



News Release

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New York State Office of Mental Health Commissioner Reviews Dutchess' Successful Mental Health Services Model

Poughkeepsie... Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro and Dutchess County Commissioner of Mental Hygiene Dr. Kenneth Glatt met yesterday with Kristin Woodlock, Acting Commissioner of the New York State Office of Mental Health (NYSOMH) and other state officials to discuss Dutchess County's continuing transition of mental health services following the closure of the Hudson River Psychiatric Center.



From left to right: Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro, NYS Office of Mental Health Acting Commissioner Kristin Woodlock and Dutchess County Commissioner of Mental Hygiene Dr. Kenneth Glatt

NYSOMH provides Dutchess County \$1.5 million in annual funding to support programs focused on decreasing and diverting inpatient admissions, facilitating discharges and strengthening the continuum of services for people impacted by the HRPC closure and other community residents with mental health needs. Dutchess County Department of Mental Hygiene (DCDMH) has implemented an integrated diversion plan of services to reduce emergency department visits for psychiatric issues,

and reduce the total number and length of stay of costly psychiatric hospitalizations.

Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro said, “The focus of our plan is prevention, intervention and diversion. We are pleased with the outcomes we achieved so far, but there is more work to be done. We are grateful to NYSOMH for its support of our efforts and we are pleased to have Acting NYSOMH Commissioner Kristin Woodlock here to learn more about our program and how we can continue to work together with the State to enhance the mental health service delivery model.”

Dutchess County’s diversion program components include:

- Enhanced diversion services at St. Francis Hospital Emergency Department which assist in shortening the time it takes for a patient to receive necessary psychiatric evaluation.
- System Advocates who work directly with patients to facilitate hospital discharge planning to reduce hospital length of stay and ensure engagement in community treatment and support services.
- Partial Hospitalization Program, an acute, short term, outpatient, day program designed to reduce hospital length of stay or avoid hospitalization altogether. It is a skill based training program to assist individuals better manage their symptoms.
- Mobile Crisis Intervention and Prevention Team

The Mobile Crisis Intervention and Prevention Team (MCIT), a seven member team established in April 2012 that is available seven days a week, is the cornerstone of the diversion program. The MCIT is dispatched through DCDMH’s HELPLINE, 24/7 phone service staffed by mental hygiene professionals. The MCIT responds immediately to individuals in crisis to help avoid an Emergency Department (ED) visit and/or support individuals in the community following a brief ED intervention. In the eleven months since the team’s inception, there have been nearly 600 referrals for the team’s services. Approximately 20% of those referrals have come from family members who are concerned about the welfare and safety of a loved one. The team assists individuals in a wide variety of ways, from telephone reassurance and medication prescription assistance to counseling and even attending court arraignments to help divert an individual into mental health treatment services rather than being incarcerated.

The MCIT is seeing demonstrated successful outcomes. From April 2012 to February 2013, there have been 235 fewer inpatient hospitalization admissions when compared to the same

period for 2011/2012. The team's assistance at court arraignments is also having positive results. Individuals assisted by the MCIT are not reappearing in courts for repeat offenses.

NYSOMH officials were pleased to learn of the work being done in Dutchess County and is seeking to partner with the County to promote the successful diversion model as mental health delivery is transitioned into a managed care structure.

"We are grateful to Commissioner Woodlock for her continued support and look forward to working together in partnership with NYSOMH to best assist those individuals who are dealing with mental health issues in positive, supportive and helpful way," concluded County Executive Molinaro.

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