's Chapel. The conference, entitled "Nursing Leadership: Challenges for the Future", takes place during National Nurses Week, started by the American Nurses Association to honor the Nation's nearly 2.9 million registered nurses.

Participants will attend sessions on strategies for developing nursing leaders in clinical practice, leadership models, and best practices in leadership skills development. The conference will feature national leaders in the nursing field and nurse leaders from Bowie State University and Saint Elizabeths Hospital.

"This conference is the first step in developing a strong training partnership between DCNA and the Department of Mental Health", said Hospital CEO **Patrick Canavan**. "It also gives us the opportunity to highlight the long and rich history of nursing at Saint Elizabeths Hospital."

The DCNA represents approximately 2,000 registered nurses in the District. According to the DCNA, the shortage of registered nurses poses a real threat to the Nation's health care system and the public's health, and this conference will help encourage current nurses to continue in their careers.

Special Recognition to the Planning Committee Members: **Diane Atkinson-Jones, Dr. Clotilde Vedoni Clark, Risikat Gbajabiamita, Velora Jernigan, Lewis Mayo, Ruby McIver, Martha Brown Murray (Posthumously), Dr. Bernardine Lacey Pedrick, LaVerne Plater, Dr. Jogues Prandoni, Edward Smith, and Lillian Wade.**

Upcoming Events

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

Dixon Court Monitor Visits **May 7-8, 19-20**

Dixon CSR Adult Reviewer Refresher Training **May 13-15**

DC CSA & Community Advisory Council 5th Annual DC CSA Participants Banquet and Awards Ceremony **May 29**

May 8 is Children's Mental Health Awareness Day in the District of Columbia

At the request of DMH, Mayor Fenty has declared May 8 as Children's Mental Health Awareness Health Day.

Director Baron will present the Mayoral Proclamation during a national program on May 8 at the historic Lincoln theater organized by SAMHSA. Howie Mandel, star of the hit TV show, Deal or No Deal, will appear along with other nationally known television celebrities.

The event will feature youth performers communicating the message that high school youth can be resilient in the face of challenges.

Awareness Day is a national celebration that seeks to promote positive youth development, resilience, recovery, and the transformation of mental health service delivery for children and youth with mental health needs and their families.

Dr. Barbara Bazron, Deputy Director, and staff from Children and Youth Services also will attend the program.