

D.C. Department of Mental Health Connecting



December 2003 Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Our City Vol. 1 No. 5

Family Members Join Planning Team for Youth



Sitting from left to right: Ty-Gray-El, Andera Bush, Dorthia Austin
Standing from left to right: Rose Neverdon, Harriet Crawley, Wallace Kirby, Elaine Bush, Juanita Long, Sylvia Evans, Rosa Hamlett Not Pictured: Ivy J. Bulluck, Clovis Cromwell Jackson, T. Furaha Raufu Bey, Patricia Moses and Inez Scope

Connecting with families has taken a giant leap forward with the first graduating class of family members from the Multi-Agency Planning Team (MAPT) training program. With this program, **T. Furaha Raufu Bey, DMH Family Liaison**, said that families with children in the mental health system get help from people like themselves—other family members.

Ms. Raufu Bey wore two hats during the program. She facilitated the training and also served as a family member. She said, “We know what works and we want to focus on what works.”

During the six-month training program, 11 family members participated in mock conferences and learned how to advocate for families during team meetings.

Recovery, legal issues and special education are among the primary concerns of family members.

Family members have a special role in assuring that each child and the family is the focus of a single, integrated and family-centered treatment planning process facilitated by a well-trained clinical case management team. As a result, treating family members with respect was a focal point of the training. Team members are instructed to interrupt review meetings if they are not conducted in a family-friendly atmosphere. In addition, family members are ensured a voice in the decision making process for their children.

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Holiday Message from the Director

Tis the season to be jolly and I hope that you are well on your way to experiencing the feeling of holiday joy.

Yes, this is the season of giving but keep in mind that gifts can come in all shapes and forms. Visits with an elderly neighbor, a telephone call to an old friend or volunteering in your community are very special ways of giving.

I also suggest that you take a moment to reflect on your past, rejoice the present and review future goals. And by all means count your blessings.

Be merry while you enjoy the company of family and friends. Be healthy as you indulge in all of the culinary delights. Be wise-- please don't drink and drive.

More than anything during the holiday season and throughout the New Year I wish you joy, happiness and peace of mind.

Martha B. Knisley
Director



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Family Advocates Join MAPT

Under the MAPT program, the Youth Services Administration, Child and Family Services Agency, DMH and other agencies facilitate access to comprehensive community-based services for families with children who are multi-problem.

As the first MAPT graduating class integrates into the system, Ms. Raufu Bey is already fine-tuning the curriculum for the next class expected this spring. Still, some things will remain the same. She said the focus is to “Heal a parent, heal a child, save a family.” The phrase, coined by member Ty Gray-El, has been adopted as the family motto.

The MAPT program is made possible by a grant from the D.C. Children Inspired Now Gain Strength project (D.C. CINGS).

2003 MAPT Family Graduates

Dorthia Austin
Ivy J. Bulluck
Andera Bush (Daughter)
Elaine Bush (Mother)
Sylvia Evans
Ty Gray-El
Rosa A. Hamlett
Clovis Cromwell Jackson
Wallace Kirby
Juanita Long
Patricia Moses

DMH Family Liaison Coordinators

T. Furaha Raufu Bey
Rose Neverdon
Harriet Crawley
Inez Scope, Family Consultant



The St. Elizabeths tree-lighting ceremony marks the return of this traditional activity to the Anacostia neighborhood where the hospital has been located for almost 150 years.

DMH to Play Role in Reform Effort at the YSA

Mayor Anthony A. Williams recently announced significant management reform efforts at the Youth Services Administration (YSA). The Department of Mental Health (DMH) will be part of the multi-agency mandate to provide services and resources to emotionally troubled DC youth.

DMH Director Martha B. Knisley will add additional mental health resources to the Oak Hill facility. Ms. Knisley has assigned **Dr. Graciola Gonzalez, the District's Chief Child Psychiatrist**, to strengthen mental health and substance abuse assessments, crisis coverage, suicide prevention and mental health treatment for the most severely emotionally disturbed youth at Oak Hill.

The Department also will add a Continuity of Care Director so the city can more effectively plan for the release of youth at Oak Hill as well as other staff to enhance mental health at the facility.

In response to the reform effort Ms. Knisley said, “The department is looking forward to working with the new leadership at Oak Hill to provide these young people with a stable and productive environment.”

Representative Payee Workshop

The DMH Community Services Agency Office of Consumer Affairs are holding a workshop on representative payee services. Speakers from Bread for the City and DMH/CSA Office of Finance will discuss and answer questions on the subject at 35 K Street, NE on Tuesday, December 16, 2003, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm.

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New DMH Program To Protect Mental Health Consumers' Rights, Resolve Problems

DMH Director **Martha B. Knisley** recently announced that a new grievance program now is available to mental health consumers enrolled in any of the 21 Core Service Agencies certified by the Department as well as patients at St. Elizabeths Hospital. The new consumer grievance program, titled FAIR – Finding Answers, Improving Relationships – provides the means to resolve consumers' grievances with their mental health service providers and uphold their rights as described in the Mental Health Consumers' Rights Protection Act of 2001.

“For the first time, the rights of consumers of mental health services provided through the District’s public mental health system are protected by law,” said Director Knisley. “This is not just a Band-aid or small first step. The new grievance procedure is a commitment to ensure that any of the more than 14,000 consumers enrolled in the public mental health system have the right to complain and be heard, and to expect service providers and this Department to respond to their grievances in a timely, respectful and equitable manner.”

We are taking responsibility to make sure that no grievance is ignored and each consumer’s concern is addressed,” she added.

