

# Bulletin



news from the division of mental hygiene

## Division of Mental Hygiene, Goals and Progress

**T**HANKS TO THE DEDICATION of our many community partners, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DOHMH) Division of Mental Hygiene (DMH) made great progress in 2004. We are especially pleased with the innovative work in the following areas:

- providing housing for high need individuals;
- identifying mental illness in people with mental retardation;
- improving the quality of services to very young children with developmental delays; and
- enabling those with addictions to receive treatment.

In 2005, we plan to continue to move forward in a number of critical areas:

### Early Intervention

- Introduce "Families as Partners," a family partnership model of service delivery where caregivers learn to use daily routines to help their children overcome delays. This program will start in one borough and extend to all boroughs by the summer of 2006.

### Chemical Dependency

- Scale up use of Buprenorphine, a new and effective treatment for people with dependence on heroin and prescription pain pills that allows people to live more productive lives.
- Establish the use of "Brief Intervention for Problem Drinking," an effective intervention to be used in local emergency rooms to help reduce problem drinking and the devastating personal and community consequences associated with it.

### Supportive Housing and Homelessness

- Issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to develop 700 units of supportive housing for people with mental illness and people with both mental illness and a substance abuse disorder.
- Work with the NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) and the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) to place people with mental illness and people with both a mental illness and a substance use disorder in public housing.
- Pilot services for people with mental illness or people with both a mental illness and a substance use disorder who are identified as high utilizers of medical and psychiatric services, and on Medicaid.
- Work with the New York City Department of Homeless Services to make permanent housing the goal of outreach programs.

### Mental Health

- Expand Depression Screening and Management in Primary Care in HHC facilities, with goal of full adoption by all HHC primary care sites within 3 years.
- DMH aims to expand this initiative to voluntary hospital primary care sites and/or other venues (e.g., university health services).
- Establish and implement a plan to meet the mental health needs of combat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to New York City.
- Improve the performance of Mobile Crisis Teams.

### Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability

- Establish a Local Government Plan with a focus on New York City concerns and initiatives.

In conjunction with the Federation for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services:

- Increase access to inpatient treatment and acute care alternative services for individuals with mental retardation/developmental disabilities (MR/DD) and acute mental illnesses;
- Improve access to detoxification services for MR/DD individuals;
- Work with the Department of Education to improve transition planning for MR/DD adolescents who will no longer be eligible for services at age 21.

### Continuous Quality Improvement

- Expand Quality IMPACT (Improving Mental Hygiene Programs and Communities Together), a multi-year project focused on improving mental hygiene services through the use of continuous quality improvement, to an additional 81 chemical dependency, comprehensive outpatient, and mental retardation/developmental disability programs.
- Increase information available to consumers and their families about the quality of city mental hygiene services.

### Administration of Contracts

- Improve the timeliness of planned contract actions and contract registrations.
- Introduce decision rules for mental hygiene service selection and contracting, and use these rules to shape DMH Fiscal Year 2007 purchasing.

### Medicaid

- We will continue to plan for how DMH will adapt to and maximize the predicted major changes in the future of Medicaid payment for mental hygiene services. ■

## Take Care New York

Launched in 2005, **Take Care New York** is the City's comprehensive health policy to help New Yorkers live longer, healthier lives.



It focuses on ten priorities, including and “**Live free of dependence on alcohol and drugs.**”

### Buprenorphine

Buprenorphine is a new treatment for those addicted to heroin that is prescribed in routine medical settings, picked up at a local

pharmacy, and self-administered, allowing people to receive treatment with dignity and privacy. It is safe, has a low potential for abuse, and allows people to think clearly, maintain employment, and function normally.

Buprenorphine holds promise for the more than 200,000 New Yorkers addicted to heroin and the tens of thousands more addicted to opioid pain relievers.

Introducing buprenorphine to New York City has not been without obstacles. Barriers include who and how it can be prescribed, as well as significant physician training requirements. To address these challenges, DOHMH has distributed information packets to educate physicians and worked to streamline the New York State application process for

physician registration. DOHMH staff were recently deployed to the South Bronx, East and Central Harlem, and North and Central Brooklyn—neighborhoods with persistent, across-the-board mental health, substance abuse and health problems—to educate consumers and families as well as chemical dependency providers and administrators about buprenorphine. Our goal in 2005 is to see a several fold increase in the number of people taking this medication, and having greater functioning and quality of life as a result.

### Alcohol Use

DOHMH recently released a report on the latest data on alcohol use in New York City, showing that 15% of New Yorkers drink excessively, one-third drink moderately, and half do not drink at all. Excessive drinking causes more than 1,500 deaths and 25,000 hospitalizations each year.

The report “Alcohol Use in New York City” is the latest DOHMH NYC *Vital Signs*, a series that informs the public, as well as the provider community about important health topics, such as mental health and health care access. *Vital Signs* reports are available online at [www.nyc.gov/health/survey](http://www.nyc.gov/health/survey).

In 2005, DMH will be piloting a new program, “Brief Intervention for Problem Drinking” in a select group of local emergency rooms. Brief intervention is a short-term counseling strategy based on motivational enhancement therapy that concentrates on changing patient behavior and increasing patient compliance with therapy. ■

## DOHMH Welcomes Dr. Jorge Petit

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene welcomes Jorge R. Petit, MD as Associate Commissioner for Program Services in the Division of Mental Hygiene. Dr. Petit oversees the Adult and Child Program Services Offices and the Office of Program Development.

“We are delighted to have Dr. Petit join the Division of Mental Hygiene,” said Dr. Lloyd I. Sederer, Executive Deputy Commissioner. “He has been a leader in the psychiatric care community for many years, and is widely regarded for his work in addressing the mental health care needs of Latinos in the U.S. We welcome his diverse skills and experience, and look forward to his contributions to the agency.”

Prior to joining DOHMH, Dr. Petit served as the Director of Psychiatric Emergency Services at Mount Sinai Medical Center, and most recently as Acting Chairperson of the Department of Psychiatry at North General Hospital.

Dr. Petit said, “I am excited about my new role here at DOHMH. This position allows me to lend a hand in furthering the Department's efforts to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to professional, timely, high-quality and culturally-sensitive mental hygiene services. I will be working closely with providers, consumers, advocates and other government agencies to enhance and improve existing DOHMH programs and to create and support our new initiatives.”

### Bulletin from the Division of Mental Hygiene

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