



GOOD Mental Health.

It starts with a conversation.

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Early Childhood Mental Health in Primary Care and Other Settings is Key to Prevention



Promoting infant and early childhood mental health is gaining traction and funding both nationally and in Massachusetts. Research shows that the first signs of mental illness often occur in childhood. Half of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14. It is estimated that between nine and 14 percent of children from birth to 5 years of age experience social and emotional problems that negatively affect their early learning, social interactions, and family well-being. The Department of Mental Health Child and Adolescent Services, in partnership with other state agencies and early childhood professionals, is working on several fronts to increase early identification and improve treatment for children with mental health issues.

Many of the current early childhood efforts started with a *Race to the Top (RTTT) Early Challenge Grant* from the U.S. Department of Education that was awarded to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) in 2012. DMH is one of several state partners working with EEC to create a more comprehensive approach to early learning and development for young children from birth through school age. The RTTT grant supports several DMH activities to strengthen existing foundations of early childhood mental health systems and supports, some of which are described below. The Department's involvement has provided an unprecedented

~SAVE THE DATE~ [MassPRA Annual Meeting](#)

[Photo of the Month](#)

DMH Office of
Communications and
Community Engagement

Questions or
suggestions?

Call 617-626-8124



Go Social with DMH!



DMH is on
Flickr!
MassDMH

DMH joins the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and its agencies on Flickr! View photos from DMH events, follow us and favorite your favorite DMH photos from DMH sponsored events.

- DMH - MassDMH
- EOHHS - Mass_hhs

View our photos on [flickr](#)



DMH is on
Twitter!
[@MassDMH](#)

Spread the word: We're sharing great information, resources, links, happenings and content with you in real time. Follow DMH on Twitter [@MassDMH](#) or just click the Follow button.

DMH joins the Executive Office of Health and Human

opportunity to strengthen the early identification of behavioral and emotional challenges in young children across health, mental health, and early education domains.

DMH funds and is working with the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project (MCPAP), described in the [October edition](#) of [DMH Connections](#), to enhance pediatricians' capacity to address early childhood mental health issues in primary care. A survey conducted in 2013 by DMH and MCPAP found that pediatricians are struggling to help parents reduce disruptive behaviors of their 3 to 6 year olds. To address this need, MCPAP is training clinicians who work in primary care settings in Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), an evidence based intervention for helping parents of pre-school children develop skills and confidence to handle their child's challenging behaviors. Triple P is a widely used and tested program that was developed in Australia more than 30 years ago and adopted successfully worldwide and throughout this country. This cost effective program consistently demonstrates reduced problem behaviors in children along with high parent satisfaction. Forty clinicians affiliated with 28 primary care practices have been trained and are implementing the intervention. By spring, an additional 20 clinicians will be trained and ready to implement in other primary care practices.

To increase the capacity of early childhood education professionals to understand and recognize mental health issues in young children, DMH designed and delivered a series of statewide trainings on infant and toddler early childhood mental health to 1000 educators. And to increase capacity within the children's mental health system, DMH is designing and plans to deliver an intensive three-day training series for 60 In-Home Treatment (IHT) supervisors within the MassHealth Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) service system. DMH also provides technical assistance to EEC's Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation network which provides mental health services in child care and family based centers.

Collaborations are underway with the Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) on Child and Adolescent Mental Health and the Infant Early Childhood Interagency Systems Workgroup of state agencies to address models of care and financing mechanisms that improve access to early childhood mental health services and supports.

