



DMH News Bulletin



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*Timely news on events, services, people, funding and innovations at the
D.C. Department of Mental Health*

DMH Hosts D.C.'s First Forensic Consumers Conference . . . The Department of Mental Health hosted the "Forensic Mental Health Training Conference: Recovery and the Forensic Mental Health Consumer in the District of Columbia," on June 26. The conference, supported by the Community Mental Health Services Performance Partnership Block Grant from the State Mental Health Planning Council, brought together about 200 consumers, family members and representatives of the judiciary, law enforcement, correctional agencies, and mental health communities to discuss promoting the recovery of forensic consumers and their return to the community. **Mayor Anthony A. Williams** addressed the participants, noting the city's long-term investment in building a first class mental health system and that this conference represents a milestone in that rebuilding. More extensive coverage of the conference will be included in the next edition of the *DMH News Bulletin*.



DMH Partnership Council Elects New Officers . . . The Partnership Council elected new officers at its June 27 monthly meeting. The officers will begin serving their one-year term at the Council's September 26 meeting. **Senora Simpson** was elected president, **Jesse Price** was elected vice president, **Rose Neverdon** was elected secretary and **Dr. Harry Montgomery** was elected parliamentarian. The Partnership Council is concluding its first year of operation. Director Knisley thanked its members for their invaluable contributions during this inaugural year and Ms. Simpson for serving as chair. The Council was created as part of the Transitional Receiver's Plan for the District mental health system, to ". . . reflect the varying interests of adults and children, youth and families." It serves as an advisory body on DMH policy, the budget and other critical issues and is composed of consumers, family members, mental health professionals and DMH employees who meet monthly.



OIG Audit of Patient Accounts Upholds DMH Corrective Actions . . . The D.C. Office of the Inspector General recently issued an audit report of the Department of Mental Health's patient accounts system, confirming that DMH Director Martha B. Knisley and her team are on the right track to improve the system's management and accountability. Soon after taking over DMH, Ms. Knisley identified problems with how the Department handled its fiduciary responsibilities to consumers of mental health services and in August 2001 sought the OIG audit. The audit report noted that DMH had fully implemented the bulk of the recommendations, and the remaining recommendations will be initiated by July. Following are actions taken by DMH to improve the patient accounts system:

- Developed its new representative payee process by introducing a best practice developed in Ohio and promoted nationally by the Social Security Administration. Implementation to be completed by October 1, 2002.
- Initiated and trained staff and community providers on expediting disability benefits.
- Developed and implemented new policies to provide timely notification of deceased consumers' financial status to survivors. Interested parties should call the Office of Finance and Information Systems at (202) 645-7370, weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or send an e-mail message to pas.info@dc.gov.



St. Elizabeths Hospital Psychologist Shares Expertise at FBI Symposium . . . St. Elizabeths Hospital's Maureen Christian, Ph.D., A.B.P.P., Chief Psychologist in Forensic Services was a speaker at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, "by invitation only," symposium on *Violence in the Workplace* at the Landsdowne Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia, June 9 - 14. Using a forensic case study involving lethal workplace violence as a frame of reference, she discussed factors relevant to predicting future violence and two approaches to assess violence risk potential. Dr. Christian compared a strictly actuarial approach to a multidimensional approach that utilized historical, clinical, and risk management measures. Symposium participants found the presentation thought provoking and it generated considerable discussion throughout the day. Attendees were 150 professionals representing criminal justice and law enforcement agencies, private industry, professional organizations, victim services, academic institutions, and the mental health professions.



DMH Initiates Development of New Consumer Grievance Procedures . . . During the next several months, the Department of Mental Health will implement a new consumer grievance procedure, available to all consumers receiving services from providers certified or licensed by DMH. The new procedure is designed to replace a variety of current grievance processes and will emphasize speedy, informal resolution of problems at the provider level. Consumers who are dissatisfied with their provider's response may have their grievance reviewed and an advisory recommendation made by a neutral person outside of DMH. Consumers may continue to take their complaints to other sources of help. The rule incorporating the grievance procedure soon will be published in the *D.C. Register* for comment. The rule also provides that DMH will establish a peer advocate program, independent of DMH which will employ current and former consumers to assist during all phases of the grievance procedure. DMH expects to implement the new grievance procedure in phases. Meanwhile, existing grievance processes will remain in effect.



Graduation Held for St. Elizabeths Psychiatry Residents . . . Eight residents graduated from the St. Elizabeths Hospital Psychiatry Residency Training Program, June 21, at a ceremony held at the Ft. McNair Officers' Club. Their contributions to in- and out-patient care were noted. Congratulations to: Martha Emanuela Biduc, M.D.; Grace Efiok Inyang, M.D.; Mathukutty Joseph, M.D.; Meera Kodyan, M.D.; Ricardo-Adria'n Rius, M.D.; Nika Razavipour, M.D.; Shobha Shirali, M.D.; Katalin Vldar, M.D. The program will welcome eight new residents July 1, when they will begin their first year of training.



Taking the Work of DMH to the Public . . . Dr. Michael Fain, Executive Assistant for Policy and Planning to Director Knisley, was the guest speaker at the Kiwanis Club Southwest Waterfront. His topic was "Mental Health and the Public At Risk." Earlier this month, **Paul Washington**, Director of Consumer Rights, Office of Accountability, and **Alvin Hinkle, Jr.**, Program Manager, Central Intake Division/Community-Based Intervention DMH CSA, represented the Department at Council member Sandy Allen's annual Health Fair. They provided information about services and how to access them.



DMH CSA Staff Incorporates Crisis Readiness in its Training Program . . . "Frontline" took on new meaning for DMH Community Services Agency staff starting September 11 and extending through the next several weeks. A month later, just as everyone thought the crisis was over, two Postal Service employees at the Brentwood Post Office died in late October from exposure to anthrax, and, once again, CSA staff returned to crisis mode. That they were able to conduct a weeks-long crisis mental health program is noteworthy; however, the lesson learned was that training needed to be expanded to include how to provide crisis services. To that end, 22 CSA employees, along with other DMH and District government staff attended 40 hours of training in April to learn techniques that will lead to certification in emergency response from the National Organization for Victims Assistance. Now, should an emergency or disaster occur, these employees can be mobilized and dispatched to designated sites to provide emergency debriefing and crisis counseling services.



More Congrats to the DMH Family Graduates . . . Danielle Carpenter (daughter of Bettye Carpenter) graduate of Towson University with a Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communication, May 22; **Sue Crestwell (DMH employee)** graduate of Strayer University with an Associate of Arts Degree in Computer Networking, June 23; **Basile J. Lee (son of L. Darnell Lee)** graduate of State University of West Georgia with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, May 8.



A Note from DPW about Summertime Trash Collection . . . During the summer, on those extremely hot days when code alerts are given, the D.C. Department of Public Works reminds District residents that trash pick up will begin by 6 a.m. instead of the normal 7 a.m. on regularly scheduled days. This will ensure completion of all trash collection routes, while providing heat relief to workers.

For further information or additional copies of this News Bulletin, write or call Linda Foxx, Office of the Director, DMH, 77 P Street, N.E., Wash., DC 20002, Phone 673-1928, Email-dcdmh.info@dc.gov.

Government of the District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor



D.C. Department of Mental Health
Martha B. Knisley, Director
