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New Oakland NEWS

January 2018, Issue 29

In this issue

1. What's Your New Year's Resolution? Think About Better Mental Health
2. New Oakland Welcomes Dr. Maria Villafuerte: The Latest Addition to Our Psychiatric Team
3. Metro Detroit's Colleges Work to Develop a Culture of Care for Mental Health of Its Students
4. Suggestions for Promoting a Better Mental Healthcare System in Michigan



Suggestions for Promoting a Better Mental Healthcare System in Michigan

(continued from previous page)

9. The behavioral health community must find ways to more effectively engage employers to meet the needs of the ever changing workforce while helping to increase worker productivity and reducing employer cost. The silos between employers and health professionals need to be breached. We need to partner with employers around behavioral health awareness, acceptance, prevention, and recovery in and out of the workplace. Employers should be viewed as allies not adversaries.

10. Commission a study that shows the good, the bad and the ugly – what is working well (and what isn't) in the public mental health field under the auspice of public control. What is working (and not working) in the private/non-profit and profit health plans. Use this data to make public policy going forward.

11. Create legislation that no state administrative official, legislator or

legislative staffer involved in the transfer of public money to the private/profit making Health Plans can accept a job, contract or any form of remuneration from the industry for a period of two years after leaving state service.

12. Move to have non-violent persons in our prison system with serious mental health disease transferred out of corrections and into a proper behavioral health programs when appropriate.

13. Hold local profit and non-profit hospitals accountable to serve persons with serious and acute mental health issues in their communities (it is a known fact that games are being played to avoid serving these citizens). The State needs to get serious about using all the tools at its disposal, including Certificate of Need, Licensing, and tax policy. Penalties include revoking tax exempt status from nonprofit hospital not serving the public need, invoking significant financial penalties, etc. It is unacceptable that persons with mental illness in need of a hospital settings are being denied service.

Going Forward

The vision, values and dedication of the public behavioral health community in Michigan are second to none. Never shy away from advocating for what is right. There are leaders among you. Stand up and be willing to lead going forward. We must always act as though the decisions we make will impact someone we love – because ultimately it will.

Collectively we need to join with advocates to change what needs to be changed while preserving the value and the values of the public mental health system. Together we have—and will continue to—make a difference!

Tom Watkins is Michigan's former state superintendent of education and a business and educational consultant in the US and China. He is an advisor to the Michigan-China Innovation Center, Detroit Chinese Business Association, and Michigan US/China Exchange Center. The full text of this article is available at <http://domemagazine.com/tomwatkins/tw102717>

What's Your New Year's Resolution? Think About Better Mental Health



by **Martha Adair, MA, LLP**
New Oakland Clinical Director

Welcome to the new year, everyone! On behalf of all of us at New Oakland Family Centers, here's hoping it will be a fantastic one.

Of course, we can do more than hope. Each of us, in his or her life, can take actions and make concrete plans to help make every year (and every day) a little better.

That's the motivation behind those New Year's resolutions we all make (or many of us do) to go to the gym more often, maybe find a new job, travel more, break bad habits, eat healthier and on and on and on.

Don't get me wrong, resolutions are great things . . . and the beginning of the new year is a good time to make them. It feels like the perfect time to start with a clean slate.

But too often we have a hard time dealing with the disappointment that arises when our expectations for ourselves fall short.

And maybe, too, we forget what all these resolutions have in common, whoever we may be. Resolutions to make ourselves better and do things that make us happier are really all about taking care of our mental health.

That's why I think we should approach our resolutions in ways that make us feel good about progress toward our goals — but don't automatically make us feel bad or hopeless when we fall short.

Mental health isn't something that you take care of starting January 1. For all of us, it's a day-in-day-out effort to move our lives forward to understand the things that are truly most important to our overall well-being.

That's a big part of our philosophy at New Oakland . . . helping individuals and families really be mindful of what's most important. And it's a perspective you can (and should) carry with you year-round!