DMH will continue to provide leadership and guidance to increase the clinical capacities of providers and clinicians across health and mental health systems in the early identification of and treatment of young children and their families.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

2015 DMH Citizens Legislative Breakfasts Series

DMH will host its annual series of Citizens Legislative Breakfasts in February and March. This is an opportunity for members of the mental health community to meet with their legislators, thank them for their support and discuss how DMH helps people with mental illnesses recover and live satisfying lives in communities of their choice. It is also an opportunity for consumers and family members

Services (EOHHS) and several of its agencies on Twitter -- please follow them too. Here's a list:

- EOHHS - @Mass_HHS
- Department of Public Health - @MassDPH, @MassinMotion
- The Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) - @@Mass_CHIA
- Department of Veterans Services (DVS) - @MASSDVS
- DVS Save Team - @MassVeterans
- DVS Women Veteran Network - @WomenVeterans

Follow us on 

Commonwealth Conversations BLOGS



Health and Human Services Blog

This social media platform provides news, updates and serve as a forum for open dialogue about issues related to all 16 EOHHS agencies. [Click here](#) to read blog posts by Secretary Sudders, Commissioner Fowler and others

Department of Public Health Blog

[Click here](#) to view the DPH blog which features expert tips on nutrition and physical activity as well as a roundup of health and wellness events

to share good news and success stories about their life experiences.

Sharing stories is the most powerful tool we have in the recovery toolkit. At the DMH Citizens Legislative Breakfasts, we will hear the courageous and compelling personal stories of adults, youth and families living with mental illness and thriving in the face of their challenges.

Join the conversation!

Wednesday, February 12, Metro Boston Area Citizens Legislative Breakfast
(Great Hall, State House)

Thursday, February 26, Northeast-Suburban Area Citizens Legislative Breakfast
Northeast Communities (Great Hall, State House)

Thursday, March 12, Southeast Area Citizens Legislative Breakfast
(Great Hall, State House)

Friday, March 20, Western Mass Area Citizens Legislative Breakfast
(Springfield Technical Community College, Scibelli Hall)

Wednesday, March 25, Northeast-Suburban Area Citizens Legislative Breakfast
Metro Suburban Communities (Great Hall, State House)

Friday, March 27, Central Mass Citizens Legislative Breakfast
(Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital, K2-A2 Conference Center)

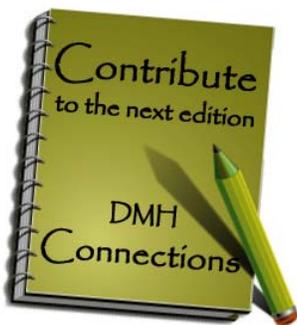
The breakfast events begin with registration and refreshments from 9:30 to 10 a.m. and the program starts promptly at 10 a.m. for approximately an hour.

Holiday Generosity Touched All Corners of DMH During the Holidays

DMH was filled with the giving spirit this past holiday season as staff in Area and Site offices and facilities across the state made sure that adults children, adolescents and families in our services and their communities had something special to celebrate. Here are some highlights:

Central Office held its 4th Annual "Warm for the Winter" coat and clothing drive during the month of December. Staff filled two coat racks and several boxes with gently used coats vests, scarves, hats, gloves and mittens and new socks and donated to the DMH Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) who will distribute them to men and women at the Erich Lindemann Mental Health Center shelter programs in Boston as well as those they encounter in their outreach.

In **Metro Boston**, the Solomon Carter Fuller site continued its annual charitable giving to the Chelsea-based Harbor Cove domestic violence agency. Each staff member picked one or two children's names and



[Click here](#) for the 2015 Editorial Calendar

March Submission
Deadline: February 15

Please send all materials to
[Michelle Cormier Tallman](#)

[Click here](#) for Submission Guidelines



ReachHire offers young adults and anyone seeking a wealth of tools, advice, and resources designed to help you reach your dreams - for building a career, getting an education, and supporting yourself financially. With a positive attitude and the right support, you can make it a fun and fulfilling experience.

Get Started Today at:
www.ReachHireMA.org

purchased the child's requested clothing or toy item. Both of the inpatient units held parties for the clients as did the shelters.

The **Central Massachusetts** Area Site Offices, Area Office, and Mobile Forensic Division, with assistance from the Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital joined together in creating gift baskets for a holiday drawing that benefitted the Area's community individuals served during the holidays.



