

Primary Care and Mental Health

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The February 13, 2008, New York State AHEC System Advisory Board meeting held in Albany focused on the “Integration of Primary Care and Mental Health Services.”

Featured speakers Michael Hogan, PhD, Commissioner, New York State Office of Mental Health, and Deborah Bachrach, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Health Insurance Programs, addressed benefits and challenges. Dr. Hogan highlighted the challenges and importance of care coordination

continuity of coverage, quality, and financing.

Jean Moore, MSN, BSN, Director, Center for Health Workforce Studies, provided an overview of the current mental health workforce at state and regional levels based on physician survey and licensure data (active psychiatrists who treat adults and children/adolescents, licensed social workers, and nurse practitioners).

The meeting included a panel composed of: Lynn Videka, PhD, VP for Research, Distinguished

programs and the workforce, and challenges/recommendations for recruiting and retaining a diverse mental health workforce and faculty.

In closing, the Advisory Committee discussed the role that the NYS AHEC System might play in promoting the integration of mental health and primary care services. Key issues to address include opportunities for training in integrated settings, the importance of examining institutional culture in academic programs and providing mentors to students from



Rossmery Barzey, MSI AHEC Program Director; Maxine Golub, MPH, NY Metropolitan Region Office Director; Lynn Videka, PhD, SUNY Albany Vice President for Research; Lani Jones, PhD, Assistant Professor, SUNY Albany School of Social Welfare; Linda Kahn, PhD, NYS AHEC System Evaluation Director; Wendi Williams, PhD, Counseling Psychologist; and Virna Little, PsyD, Vice President Psychosocial Services & Community Affairs, Institute for Family Health.

in multiple settings, described the scope of the State’s mental health operations system, and offered strategies for diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems closer to appearance of first symptoms. Ms. Bachrach discussed health care and Medicaid reform as a base upon which to integrate primary care and mental health services. She spoke to issues of continuity of care and

Service Professor, School of Social Welfare, University at Albany, SUNY; Lani Jones, PhD, MSW, Assistant Professor, School of Social Welfare, University at Albany, SUNY; and Wendi Williams, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Education, Long Island University. Panelists provided insight into available training programs in New York State, recruitment issues involving training

underrepresented groups who are seeking professional training, and the need to address reimbursement for services that provides adequate compensation for mental health professionals.