

Staying in Touch

March 2009

Message from the Director

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Dear DMH Employee,

As we all know, the nation's economic slowdown is affecting the District's revenue projections for the coming year and beyond. On Friday, the Mayor submits his FY 10 budget request to the Council that will show declining revenues and likely reduced expenditures. While we don't yet know the impact, we can expect that this will affect us at DMH. I am committed to

informing you as soon as possible of any proposed personnel actions including a reduction-in-force. You can read the DMH baseline budget on the Office of the Chief Financial Office website at www.dccfo. But, keep in mind that this is the Mayor's starting point and is not the Mayor's final budget submission.

This is a difficult time for the Department as we will be conducting a reduction-in-force related to the transition of the DC CSA as well. While tough decisions must be made, our first commitment is to the consumers that we serve so I am taking steps that minimize the impact on services and clinical positions.

With that perspective, our focus stays on providing services. The consumer/provider choice fairs for DC CSA consumers have begun and are on schedule. The children/youth CSRs start this week. These reviews along with the upcoming adult reviews are an independent assessment of the effectiveness of our public mental health system and will help identify opportunities to improve. My thanks to all of you who are taking the time to participate.

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

Steve

**Department of Mental
Health
Budget Hearing
March 30
10 a.m.**

Saint Elizabeths Wins National Accreditation of Blackburn Laboratory

Saint Elizabeths Hospital Blackburn Laboratory has been awarded an accreditation by the Commission on Laboratory Accreditation of the College of American Pathologists (CAP) based on the results of a recent on-site inspection.

The College of American Pathologists is a medical society composed exclusively of pathologists and is widely considered the leader in laboratory quality assurance. The CAP accreditation program, begun in the early 1960s, is recognized by the federal government as being equal to or more stringent than the government's own inspection program.

"National accreditation confirms that Saint Elizabeths performs the highest standard of care for laboratory services for patients," said **Steve Baron**. "I congratulate CEO **Patrick Canavan**, and Dr. **Suryabala Kanhouwa**, Director of the Blackburn Laboratory and the entire team".

During the CAP accreditation process, inspectors examine the laboratory's records and quality control procedures for the preceding two years. CAP inspectors also examine staff qualifications, equipment,



The Team that made it happen. (L to R) 1st row-Victor Falade, Charmonda Gregory, Constance Coombs. 2nd Row-Imelda Sison, Dr. Kanhouwa, Nancy Marasigan, Rosita Chang. 3rd Row-Andreas Papanicoloau, Chandresh Vaidya, Elma Rigoroso.

facilities, safety program and records as well as overall management of the laboratory.

The Blackburn Laboratory was first accredited in 1985 and has been reaccredited every two years following an on-site inspection.

News from Human Resources

Welcome New Employees: In the last month, a number of former DC CSA employees have joined the Mental Health Authority from the DC CSA.

Sheryl Jenkins, LSWA, MSW, joined the RTC Program as a Residential Clinical Coordinator.

Ana M. Veria is the new Director of the Policy Support Division in the Office of Strategic Policy and Planning.

Shameka Abney, LICSW, is a Social Worker in Care Coordination, Office of Policy and Programs.

Yasmin Leftwich is an Operations Analyst in Office of Fiscal Services.

Kenneth Hopkins R.N., MBA, is part of the Investigations and Quality teams in the Office of Accountability (OA).

OA also welcomed **Sylvia Ratliff-Trappio**, R.N. who joins the Certification staff and will be working on Quality Reviews. She previously worked at the Washington Hospital Center.

Council Passes Compensation Agreement. The Council recently adopted the "Compensation Collective Bargaining Agreement between the District of Columbia Department of Mental Health and the Washington Area Metal Trades Council, AFL-CIO National Conference of Fireman & Oilers, Service Employees International Union of North America, Local 572 Approval Resolution of 2009", PR 18-87.

This collective bargaining agreement covers 2007 through 2010 and affects employees at the DC CSA and Saint Elizabeths Hospital.

Benefits Information Session. Wednesday, March 18, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 4th floor Training Room. Come learn about dental and vision plans; deferred comp programs, college savings plan and more. If you have questions, contact **Louisa Buadoo-Amoa**, PhD, MSA at (202) 673-3652 or louisa.buadoo-amoa@dc.gov.

Employee Spotlight: Dr. Surya Kanhouwa Blackburn Lab Director

Dr. Surya Kanhouwa has directed the Blackburn laboratory since 1983. Under her leadership, the Laboratory was first accredited by the College of American Pathologists in 1985 and has maintained its accreditation.

She is probably one of a few people who know that the 125 years old Blackburn Laboratory was named after the first pathologist appointed in 1884. But, this is just one of the many facts about the Hospital that she has at her fingertips. **Dr. Kanhouwa** is recognized as an authority on the Hospital's history and has published many articles about it. She can talk in great detail about the evolution of treatment at the Hospital and some the Hospital's more famous patients like the poet Ezra Pound. She often conducts tours of the laboratory and answers questions from media and film companies.

Dr. Kanhouwa recently was a guest lecturer in the Community History Series organized by the Anacostia Community Museum. She also served as Chair of the Hospital's 150th anniversary celebration that included scientific sessions and Living History of Civil War Medicine, highlighting the Hospital's role during Civil War.