The **Western Massachusetts** DMH staff at the Haskell Building in Northampton planning committee, [pictured left](#), hosted a Holiday Party with a pot luck luncheon followed by a raffle of items donated by the staff in the Haskell Building. This

year staff-donated items filled 40 baskets that were raffled during the event. The generosity and creativity of the WM staff was evident and the event raised \$1,006.00 to be distributed evenly between two charities, the Fisher House in Boston and the USO of Pioneer Valley both involved in providing practical support to family members of the military enabling them to support those who have served and sacrificed in the military.

The Holyoke/Chicopee and Springfield Site Offices collected gently used coats and purchased hams for the Springfield Rescue Mission. This yearly tradition drew a big response and was a tremendous success.



The **Northeast-Suburban** Area Office created a Holiday Money Tree [pictured here](#). Funds raised went to The Abundant Table, Inc. in Norwood, a volunteer-run, community-based non-profit organization serving weekly healthy free meals with compassionate camaraderie to individuals and families in need. The Abundant Table, Inc. takes pride in fostering a judgment-free, respect-filled environment and seeks to serve as a conduit for local businesses, institutions, schools, civic organizations, families and individuals to come together and selflessly prepare and serve a meal to those in need. Area Office staff also contributed to the Canteen Fund for extra activities for patients at the hospital.

The Lowell Site and NAMI hosted a holiday party for over 200 individuals. The menu included sandwiches, salads, Italian entrees and a variety of deserts. Through the Toys for Tots program the site was able to provide Christmas presents to 85 children whose families are served by DMH Case Management.

West Suburban Site staff donated Thanksgiving meals to 23 people receiving DMH services in their communities in partnership with A

Focus on Employment



Patient Wage Programs: A Bridge to Work

*By Michael Stepansky
DMH Director of Employment*

Although the goal of "competitive employment" is always met in the community, many individuals actually begin working towards that goal long before they transition back home. Patient Wage Programs (PWPs) operate at nearly all DMH inpatient facilities as well as several outpatient clinics in the Southeast. At any one time, the Inpatient Programs collectively work with approximately 150-175 patients, teaching skills crucial to employment as well as helping patients maintain the motivation necessary for pursuing competitive work following their discharge. Despite the challenges of operating work programs within state hospitals, DMH rehabilitation departments have created at least 14 distinct positions for PWP participants, including work in clerical services, hospitality, landscaping, custodial services, food services and retail. Some sites have developed customized or specialized positions for patients unable to participate in other offerings.

Says Sharon Gaffney, Director of Rehabilitation at Shattuck Hospital: "Real work experiences provide

Place to Turn in Natick and the Marlboro Food Pantry. These individuals were able to prepare a Thanksgiving meal in their homes for family and friends. The North Shore Site staff donated food and personal care items to the Beverly Bootstraps Food Pantry on the second day of the New Year. The South Suburban Site staff donated holiday gifts to six children of Atlantic Clubhouse members.

In the **Southeast Area**, the Area Office adopted a family in lieu of gift giving to each other. The Plymouth Site Office staff were involved in many charitable events during the holidays. The Site Citizen's Advisory Board joined the Plymouth Site Office in a food drive to support the Plymouth Bay Clubhouse Food Pantry. The annual Healthy Holiday Luncheon was held for more than 50 clients at the Plymouth Bay Clubhouse with a four-course meal prepared and served by Plymouth Site and provider staff. All guests received copy of the healthy recipes along with a calendar for the new year. Site staff adopted and purchased presents for families and/or individual clients who have great need and otherwise would not receive a gift on Christmas.

Pocasset Site staff hosted a holiday party for CBFS clients. The Pocasset office supported the Tabernacle of Praise a local Cape Church for their food pantry during Thanksgiving and Christmas. Staff also chose a family and donated gifts for three children and three adults. Pocasset Mental Health Center staff held a Christmas dinner for patients and family members.



Corrigan Mental Health Center staff held a festive, traditional holiday dinner for all Fall River DMH clients, served by the Center's leadership team. More than 300 clients attended. Staff donated a range of items for gift baskets given to clients at the holiday event. Individual staff "adopted" many child and adult clients with high needs and limited resources. A Gifting Tree, [pictured here](#), and decorated with wish lists. The treatment team staff delivered the gifts.

