

HORIZON HEALTH PULSE



Partnering with consumers for better outcomes.

A new initiative organized and coordinated by the Erie County Department of Mental Health is designed to better meet the individual needs of consumers dealing with mental health issues. The Person-Centered Planning Initiative will teach area providers to take a more person-centered approach in working with consumers regarding their mental health treatment plan.

"We found that our system was failing those individuals who don't engage well with our existing programs," says Peter Curtis, assistant commissioner of mental health for Erie County. "We needed an approach to service planning and delivery that puts the enrolled individual in the center at defining both the goals to be achieved and the services and supports to achieve them. This change of focus not only helps individuals identify and build from their strengths, but it also increases their investment in the recovery process because it becomes theirs."

"This ... not only helps individuals identify and build from their strengths, but it also increases their investment in the recovery process because it becomes theirs."

to more accurately reflect a person-centered focus. Part of that involves training its staff on how to approach, intervene and treat the consumer using these techniques.

In the past, the approach had been to "take care" of mental health consumers, making sure they took their medication and came to their treatment appointments. Consumers were usually left with few choices in their own treatment and often wouldn't participate as willingly if they did not agree with the treatment plan.

"This new initiative helps position the consumers as partners with their mental health providers, rather than a "patient" that is "being treated," says Curtis. "Many are more committed to their treatment plans because their individual needs are being addressed and many system barriers have been removed."

"Partnering" continued on page 4



KC Kraft Photography, Inc.

Maria Rivett (left) and Carolyn Camm (right) participate in a training session for the new Person-Centered Planning Initiative, conducted by Carol Blessing, CSW, of Blessing/Meissner Consulting Group.

The Department implemented this new initiative and began training Erie County providers, such as Horizon, to use the techniques they developed. They hired a consultant, Carol Blessing, CSW, of Blessing/Meissner Consulting Group in Albany, NY, to visit area mental health providers and train them on person-centered practices.

As a result of its training, Horizon is currently in the process of revamping its overall policies and procedures

"Many are more committed to their treatment plans because their individual needs are being addressed and many system barriers have been removed."

HORIZON HONORED PAGE 2 MEET OUR BOARD PAGE 2 ROAD TO RECOVERY PAGE 3



From the desk of...

**Hak Ko
Medical Director**

Of all the major psychiatric illnesses, bipolar disorder is the one that has the most intrigue in the public's mind, and is the focus of intense biochemical and genetic studies. Once known as manic depression disease, bipolar disorder causes individuals to suffer through a never-ending ride on an emotional roller coaster.

Many great artists, both past and present, have suffered from bipolar disorder, including Lord Byron, Edgar Allan Poe, Vincent Van Gogh and Ernest Hemingway. Former First Lady Betty Ford contributed greatly to the public's understanding when she admitted she was receiving treatment for the illness.

Research done in genetics, neurobiology and neurochemistry firmly establishes that the brain's neurochemical dysfunction is due to defective genes. In a certain subtype of bipolar disorder, scientists were able to locate a single gene as responsible for several generations of suffering in an Amish family.

Today, when bipolar disease is diagnosed promptly and treated properly, there is a very good chance of leading a relatively normal life and having a successful career. However, earlier sufferers were not as lucky. Often misdiagnosed as schizophrenics, they were subjected to lengthy confinement and crude treatment with an assortment of conventional anti-psychotic drugs and their miserable side effects. It wasn't until the 1970s that we were given the first drug specifically designed to fight this illness. Lithium was the first mood stabilizer that worked miracles, even though its use was limited by kidney and thyroid side effects.

"From the desk of..." continued on page 3



Horizon honored by American Cancer Society

Just one day before the American Cancer Society's 27th annual Great American Smokeout last November, the organization honored several local businesses, volunteers and elected officials – including Horizon Health Services – who have worked to help others quit smoking and to uphold the smoking ban. Horizon President and CEO Anne Constantino accepted the award for Horizon, honored for its efforts to use the new law to create policy change and to reach out for education and cessation training for its staff, who work with addicted individuals.

"We are honored and excited to receive this award," says Anne Constantino. "We recognize that smoking negatively affects the health and

wellness of our staff and consumers. Horizon is making every effort to help people stop smoking."

Pat Bax, tobacco control specialist for the Western/Lakes Region of the American Cancer Society, nominated Horizon for the award. "Horizon is dedicated to fighting the crippling power of addiction and dependence," says Bax. "By addressing tobacco addiction in a very proactive approach, Horizon demonstrates a commitment to the health and wellness of our community."

Others honored by the American Cancer Society included Erie County Executive Joel Giambra; Michael DiPaolo of Ilio DiPaolo's Restaurant; *The Buffalo News* editorial board; AMF Bowling Centers of WNY; Niagara County Community College; Dresser-Rand, and volunteers Steve Turkovich and Dan Smith. ♥

MEET OUR Board



Name:

Linda Hardie

Title: Executive Director, Clean Communities of WNY, Inc.