24-Hour Crisis Hotline
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To learn more about New Oakland's state of Michigan-licensed FACE to FACE Partial Hospital Program, visit us online at www.NewOakland.org

New Oakland Welcomes Dr. Maria Villafuerte: The Latest Addition to Our Psychiatric Team



New Oakland is excited to announce the addition of **Dr. Maria Nicole A. Villafuerte** as the newest addition to our team of psychiatrists.

Dr. Villafuerte joins New Oakland following six years as a staff psychiatrist at Henry Ford Kingswood Hospital.

In her time serving patients in the Detroit area, Dr. Villafuerte has developed a reputation as a sensitive and innovative clinician with a deep commitment to the changing needs of mental health consumers.

“As a physician and mental health professional, the most important thing I do every day is help each of my patients find the evidence-based

options that are right for them,” Dr. Villafuerte says. “That’s why I’m so pleased and excited to be joining New Oakland and advancing their commitment to delivering the ‘right care at the right time.’”

“My goal is always to ensure people are receiving the treatments they need in an environment where they feel fully respected and fully engaged in their own care,” Dr. Villafuerte says.

Dr. Villafuerte received her medical training at the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic

Medicine and did her psychiatric residency within the Henry Ford Health System. She also serves as Assistant Clinical Professor with the Wayne State University School of Medicine.

She is board-certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and a member of the American Psychiatric Association, American Medical Association and the American College of Osteopathic Psychiatrists and Neurologists.

Metro Detroit’s Colleges Work to Develop a Culture of Care for Mental Health of Its Students



by **Claire Charlton**
Metro Detroit freelance
journalist

This story was originally published in the Dec. 18 issue of **model D** (www.modeldmedia.com)

model **D**

By the time Kelly Toal began taking classes at Wayne State University, she had seemingly reached a stable place in her life. She had strong support, good friends, and a purpose. She was certain that her mid-teen anxiety and depression diagnosis was situational — related more to her parents’ difficult divorce than to her own mental health.

So she was surprised (and frightened) when depression and suicidal thoughts crept back into her life. For the first time, Toal saw her depression as a mental health issue. “That made me realize I needed to deal with this. Shake hands with it and look it in the face,” Toal says.

Keeping college minds healthy

While her experience is unique, it’s not uncommon. College students, often living on their own for the very first time, face significant stressors, including social, financial and academic challenges. Those predisposed to anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and other mental health conditions are especially vulnerable.

This fall, more than a dozen Michigan colleges and universities launched a program to increase support and awareness of student mental health.

Because most students who are overwhelmed or anxious don’t, or won’t, seek counseling, the program provides training for everyone who interfaces with students, including deans, residence assistants, equity and diversity officers, and even fellow students.



Students at Wayne State University Campus
Photo: Nick Hagen

Years before college

It’s best to recognize and treat conditions long before college. That’s why Kent, Jackson, and Oakland intermediate school districts are implementing Project AWARE to improve the mental health literacy and provide youth mental health first aid training to those who interact

with kids. The program is grant-funded through the Michigan Department of Education by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

In addition to training 1,000 staff in the Holly, Pontiac, and Waterford school districts, Oakland Schools will also offer training to the public six times a year, and work toward sustainability before the grant ends in September 2019.

For Kelly Toal, a caring friend became a strong confidante. “She was the first to talk so openly about mental health, and the result was I opened up to her,” she says. “When I hit bottom, she was there. I told her I was feeling suicidal, and she stayed by my side. In the past, I would never have reached out.”

When life piles on, Toal urges students to recognize their own individual efforts as victories. “Keep trying and you’ll find a place or a space where you are happy being exactly who you are,” she says.

“Once, my older brother told me he just wanted me to be happy being Kelly Toal. And after 10 years of struggling with my mental health, I’m proud of who I am, and who I can continue growing to be.”