This a many more acts of generosity and kindness can be found throughout the Department, throughout the holidays and every day thanks to the dedicated staff of DMH.



DMH YouTube Spotlight

This month we feature a short video interview filmed at DMH

opportunities for patients to practice skills that support a worker identity and immensely enhance each person who chooses to work a successful return to life in the community. Success at work offers meaningful and valued activity as well as opportunities for greater independence which support a person's recovery over time."

While PWP participants also have access to additional employment-related supports while hospitalized, including "Job-Club" peer-support and discussion groups or community visits to career centers or work sites, they also are often among those most eager to work following discharge, seeking supported employment services from CBFS, PACT, Clubhouses, or MRC. The Patient Wage Programs are valuable examples that there is no space or program which cannot support a person's vocational recovery.

Multicultural Corner



The Time is Now!

By Tina Sang, MPH, MSW
Office of Multicultural Affairs

Behavioral health problems are the third leading cause of disability in the United States, and they negatively affect people's overall health and quality of life. The Massachusetts Health Policy Forum's new issue brief, "[The Time is Now: Tackling Racial](#)

Central Office featuring Toni Wolf, Executive Director of Employment Options in Marlborough who spoke with Evan Kaplan, Executive Director of Family Connections in Philadelphia, PA. Evan spoke of an approach called Reflect, Reframe, Respect, and candidly shares his thoughts and experiences of being a caretaker while caring for his own mental health.



[REFLECT, REFRAME, RESPECT](#)

Are you ready to EAT for the HEALTH of It?



Feel better!
Increase your energy!
Reach your healthy weight goals!

- Learn about topics such as:
- * Learning Portion Control and Sizes
 - * Recognizing Your Triggers
 - * Reading Labels
 - * Navigating the Supermarket
 - * Cooking to Optimize Health
 - * Eating Healthy on the Go

YOUR REWARD: Complete all six weeks of the challenge and a post-assessment and be entered into a raffle for a \$200 gift card to the grocery store of your choice

- Register online at <https://wellmass.staywell.com>.

[and Ethnic Disparities in Mental and Behavioral Health Services in Massachusetts,](#)" is a call to action to remedy the unmet mental health needs of Commonwealth residents, especially for communities of color. Lead authors of the issue brief, Dr. Margarita Alegria and Dr. Benjamin Cook of Harvard Medical School and the Center for Multicultural Mental Health Research, presented the brief's main findings at a public forum held on Dec. 11, 2014.

The issue brief cites current mental health data to reveal alarming disparities between the need for services and service utilization as well as disparities between racial groups. According to the 2004-2012 National Survey of Drug Use and Health, only about half of White, Black, and Asian adults with mental illness in Massachusetts received mental health services during the past year. Service utilization by Latino adults with mental illness in Massachusetts was even lower at 29 percent.

To address these disparities, the issue brief provides five recommendations:

1. Increase early identification and enhance consumer self-management of behavioral health problems, including screenings for people in the criminal justice system so they receive mental health and substance use treatment
2. Expand the supply of qualified, culturally competent and linguistically appropriate mental health providers, peer counselors, and paraprofessionals who serve diverse communities

- Registration is open from February 2 - March 1, 2015. The challenge starts the day you register and lasts for six weeks.

Are you the captain of your crock pot? Can nothing top your grandma's recipe for homemade meatballs? Then the GIC's WellMASS wellness program wants to hear from you!

[Click here](#) for more information on the Eat for the Health of It Recipe Contest

Check your inbox for DMH Communications on this exciting challenge coming soon!

WellMASS Health Assessment Extended, Still Time to Earn Rewards

This year WellMASS and the GIC are offering employees even more benefits for taking or retaking their Health Assessment:



**Complete your WellMASS Health Questionnaire TODAY!
It only takes 10 minutes!**

Go to <https://wellmass.staywell.com> on your computer or smartphone.

WHY TAKE THE HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE?

