

Staying in Touch

December 2009

Message from the Director

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*Happy Holidays
and
Best Wishes for the New
Year!*



Dear DMH Employee,

DMH received a rating of partial compliance in meeting the requirements of the Language Access Act in FY 09 which requires equal access to our programs and services for limited English or no English residents. While 88% of all District agencies received a partial compliance rating, I am not satisfied with our score, particularly the results of the testing of the responsiveness of

our communications systems. Our overall score was 1.46 with 2 being full compliance. However, we received our lowest scores in telephone testing with a score of 2.55 out of a possible 5.5 points, and a score of 5 out of a possible 8 in responses to mail correspondence. You can read more about the report and our rating on page 2.

To address deficiencies identified in the report, we will schedule more training to make sure staff is able to respond appropriately to callers who are unable to communicate in English or to mail correspondence. Further, we've got to make sure that everyone knows how to access the interpretation and translation services available to us. We've invested resources in making sure these services are available when we need them, and we have to do a better job of using them.

In the next few months, **John Graham**, the new language access coordinator, will be talking with program managers about how we can better meet our programmatic requirements, particularly stepping up our outreach activities and our work with the provider network.

Best wishes for a joyful Holiday Season and I look forward to another year of working with you to better serve people who use and need the public mental health system. Please email me if you have any comments at steve.baron@dc.gov.

Steve

Report Grades District Progress with Language Access Law

DMH receives partial compliance rating

DMH has received a rating of partial compliance in meeting the requirements of the Language Access Act in the 2009 report recently released by the District's Office of Human Rights.

The report is prepared each year to outline overall progress and individual agency compliance with meeting the requirements of the 5 year old Language Access law which mandates equal access to a wide range of government programs and services for limited English residents.

DMH's rating was 1.46 with 2.0 representing full compliance. Eighty-eight per cent of District agencies received a rating of partial compliance—an increase over FY 2008.

DMH received a full compliance rating in the legislative and programmatic requirements outlined below which makes up 60% of an agency's score:

- Maintain accurate data on all LEP/NEP populations served
- Provide efficient interpreter and language translation services
- Ensure diversity in the agency workforce

- Provide language access related training, and
- Conduct outreach activities to LEA/NEP communities.

DMH has Access Helpline cards printed in various languages including Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Amharic. DMH also provides interpretation and translation services as needed.

However, DMH received a partial compliance rating in public accommodations testing due to incomplete follow through and marginal customer service.

The testing which makes up 40% of the score rates the agency's communications system in three areas: 1) face-to-face or in person tests 2) telephone calls, and 3) U.S. mail. All tests were conducted solely in a foreign language. DMH's weakest scores were in the telephone test results with just 2.55 out of a possible 5.5 points and in responding to mail correspondence with 5 out of a possible 8 points.

With the retirement of **Tedla Georgis, John Graham**, community outreach officer, has assumed responsibility for DMH compliance. To arrange interpretation and translation services or if you have any questions about our requirements, you can contact John at (202) 673-7615 or john.graham@dc.gov. And, our thanks to **Tedla** for his years of service in this area.

Apply now to Participate on DMH Emergency Response Teams

Director Baron recently sent an email to all staff encouraging volunteers to apply for our emergency response teams. In the past, DMH has provided emergency mental health support services in response to a number of national emergencies as well as city-wide emergencies and local emergency situations. Our response efforts have been acknowledged and much appreciated by the lead agencies.

We are increasing the number of emergency response teams to make sure we have sufficient staff available and trained to respond to large and small emergencies. Team members will receive formal training and be certified as an Emergency Mental Health Responder.

This is a wonderful opportunity for you to volunteer to participate in a high priority activity that supports our community. However, we also have certain requirements and expectations that you must be willing to fulfill. Please read about them on page 3.

For more information, please contact **Julia Maxwell**, Director of Disaster Mental Health Services at (202) 671-0347 or julia.maxwell@dc.gov.

Employee Spotlight: Ricky Dickens—Respect Award Winner

Congratulations to **Ricky Dickens**, Forensic Psych Technician, JHP-12, who was honored with the Respect Award at Saint Elizabeths. The Respect Award is a consumer-nominated award created by the Forensic Patient Advisory Council that honors Forensic staff who demonstrate three or more of the following characteristics: common courtesy, fairness, willingness, patience, and encouragement.

Ricky Dickens, a native Washingtonian, grew up not far from Saint Elizabeths and attended Ballou High School. He has worked at the Hospital for 10 years.

He believes that he has worked well with individuals in care largely because of his "do unto others as you would want others to do unto you" philosophy. "Receiving the Respect Award makes me feel good for a couple of reasons. First, it's always a good feeling when you are recognized for the good you do. Secondly, it means that the individuals in care I work with acknowledge that I see them as more than patients," he said.