HHS Board/Position:

Linda joined the Horizon Health Services board in 1986. Today, she also sits on the Health Management Group and Horizon Village boards.

How did you come to be on the Board?

"In the mid-80s, I was working with the Erie County Legislature on the Health and Mental Health Committee. James Wiegand, president of the recently-formed Horizon, was looking for government board members. We met and talked and Jim thought my knowledge and interest in mental health would be of great benefit to Horizon as it grew."

What have you found most rewarding about serving on the Board?

"The opportunity to make decisions that directly affect the lives of our neighbors is very rewarding. Every single family in WNY is affected in some way by mental health issues. I believe quality mental health treatment must be available and accessible to everyone through community-based agencies. I enjoy working with my fellow board members to reach policy-making decisions that continue to allow Horizon to be a quality agency and to innovate new services and grow more responsive in the mental health field every day."

What do you want people to know about Horizon?

"Who we are! That we exist! That anyone can have access to quality services provided by dedicated and committed employees who are the very heart and soul of this wonderful organization. Our programs are top notch and our employees very dedicated to our mission."

On what other Not-for-Profit Boards do you currently serve?

"I also serve on the board of Alleyway Theatre and several of its initiatives, on the WNY Earth Day Steering Committee and on the board of National Clean Cities Incorporated in Washington, DC." ♥

Hello
My name is
Margaret Braun
Program Director
Bailey-LaSalle AOC



As the new program director of Horizon's Bailey-LaSalle Addictions Outpatient Center, Margaret Braun says she is most impressed by how hard her staff works. "This is truly a team environment,"

says Margaret, a former counseling supervisor and counselor at Erie County Medical Center. "Everyone is focused, conscientious and extremely dedicated when it comes to helping our consumers."

The Center's eight addiction counselors typically see more than 250 consumers per week, offering everything from group and individual counseling sessions, acupuncture treatments and vocational training. The Center also houses a mental health clinic and New

Beginnings, Horizon's HIV Program, which have separate managers.

"I think it's so important that we are able to offer such a full range of services right in this building," says Margaret, herself a credentialed addictions counselor. "I think Horizon's holistic approach to treatment is very beneficial in many ways to our consumers, and I see firsthand the benefits they get from participating in our many programs. We work in a very cooperative way to provide the best treatment we can for each consumer."

Margaret says that, while she's still "learning the ropes," she's been very pleased with what she's seen so far at the Center. One of her goals for the Center would be to organize a trauma treatment program, which she believes would be a natural fit with Horizon's holistic approach to treatment.

"So many of our consumers have experienced traumatic events in their lives, and many are dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," she says. "I believe that helping them deal with past traumas will help them deal with their addictions." ♥

Join us as we celebrate a new location for New Beginnings. For more information on our open house, to be held Friday, February 13, contact Khris Decker at 833.3622.

theRoadtoRecovery

Here is the true story of a consumer who overcame many obstacles with the help of Horizon Health Services to turn her life around. Last names have been omitted for privacy.

Megan's mom, Peggy, thought her daughter was dealing with normal teenage angst. She was at times unapproachable. She fought with her siblings and her girlfriends. She'd cry or get angry for no apparent reason.

If it was raining, somehow Megan managed to make her mom feel responsible. But her grades were good and there were no major problems, so Peggy assumed Megan would outgrow her issues.

When it was time for college, Megan enrolled at Buffalo State College. But after one semester, she couldn't handle the stress and she dropped out. Peggy tried to encourage Megan to get a job, but was unsuccessful. It was getting more and more difficult to reach Megan. She had begun using self-mutilation techniques. She was showing signs of anorexia.

"I had no self-esteem," says Megan. "I felt ugly and I hated myself. I didn't know it, of course, but it was all due to my illness. It was a very difficult time, and it upsets me to look back."

Finally, her parents decided to seek the help of a psychiatrist. Megan was diagnosed as having major depression and she was put on Prozac. From there, it was a sequence of different doctors, different drugs, participation at mental health clinics and total frustration for Megan and her family. Then someone suggested to Peggy that she give Horizon a call. "That's when

positive things began to happen for Megan," says Peggy. "Finally, at age 20, Megan was properly diagnosed and treated."

The diagnosis at Horizon was bipolar disorder. A treatment plan, involving counseling, was set up for Megan. Her physical state was thoroughly examined. At first, Megan would not cooperate, and refused to participate in the treatment and counseling program, though she kept in touch with her doctors.

"I had two great counselors at Horizon when I first started," says Megan. "But both left and I never bonded with my third counselor, so I got discouraged and wouldn't participate. That was a big mistake."

