Durham Recovery Welcomes SAMHSA's New Directions

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SAMHSA will take a new approach to serious mental illness, shifting efforts in the agency to focus on major issues affecting this population. These efforts will include providing evidence-based psychiatric treatment and supporting a collaborative care model with community resource providers, including peers and organizations that provide recovery supports. SAMHSA will receive support for these efforts through the Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee, which is a public-federal partnership that aims to improve services to adults living with serious mental illness and to young people living with serious emotional disturbance and their families.

SAMHSA is an acronym for the US government agency, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation.

SAMHSA will continue and expand programs designed to address mental illness in America, including suicide, which continues to take tens of thousands of lives every year. SAMHSA will help expand suicide

prevention programs that also fund organizations that implement Zero Suicide, a program to train health care providers on how to ask about suicidality and make safety plans to get people to the necessary care. SAMHSA continues its mental health court programs and has new programs offering diversion prior to arrest. AOT is now funded in several sites, but more must be done to educate providers and the public about the value of AOT programs with enriched psychosocial services. Further, a new program of assertive community treatment will be funded in 2018. One of the major successes clinics have had recently at SAMHSA was the appropriation of additional funding for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, which require integrated care for mental and substance use disorders as well as for general health care. These programs, already established as demonstration programs in eight states, will be expanded to community organizations that will be able to provide the required integrated services and crisis services; peer and family supports; and psychiatric evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation services. This is a very exciting development because integrated care is the model that should be pursued for American health care in general but is particularly important for those with disabling mental disorders.

These are important times for establishing new models that will use evidence-based care to manage the needs of Americans experiencing serious mental illness and substance use disorders. SAMHSA will play a key role in establishing these new care approaches and in preparing the behavioral health workforce. ?It is personally gratifying for me to have the opportunity to serve our people in this new role. I look forward to both the challenges and the metamorphosis of our healthcare system for those living with mental and substance use disorders in the United States,? a representative said.

SAMHSA is working to completely restructure technical assistance and training. They are building a national system of resources that will be available at no cost, or at most low cost (e.g., payment for continuing education credits, small fees for training taking place at venues that must be rented), to any individual or program wishing to take advantage of them. SAMHSA grantees will now have funding built into their grants that permits them to identify training or technical assistance needed and to purchase that training should it not be available through the national network. Funds not used for training can be used to provide more services as described in the grant proposal.

The clinical support system will also offer a course on assisted outpatient treatment (AOT). This system is replicated in the opioids area with the well-established Providers? Clinical Support System for Medication-Assisted Treatment, which provides the majority of the Drug Abuse Treatment Act (DATA) waiver trainings, ongoing continuing education, and mentoring for practitioners.

The largest change in technical assistance is the establishment of new technology transfer centers in prevention of substance use disorders and serious mental illness. SAMHSA has issued funding announcements encouraging applications for these centers, which will be placed in each of the 10 DHHS regions, thus providing national coverage, as well as for centers focused on tribal needs and Hispanic/Latino

needs. These newly established centers will work collaboratively in their regions, with each other, and with the existing addiction technology transfer centers to ensure that training needs of health care providers are being met. With these centers, all health care providers and organizations can participate in educational programs that will improve their abilities to serve the mental health and substance use disorder needs of Americans, and in doing so, will serve the nation rather than only select grantees.

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