While in the US Army Reserves, **Dr. Kanhouwa** spent many hours carefully cataloguing the Hospital's 100 years old brain collection. It is the largest collection of insane brains in the country. A pictorial history of the Hospital and Laboratory that she compiled lines the walls of the Laboratory.



Dr. Surya Kanhouwa, a recognized authority on the Hospital's history.

Given her abiding interest in and knowledge of the history of Saint Elizabeths, she hopes to assist in setting up an archive to preserve its past.

Dr. Kanhouwa is board certified in Anatomical/Clinical Pathology and Nuclear Medicine. She also is a retired Colonel, USAR.

Human Resources Director Earns National Certification



Frankie T. Wheeler

Director of Human Resources **Frankie T. Wheeler**, CPM, recently earned certification as a Senior Professional in Human Resources. The certification, awarded by the Human Resources Certification Institute, recognizes her theoretical and practical experience in human resource management.

The Human Resources Certification Institute is the credentialing body for human resource professionals.

To become certified, an applicant must pass a comprehensive examination and demonstrate a strong background of professional human resource experience. **Frankie** has worked more than 36 years in the human resource profession. She was appointed the DMH director of human resources in 2006.

Frankie is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management, the world's largest organization dedicated exclusively to the human resource profession.

Brief Description of the District’s Budget Process

Step 1: The Mayor formulates the District’s annual operating budget based on his policy and spending priorities for the fiscal year. The Mayor’s budget request must be balanced and based on revenue projections certified by the Chief Financial Officer.

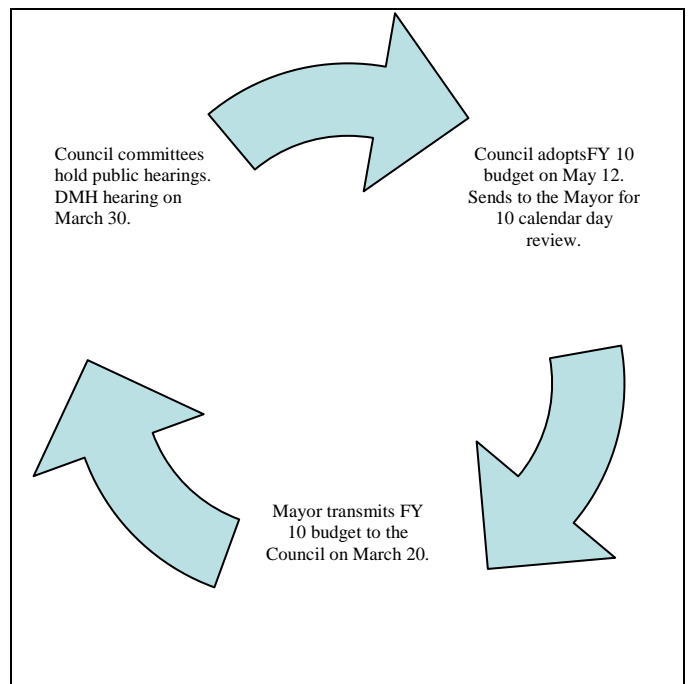
The Mayor sends the budget along with a four year financial plan and a six year capital budget to the Council in the form of a proposed bill— “the Budget Request Act” for adoption. At the same time, the Mayor sends a “Budget Support Act” that includes legislative amendments or initiatives required to support the budget request act.

Step 2: Meanwhile, the Council by resolution establishes the date and requirements of the Mayor’s budget submission. **This year’s date for the Mayor’s FY 10 budget submission is March 20, 2009.**

After the Mayor submits his budget, the Council must adopt a budget within 56 days. During this time, Council committees hold hearings to analyze each agency budget and receive public comments. The Council can change the Mayor’s proposed budget based on its own spending priorities but it cannot exceed the revenue projections in the Mayor’s budget unless it adopts new taxes or fees and the new revenue is certified by the Chief financial Officer.

Step 3: The Council adopts its version of the budget request act with a single vote, unlike any other legislation except for emergencies and resolutions. **The vote on the FY 10 budget is scheduled for May 12.** The Council sends the budget request act to the Mayor.

Step 4: The Mayor has 10 business days to consider whether to sign the budget request act, allow it to become law without his signature or veto it. Unlike other legislation, the Mayor has the authority to line veto the budget act.



Upcoming Events

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

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| Child/Youth CSR | March 9-20 |
| Dixon Court Monitor’s Visit | March 18-20 |
| Council Committee on Health
FY 10 Budget hearing | March 30 |
| District Dixon Status Report Due | April 1 |

Step 5: If the Mayor signs the budget request act, it is sent to the President of the United States for transmittal to the Congress. Like no other jurisdiction in the country, Congress must approve the District’s budget in an appropriations act similar to 12 federal agencies. If the Mayor vetoes the budget or any section, the Council has 30 business days to override the Mayor’s veto by two-thirds of the members voting. If the Council overrides the veto, the Chairman of the Council transmits the act or any section to the President.

Step 6: The President transmits the District’s budget to Congress for its approval. House and Senate committees with oversight over the District hold hearings on the FY 10 budget attended by the Mayor, the Council Chairman and Chief Financial Officer. Congress must affirmatively pass the District’s budget in an appropriations act—which often takes place after the fiscal year has begun.