Eventually, Megan came back to Horizon, continued to see the same doctor she had been working with all along, and once again participated in both individual and group counseling sessions. She also enrolled in Horizon's vocational program to learn the skills that would prepare her for the job market.

"I have always found everyone at Horizon to be extremely supportive and very patient with me," says Megan. "They are very responsive to my needs, very positive-focused and very encouraging. I wouldn't be where I am today without Horizon."

Megan's mom agrees, saying she also found the staff at Horizon to be very accommodating, very easy to talk to and most reassuring. "They helped me to realize that Megan's illness is treatable and that it wasn't my fault. Without Horizon, Megan and I would never have the relationship we have now!"

Megan has learned many things that have

tremendously helped her to cope with her illness. She's more proactive now, rather than reactive, so she's more aware when the symptoms are creeping up on her and she can deal with them head on. She's become involved in nutritional groups because she wants to fight her anorexia and improve her physical condition.

But most important, says Megan, is that she's learned to maintain a more level grounding. To be hopeful and look forward to things, but not to be overly hopeful or set herself up for disappointment or failure.

"I didn't even realize how much I've learned at Horizon until I find myself using the techniques they taught me," says Megan. "Now I don't define myself as mentally ill, it's just one part of who I am."

Today, at 30, Megan has a very positive outlook for her future. She's taking her medicine, she's continuing her counseling at Horizon and she's looking forward to a job in the florist industry. Perhaps one of the most significant improvements is Megan's relationship with her mother. Over the years, as Megan dealt with her illness, her feelings for her mother fluctuated; she was often very unapproachable and would not allow her mother to show her any affection. Today, they are very close and have a very communicative, open and affectionate relationship, which is very important to both of them.

And, because of all she's been through, Megan also wants to volunteer and help others in similar situations to hers. "I know firsthand what they are feeling and what they are going through. If someone else can benefit from my experiences, I would be happy to help them." ♥

"From the desk of..." continued from page 1

The past decade has brought us the greatest advancements in the treatment of this disease. Various anticonvulsants and several atypical anti-psychotic drugs have given us numerous treatment options. Recent approval by the

FDA giving Zyprexa indications for the treatment of both manic phase and maintenance therapy is wonderful news, and similar approval is expected for most of the other atypical drugs in the near future.

It is a tragedy that earlier sufferers couldn't

have access to the same kind of treatment. Imagine how many more great paintings and literary works we could have enjoyed from artists such as Poe and Van Gogh had they been able to receive these advanced treatments. ♥

More than two million American adults, or about one percent of the population age 19 and older, have bipolar disorder.

"Partnering" continued from page 1

"With the person-centered approach, everyone is involved," concurs Maria Rivett, Horizon vice president of program development and Horizon's point person for the initiative, along with Stephanie Watson and Chris Ziemba. "From the receptionist who welcomes a consumer at our front door to the counselors and medical personnel, everyone will be focused on that individual's needs."

The hallmarks of person-centered practices include working one on one with consumers to determine how they see their own recovery, and helping them gain their own vision of an ideal life, which can include psychological stability, career goals, hobbies, relationships, etc. Once this assessment has taken place, the case workers can tailor a treatment plan that is more individualized, more oriented toward those goals and more accepted by the consumer.

"Our goal is to teach the philosophies and

principals behind person-centered practices to area mental health providers," says Carolyn Camm, assistant SPOE coordinator for the Erie County Department of Mental Health. "We want to give them the skill sets needed to take a better approach to treatment on an individual level."

Horizon's goal for the 3,500 mental health consumers it currently serves is to offer them strength-based assistance that gives them choices and offers options that work to include them in the community rather than exclude them.

Peter Curtis says he is very encouraged by the degree to which Horizon has embraced this initiative. "They are clearly invested in assisting the Mental Health Court by embracing the values and the outcomes of person-centered practices," he says. "Everyone at Horizon has willingly jumped on board and shown an eagerness to implement this initiative for the benefit of their consumers." ❤️

Horizon is the largest and most comprehensive outpatient provider of integrated mental health, chemical dependency and medical services in WNY.

HorizonHealthPulse is published for the employees, consumers, Board and friends of Horizon Health Services. Please share this newsletter with a friend. If you would like additional copies of this newsletter or if you have any questions or comments about its content, please call Michelle Wroblewski at 716-831-1800 or email her at mwroblewski@horizon-health.org.

President & CEOAnne Constantino
Medical DirectorHak Ko, M.D.



HORIZON
HEALTH SERVICES

HorizonHealthPulse

Volume 2 • Issue #1 • Winter 2004
©2004 Horizon Health Services

A hallmark of person-centered treatment is that the person's activities, services and supports are based upon his or her dreams, interests, preferences and strengths.

INSIDE:
A more person-centered approach...

Horizon Health Services
3020 Bailey Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215

HORIZONHEALTHPULSE