- Receive a snapshot of your current health
- Determine which health areas/behaviors need more attention
- Access resources on health topics like nutrition, stress and blood pressure
- Your results may qualify you for FREE health coaching

So you completed the Health Assessment last year? Take it again for a year-to-year-comparison!

EARN REWARDS:

BEFORE JAN. 31

- Your choice of a \$20 gift card or a deluxe gym bag *pictured right*. **Please Note:** the \$20 gift is taxed on your W2, the gym bag is not.
- Entry into a raffle for an iPad2
- Six-month subscription to NutriSavings, a website that provides you with nutrition information about your grocery purchases and discounts for purchasing healthy foods



FEB. 1 - JUNE 30

- Deluxe gym bag *pictured above*

3. Build community coalitions to help prevent suicide, mood disorders, and substance use problems
4. Reduce disparities attributable to the health care system, such as disparities from provider-level interactions with patients, and require the reporting of mental health disparities data
5. Expand access to behavioral health services to anyone in need, regardless of insurance coverage, immigration documentation status, or ability to pay

To read "The Time is Now" brief, click [here](#).

DMH Commissioner Marcia Fowler participated on a panel at public forum Dec. 11 called *What Can We Do?* and discussed strategies for eliminating mental health disparities. Commissioner Fowler called for a "level playing field" so communities of color, immigrants, and people with limited English proficiency are enrolled in health insurance and have access to culturally competent, trauma-informed mental health services in their neighborhoods.

The Department's mission on culturally and linguistically competent care that is person-centered and trauma-informed is operationalized by the activities outlined in its Cultural and Linguistic Competence Action Plan (CLCAP). The CLCAP's six areas of focus are listed below along with an example activity for each focus.

- Community Partnerships: Presented the *Many Faces of*

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Visit the Website: <https://wellmass.staywell.com>
- Follow WellMASS on Twitter: @GICWellMASS
- Read the Blog: <http://wellmass.wordpress.com>
- Call the HelpLine: 1-800-926-5455
- Learn More: www.mass.gov/gic/wellmass

GIC-insured employees of the Executive and Legislative Branches and Constitutional Offices are eligible to take the Health Questionnaire. Your Health Questionnaire results are never shared with the GIC, your agency or your health plan.



Some tips to manage your weight

When it comes to weight loss, there is no shortage of products and gimmicks claiming to have found the secret to shedding pounds without making dietary modifications or incorporating physical activity. The truth of the matter is that, unfortunately, many advertised weight loss programs are nothing more than fad diets -- there is no substitution for eating healthy food in reasonable portions and getting regular physical activity to lose weight and effectively maintain that loss. A general rule of thumb when it comes to spotting fad diets is that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. When evaluating the safety, legitimacy, and long-term feasibility of a weight loss program, be mindful of the following types of claims:

Lose 30 pounds in 30 days! The safest and most effective way to lose weight and prevent regain is to lose between one and two pounds per week.

Lose weight without diet, exercise, or any lifestyle modification! Both a healthy diet and regular physical activity are essential to losing weight and maintaining your losses.

Miracle pills, creams, patches! In rare cases, your doctor may prescribe an FDA-approved pill to aid in blocking the absorption of fat or increasing satiety levels, but even those are to be combined with a low-calorie diet and physical activity plan. Furthermore, there is nothing you can apply to your skin that is proven to help you lose weight.

Restrict or eliminate certain food groups! Unless you're eating something past its expiration date or you have a food allergy, there are no inherently "bad" foods.

Rather than following a diet, aim to follow a lifestyle that includes

Mental Health

community conversation held in Boston during Fall 2014

- Leadership: Convenes the Multicultural Advisory Committee, a group of external stakeholders that advises the Department on cultural and linguistic competent care
- Services: Coordinates interpreter and translation services for DMH clients who have limited English proficiency
- Training and Education: Presented the *Clinical Competence in Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Clients* trainings to DMH sites and providers
- Data and Research: Conducts data collection and analysis on race, ethnicity and LGBT orientation of transition-age youth and young adults for SAMHSA's STAY Together grant.
- Information: Updates the Department's Multicultural Population Resource Directory

To read the DMH Cultural and Linguistic Competence Action Plan, click [here](#).