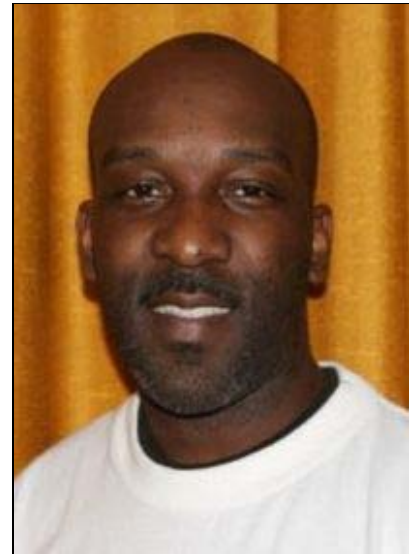
Dickens is eager to move into the new Hospital and believes it will provide an environment more appropriate for treatment. He further hopes that the future of mental health care will embrace a "no wrong door" policy.

News from Human Resources

Dr. Sonali R. Mahajan, Associate Clinical Director, recently passed her exam and is now certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology as a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist. Congratulations on achieving this major professional and personal milestone!

Marie Morilus-Black received an award from the DC Court Social Services for outstanding work by the Child and Youth Services Division to the youth that it serves.

Lens and Pens Documentary: Please remember to watch the wonderful documentary on the Lens and Pens program at Saint Elizabeths on Wednesday, December 23 at 10:00 p.m. on WHUT-Channel 32. Look for **Maureen Jais-Mick**, Director for Community Outreach and Volunteer Services at the Hospital!



Ricky Dickens

Prior to coming to Saint Elizabeths, Dickens was employed by the Securities Exchange Commission. He received a BA from Morgan State University in 2005 in Sociology and a minor in Criminal Justice. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his three daughters especially romping with them and their new puppy.

*Article contributed by **Tamil Perry**
Saint Elizabeths Public Affairs Director*

An **Emergency Mental Health Responder** is responsible for providing general emergency mental health support services to individuals impacted by a disaster or other emergency situation in the District. Individuals can be of any age and come from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The Emergency Mental Health Responder provides specific mental health interventions that could include supportive counseling, crisis intervention, de-briefing, and grief counseling to individuals impacted by trauma. Although there are certain risks and dangers associated with emergency conditions, mental health responders are typically not the first responders on the scene, and mental health response work typically occurs in secured settings with minimal hazards. Apply now!

Congratulations! DMH Employees Win Awards and Do Good Work



Tony Crew was honored recently with an Honorable Mention 2009 Caregivers Award. He also was included in the December newsletter of the Office on Aging. **Tony** is Lead Provider Relations Specialist at the Mental Health Authority.

Photo courtesy of Tony Crew

Many thanks to H1N1 Clinic Coordinating Committee and Clinic Staff

Over the past few months, clinics were held at Saint Elizabeths, CPEP and 35 K Street NE to make the H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccinations easily available to employees, individuals in care, consumers and their families. A total of 13 clinics were held and more than 400 people received the H1N1 vaccine. The last clinic is planned for January 2010.

We want to acknowledge the hard work of the following individuals who took on the job of organizing and staffing the clinics while taking care of their normal duties:

Dr. Bernard Arons, Clinical Director, Saint Elizabeths
Dr. Marvin Barnard, Medical Director, CPEP
Mary Campbell, Risk Manager
Sylvia Cobbs, Nurse MHSD
Malcolm Cook, Infection Control Officer
Cynthia Edwards, Nurse MHSD
Maxine Green, Nurse MHSD
Twyla Griffin, Occupational Health Nurse
Solomon Igwulu, RN Supervisor
Brenda Lateef, Nurse Educator
Julia W. Maxwell, Disaster Mental Health Services Director
Lewis Mayo, Program Manager
Dr. Steve Steury, DMH Clinical Director
John Waymann, Mental Health Specialist
Dr. Steven Whitefield, Medical Director, MHSD
Beverly Williams, Chief Nurse CPEP

...And Volunteers

We also want to thank the people below who volunteered to help with the Department of Health H1N1 clinics. DMH contributed more than 100 volunteer hours to the District's initiative:

Bernie Arons, Donna Coakley; Joel Dubenitz; Ryelle Durant; Lourdes Faustin; Suzanne Fenzel; O'Linda Fuller; Joyce Jeter (and she brought along friends); Robert Johnson; Phyllis Jones; Debra Krahling; Lewis Mayo; Alice Norman, and Leslie Walsh.

Skip the Bag: Save the River

Beginning January 1, 2010, businesses in the District that sell food or alcohol must charge you 5 cents for each disposable paper or plastic carryout bag. The business keeps 1 cent (or 2 cents if it offers a rebate when you bring your bag). The remaining 3 or 4 cents go to the new Anacostia River Protection Fund. Administered by District Department of the Environment, the fund will be used to provide reusable bags, educate the public about litter, and clean up the river.



For more information on how you can support the "Skip the Bag, Save the River" education campaign, go to green.dc.gov.

*All photographs by Paul Davis unless otherwise noted.
 eNewsletter produced by Phyllis Jones, PIO, John Graham, Community Outreach Officer, and JoAnn Davis, Executive Assistant to the Director.*