Policy Discussion:
Behavioral Health Professions Education — Challenges of Relevance, Effectiveness, and Accessibility

Tuesday, May 22, 2007 – 8.30 - 9.45 am
Continental Divide
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While the health care environment changes constantly, education programs in the health professions evolve slowly. Training programs struggle to keep pace with the shifting realities of practice, as these are repeatedly transformed by forces such as the growing evidence base, shifts in health care financing, the changing demographics of patient populations, and demands by consumers to play a much larger role in decisions about their treatment.

In collaboration with the WICHE Mental Health Program, The Annapolis Coalition has just completed a two-year, national strategic-planning process on behavioral health workforce development. The co-leaders of this initiative will review the outcomes of this process, highlighting the relevance of the findings and recommendations for all health professions education.

Potential strategies to be discussed include competency identification and assessment; curriculum revision; evidence-based teaching strategies; the use of technology; and interventions in clinical settings to support the use of newly learned skills. Special attention will be given to the concept of a workforce collaborative that links educational systems with clinical care systems in an effort to ensure an adequate pipeline of relevantly trained health care professionals.

Discussion leader: Dennis Mohatt, WICHE Mental Health Program director

Biographical Information on the Speakers and Discussion Leader

Michael Hoge is professor of psychology in the Psychiatry Department of the Yale University School of Medicine and director of Yale Behavioral Health, with responsibilities for managing a broad array of community-based services for adolescents and adults. He is the immediate past chair of the Behavioral Health Professional and Technical Advisory Committee of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and recipient of the 2001 Moffic Award for Ethical Practice in Public Sector Managed Behavioral Healthcare. Hoge is an expert on workforce development in behavioral health. He is a founding member of The Annapolis Coalition on the Behavioral Health Workforce, which initiated a national, interprofessional effort to improve the recruitment, retention and training of individuals who provide prevention and treatment services for persons with mental illnesses and substance-use disorders. He is also the senior editor of the recently released National Action Plan on Behavioral Health Workforce Development, which was commissioned by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Hoge has consulted on behavioral health workforce issues for the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, the Institute of Medicine Committee on Crossing the Quality
Chasm: Adaptation to Mental Health and Addictive Disorders, and multiple states and organizations. Most recently, he was appointed to serve on the Institute of Medicine Committee on Psychosocial Services to Cancer Patients and their Families, which will be identifying strategies to improve the skills of the behavioral health and general medical workforce in caring for persons with serious and prolonged illnesses. Hoge is the senior editor of three special journal issues on workforce development in behavioral health and author of multiple peer-reviewed articles on this topic.

Dennis F. Mohatt became the WICHE Mental Health Program director after serving as deputy director for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services from 1996-1999 and as the state’s commissioner of mental health. He also administered Nebraska’s public managed care initiatives in Medicaid for both physical and mental health. Mohatt has more than 15 years of experience in community mental health, including executive leadership of a very successful community mental health center in Michigan’s rural Upper Peninsula, which integrated community mental health services with primary care in two rural family medicine practices. Mohatt received his undergraduate training at the University of Oregon, and a National Institute of Mental Health training fellowship in rural mental health while at Mansfield University in Pennsylvania, where he received his M.A. in rural community-clinical psychology.

John Morris is director of the human services practice of the Technical Assistance Collaborative and also director of health policy studies at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, where he is professor of clinical neuropsychiatry and behavioral sciences. He is executive director of The Annapolis Coalition on the Behavioral Health Workforce, which has recently released a national action plan for workforce development at the request of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Morris is a past president of the American College of Mental Health Administration (ACMHA) and of the ACMHA Foundation, and in 2006 he was awarded the Saul Feldman Lifetime Achievement Award, ACMHA’s most prestigious honor. He is currently chair-elect of the board of directors of Mental Health America (formerly the National Mental Health Association) and a member of the Advisory Council to the Georgetown University National Technical Assistance Center for Children’s Mental Health and the Texas Health Institute’s Advisory Council on Mental Health Transformation. He is the immediate past-president of the SC Action Council for Cross Cultural Mental Health and Human Services and is a member of the Mental Health Policy Research Network of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. He is a former state director of mental health in South Carolina, with more than 35 years in the behavioral health field as a clinician, administrator, researcher, and educator. He serves as senior policy consultant with Comprehensive Neuroscience (CNS) and as the editor of Prescriptions for Progress. He is a member of the editorial board of Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research and is a reviewer for Psychiatric Services and PsyCRITIQUES.