The DMH Office of Multicultural Affairs is in the process of updating the Department's Cultural and Linguistic Competence Action Plan. Please send your ideas and suggestions to OMCA@dmh.state.ma.us.

Conferences and Events

Upcoming Events at The Bridge of Central Mass.

habits you can maintain even after you've lost the weight. Strategies of successful weight "losers" that promote healthy and lasting weight loss embody focusing on variety and moderation rather than deprivation and making it a habit to build your diet around fresh fruits, vegetables, lean protein, whole grains, and the occasional treat. For more information about how much of each food group you should consume for optimal health, visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>.

[Click here](#) for a printable version, take the January Challenge: "Fight Fad Diets" and try a delicious recipe for a Salmon Noodle Bowl.

FEBRUARY WEBINAR: BLOOD PRESSURE MANAGEMENT

**Tuesday, February 10
10 to 10:30 a.m. and 1 to 1:30 p.m.**

To participate, call 866-740-1260 and log on to <http://lifemasters.readytalk.com>, and enter access code 7243537.

~ SAVE THE DATE ~

MassPRA Annual Meeting

Monday, April 13

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester
Hogan Center**

The Hogan Center is a fully accessible facility

For more information, please contact:

Mary C. Gregorio

Center Club, Bay Cove Human Services

31 Bowker Street

Boston, MA 02114

Phone: 617-788-1002

Fax: 617-788-1080

mgregorio@baycove.org

Photo of the Month

"Using Trauma Informed Care to Promote Safety and Recovery"

[Click here](#) for the complete 2015 training calendar.

Training Institute events are held at the DoubleTree Hotel which is wheelchair accessible for people with mobility limitations. If accommodations such as ASL interpreters or visual aids are needed, please contact Stephen Murphy at: stevem@thebridgecm.org or 508-755-0333 three weeks in advance of the training date.

Now Available

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health Suicide Prevention Training Calendar

Please click on the link below to register.

[Suicide Prevention Events Calendar](#)

When registering for a workshop, please note that each event has tabs titled with information regarding the workshop, available CEs and cost.

Space is very limited for each workshop and fills up quickly, please register early.

Upcoming Workshops at the Center for Professional Innovation

(formerly Community Program Innovations)

CPI offers continuing education for mental health and healthcare professionals and educators, holding day-long workshops throughout Massachusetts on clinical and management topics. Trainings are held in Billerica, Foxborough and Springfield. To view the complete schedule



The 3rd Annual Stephanie Moulton Symposium included a spirited panel discussion about using Trauma Informed Care to promote safety and recovery. Keynote Speaker Dr. Sandra Bloom joined moderator Dr. Robert D. Macy, Boston Children's Foundation; and panelists Yajaira Burke, Assistant Program Manager, The Bridge of Central Mass, Inc.; Gina Montefusco, LICSW, Peer Specialist, Department of Mental Health; and Sarah Selkovits, MS, CRC, CPRP, CPS, Director of Recovery, Baycove Human Services

[Click here](#) to watch the closing ceremony on the DMH Connections YouTube Channel.

Events prior to 2014 are posted on the [DMH Photo Gallery on Shutterfly](#) and all current events are on [Flickr](#)!

If you have photos from a DMH event that you would like featured as photo of the month or on our photo site, please send them to [Michelle Cormier Tallman](#).

DMH Connections



Thank you for your readership as DMH Connections proudly celebrates 6 years of continuous publication!

and to register visit
<http://bridgewellcpi.org>
All facilities are wheelchair
accessible. If accommodations
such as ASL interpreters or
visual aids are needed,
email: info@BridgewellCPI.org
or call 339-883-2118.

[Click here](#) for the
Transformation Center website
and all the latest information
and events happening
throughout the mental health
community.

Please send your event
information to
[Michelle Cormier Tallman](#)
by the 15th of each month for
publication in *DMH
Connections*



*We will be posting DMH Connections on DMH's archives page of
the DMH Internet.
View issues from 2008 to the Present.*