The new procedure broadly defines a grievance as “the expression by an individual of his or her dissatisfaction” with either the Department of Mental Health or a certified mental health services provider, “including the denial or abuse of any consumer right or protection provided by applicable federal and District laws and regulations.”

Consumers are not required to use the new grievance procedure, however, and may pursue other avenues of relief instead of or concurrent with the grievance process.

“In addition to universal availability and a broad definition of what may constitute a legitimate grievance, principal features of FAIR include: As the network of Core Service Agencies continues to expand, every new agency will be required to submit its grievance procedure and peer advocacy program for approval by the Department of Mental Health.

FAIR emphasizes informal attempts by all parties involved to resolve problems as early as possible, and the Department’s grievance rules require providers to involve consumers in the handling and resolution of grievances. The Director of the Department of Mental Health will make a final decision in all grievances in which the consumer remains dissatisfied. The Department also is responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with the outcomes of grievances settled at any stage of the procedure.

The right to know – Access to information will be provided on all available dispute resolution options, including but not limited to the consumer grievance procedure.

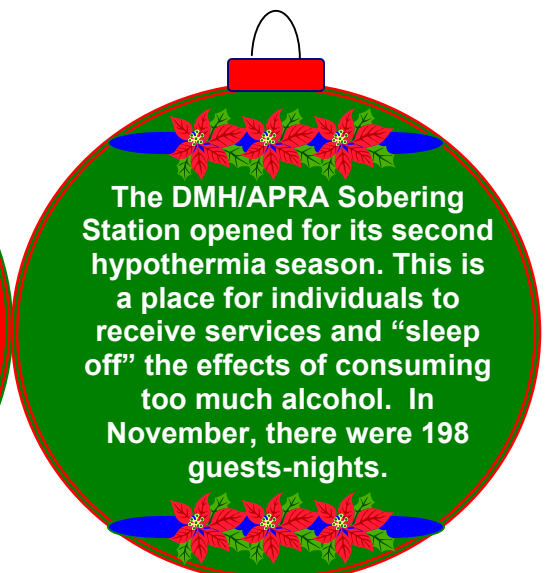
The right to representation – Assistance is available to consumers throughout the process, including an independent peer advocate.

The right to participation – Consumers help to operate the grievance procedure; individual consumers will be assisted in finding solutions to their grievances.

The right to independent review – Access to mediation or an advisory opinion by an external neutral will be provided if the consumer remains unsatisfied by the first attempts at resolution.

The right to protection – A consumer is not required to present a grievance directly to the person who is the focus of the complaint. Retaliation for filing grievances is prohibited, and the Department monitors all grievances filed against provider agencies.

The right to a prompt response – Time limits exist at each stage of the process, with automatic appeal to the next level if deadlines are not met.



How well do you know Christmas Trivia?



1. In *Frosty the Snowman*, who brought Frosty back to life?
2. Who lost \$8,000 in *It's a Wonderful Life*?
3. In *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, what biological shortcoming made the Grinch so mean?
4. What was the first gift my true love sent on the sixth day of Christmas?
5. In what city did *Miracle on 34th Street* take place?
6. What carol contains the word "Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la"?
7. Name the two reindeer whose name begins with a "C"?

1. Santa Claus 2. Uncle Billy;
3. His heart was two sizes too small 4. Six geese a-lying 5. New York;
6. "Deck the Halls" 7. Comet and Cupid

DMH Teaches Coping Skills in Junior High Employment Program

"So what do you want to be when you grow up?" It's a question that Elizabeth Jones, DMH Senior Planner and Social Worker Nikki Blass are asking students at Eliot Junior High School. Even more, Ms. Jones and Ms. Blass are helping students to develop coping skills in order to help them achieve career interest.

In a youth employment pilot project that began on November 25th, employees from DMH, DC Public Schools (DCPS) and Howard University are working with 15 ninth graders and one eighth grader. Students will explore their expressed career interests that include medicine, journalism, graphic arts, law, business and finance, childcare, architecture and computer programming. In addition, they will assist in the mapping of local businesses.

Ms. Blass expressed excitement about the program particularly because it provides students with an opportunity to be placed in a summer job that matches their interests.

Career planning can be a positive strategy for helping teenagers succeed in school, develop interests and skills as well as strengthen their emotional maturity. A coordinated effort to provide opportunity, support and mentoring can be an important proactive component of supported employment.

Ms. Jones said that this project is designed to reach junior high school students as they approach the age when kids have a greater tendency to drop out. According to DCPS, 6.8 percent of 7th through 12th graders dropped out of school in 1999-2000. These are the most current statistics available.

While this project will teach life skills, Ms. Blass also said, "We want the children to experience success."

Ms. Jones and Ms. Blass will meet with the students twice monthly during the lunch hour. The school counselor selected the participating students.

The Office of Delivery Systems Management

Did you know that in FY 2003.....

- 368 children were seen by MAPT
- 299 were diverted from RTC placement
- 199 were brought back from out of state RTC placement
- DMH had fulltime staff in the 31 public and charter School-Based Mental Health Program



Flu Prevention Measures

1. Frequent hand washing (Waterless hand solutions are a good alternative if your hands are not visibly dirty). Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with hot water and soap.
2. Use tissues when coughing or sneezing and dispose of them properly and again wash hands as soon as possible.
3. Get plenty of rest this holiday season.

4. Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet.
4. Don't share drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils.
5. Limit your interaction with others when knowingly ill (If you are ill, STAY HOME!)