(This article has been abridged from its original length. Read the complete article at modeldmedia.com)

Suggestions for Promoting a Better Mental Healthcare System in Michigan



by **Tom Watkins**
former President & CEO
Detroit Wayne Mental
Health Authority

The landscape of community mental health is forever changing. As we look to the future the one certainty we can predict is that there will be constant pressure to adapt and change, or become irrelevant. Change is never easy, but producing change that adds value to the consumer and taxpayer on both a short term and long term basis is far more difficult.

Decisions that benefit consumers and taxpayers vs. the “system” will take us down a path that will add value and make a difference. If power, control, politics and ideology drive policy decisions in the coming years, I predict future policy makers will have a huge mess to clean up down the road.

So here we go — my predictions, suggestions and ideas to help promote a mental healthcare system that is responsible for the care and support of hundreds of thousands of our fellow vulnerable citizens. Some of the ideas presented here have been articulated by others. Some are bolder than others, and a few purposely push the envelope to force policy innovation, making others rethink long held positions. All are offered as a way to better serve vulnerable people while maximizing value to the taxpayers.

Advocacy/Collaboration “Innovative Initiatives”

1. Pass legislation that mandates the health plans and public mental health systems find administrative efficiencies, without impacting consumer care/service, of at least 5% which would be redirected to consumer service. With a budget of \$2.6 billion for behavioral health systems and \$9 billion for Medicaid Health Plans, \$580 million would be redirected.

2. Stop the stigma of mental illness and demand Congress appropriate money to research the causes of serious mental illness, developing responses to these disorders that wreak havoc on individuals, families and society. Advocate groups need to make this their next “big thing.”

3. The Governor should call on Michigan’s universities, the tech community and professional behavioral health workers to design apps that take the lead in developing technology based apps to meet the needs of over 300,000 citizens in Michigan using the public behavioral health system of care— helping them not just live, but thrive in society. Foundations should put up significant “prize” money to develop these new technologies and approaches.

4. Survey behavioral health professionals, consumers and their families about their most frustrating problems, then seek assistance from university professors and grad students to do the research that addresses these real life issues. Tie university funding to helping to address real life needs that impact people in our state.

5. Arrange to have regular meetings between leaders of the public and private (profit and non-profit) health plans around ways we can work together to meet the needs of society’s most vulnerable people. Fostering better relationships between the two entities can only benefit consumers.

Suggestions “Thinking Outside the Box”

6. Study how the public policy to close state hospitals en masse in the 90s contributed to today’s problems (jails and prisons being the de facto psychiatric hospitals). What are the “lessons learned” that policy makers should take into consideration in their march to turn \$2.6 billion dollars over to the private/profit-making Health Plans?

7. We should radically change where and how traditional mental health services are provided. Gone are the days of the traditional fifty minute therapeutic hour in an office. We need to adapt mobile technology to meet the behavioral healthcare needs of our community going forward.

8. Stop paying lip service and truly engage consumers and behavioral healthcare advocates on an equal plane. This means assuring the consumer mantra, “nothing about us without us”, is not simply a slogan but a reality. Look to fund advocacy organizations at an adequate level to enable them to hold the system accountable.

(continued on next page)

New Oakland locations to serve you

Center Line Center
26522 Van Dyke Avenue
Center Line, MI 48015
586-759-4400

Clarkston Center
6549 Town Center Drive
Clarkston, MI 48346
248-620-6400

Clinton Township Center
42669 Garfield Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038
586-412-5321

Farmington Hills Center
32961 Middlebelt Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
248-855-1540

Flint Center
2401 South Linden, Suite A
Flint, MI 48532
810-957-4310

Livonia Center
31500 Schoolcraft Road
Livonia, MI 48150
734-422-9340

Okemos Center
2300 Jolly Oak Road
Okemos, MI 48864
517-679-2050

Southgate Center
13305 Reeck Road
Southgate, MI 48195
734-225-2090

Warren Center
8150 E. 13 Mile Road
Warren, MI 48093
586-825-9700

FACE to FACE Crisis Services
877-800-1650
(24 hours/day)