

Welcome!

This is the first edition of our new quarterly newsletter. This publication is part of our longstanding commitment to education and information sharing in relation to the needs that we address and the services and programs that we offer. Future issues will focus on such topics as behavioral health emergencies, crisis intervention, developments in community psychiatry, and forensic behavioral health services. We would be happy to receive suggestions for specific subjects.

About Us

We are a 63 bed nonprofit emergency psychiatric hospital founded in 1974. We are a State-licensed mental health/mental retardation and drug and alcohol treatment facility. We are accredited by the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO). We provide a crisis hotline, telephone support, emergency evaluation, inpatient care, aftercare planning, outreach, mobile crisis intervention, a crisis residential program, and ambulance service. We offer educational programs for providers, consumers, family members, police and correctional officers.

MCES Recognized by American Psychiatric Association

Montgomery County Emergency Service, Inc. (MCES), was recognized by the American Psychiatric Association for its innovative efforts to help mentally ill individuals involved with the criminal justice system.

MCES' Community Outreach Program, operated by its Criminal Justice-Community Outreach Department, received a "Significant Achievement Award" on October 25, 2000. It was presented at the American Psychiatric Association's Institute on Psychiatric Services in Philadelphia.

The award was accepted by Rocio Nell, MD, MCES' Chief Executive Officer and

Medical Director, and Donald F. Kline, MS, Criminal Justice Director. MCES was one of five mental health programs selected for recognition from among 64 applicants from throughout the country.

The American Psychiatric Association presents the awards each year to acknowledge programs that have made an outstanding contribution to the mental health field.

The following article appeared in the November issue *Psychiatric Services*, the journal of the American Psychiatric Association.

A Model Prison Diversion Program: The MCES Criminal Justice-Community Outreach Program

The mentally ill population has a disproportionate involvement with the criminal justice system, with high rates of booking and incarceration, often for minor offenses resulting from behavior linked with treatable mental and substance use disorders. The Criminal Justice-Community Outreach Department of the Montgomery County Emergency Service was conceived in the 1970s to mitigate this situation by providing a team approach to identifying mentally ill individuals who have come into contact with the criminal justice system, stabilizing them in the least restrictive setting, and returning them to the community as soon as possible.

Montgomery County Emergency Service, incorporated in 1974 as a not-for-profit, freestanding psychiatric hospital, has 63 beds and offers a broad array of emergency psychiatric and drug and alcohol detoxification services. Approximately 90 percent of the hospital's patients live in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Available services include a crisis hotline, a walk-in service, emergency evaluation, inpatient care, aftercare planning, community outreach, mobile crisis intervention services, crisis residential services, criminal justice services, consultation, and education.

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- **Mission: MCES provides round-the-clock intensive and comprehensive psychiatric services to all in need in our community while maintaining and advocating for their rights and individual dignity.**
- **Vision: The staff, board, and volunteers of MCES pledge to promote mental health in our community and to provide excellence in intervention in a compassionate environment through innovation, teamwork, and a commitment to assist our clients to improve the quality of their lives.**

The emergency service is also the designated provider for Montgomery County of services involving initial involuntary commitment and treatment, including delegate and mental health court services.

The Criminal Justice–Community Outreach Department has situated its program within the criminal justice system to provide an alternative to incarceration and to ensure that mentally ill offenders receive treatment. The program has been highly effective, reducing inpatient hospital days by nearly 20 percent and incarceration days by nearly 90 percent, and it has achieved national recognition as a model prison diversion program.

The program has evolved over the years, and today, operating with nine essential staff members, the department maintains six components: a criminal justice liaison, a forensic liaison, a mobile crisis intervention service, short-term intensive case management, long-term forensic intensive case management, and a forensic intensive case management diversion team.

The criminal justice component of the department provides liaison services for law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system. Other services include community outreach, assessment, follow-up, and advocacy for persons with mental illness who become entangled in the legal system. Education and training are provided to staff of law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. The current director of the criminal justice component, Donald F. Kline, teaches at the police academy and assists Montgomery County crisis emergency response teams. The director also provides forensic diversion services—diverting consumers from the legal system and ensuring that they receive appropriate services—and

troubleshoots systems problems between mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services and the criminal justice system.

The forensic liaison provides community outreach, assessment, and follow-up and tracks consumers who have become involved in the legal system. This office provides liaison services between the Montgomery County Correctional Facility and the emergency service and conducts on-site evaluations at the correctional facility, on a 24-hour basis, to identify consumers and ensure that they receive the appropriate care and treatment. The liaison officer also serves as consumer advocate, provides forensic diversion services for consumers involved in the legal system, tracks consumers with legal charges at the emergency service, and provides liaison services with the regional forensic unit.

The mobile crisis intervention service provides 24-hour services for persons with mental illness who are in crisis, at risk of hospitalization, and in need of treatment. The main focus of the mobile crisis intervention team is community-based intervention to promote the consumer's stability and avoid hospitalization. The service provides countywide community outreach and crisis intervention services to all persons in Montgomery County who need it. The mobile crisis intervention service also is licensed for mobile medical services in which a registered nurse provides medication and medical care. Other services provided include consumer advocacy, follow-up, education, and referral services.

The mobile crisis intervention service has an established track record of diverting individuals from the hospital setting. In the past five years the mobile crisis intervention team has provided services

to 2,211 individuals and hospitalized only 110, or 5 percent. In the 12-month period from December 1998 to November 1999, the team made 1,961 consumer contacts and 508 community outreach contacts.

The short-term intensive case management program provides therapeutic and case management services and intensive follow-up for three to six months for persons with mental illness who are not covered by the traditional mental health system. Services include therapeutic and intensive case management services, consumer advocacy, and education. The goal of the program is to promote community-based treatment, ensure consumers' stability, and reduce recidivism. The program promotes community-based treatment to ensure that consumers connect with the traditional system.

The long-term forensic intensive case management program provides therapeutic and case management services to consumers who come into contact or conflict with the legal system. The program provides consumer advocacy and education, promotes community-based treatment, and ensures that consumers connect with the traditional system—mental health, mental retardation, or substance abuse services. Staff members maintain a close working relationship with staff from law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system.

The forensic intensive case management diversion team is part of a federally funded study that includes nine sites across the country. The team focuses on the consumer's stability to improve clinical outcomes—symptoms, functioning, compliance, and so on—and to reduce prison recidivism and length of inpatient hospitalization. The team functions as a traditional intensive case management

service and provides intensive therapeutic interactions, including medication maintenance and monitoring by a registered nurse. It also focuses on community-based treatment and integration of services, improvement in the quality of life of the consumers served, and reduction of substance abuse or dependency. Other services include legal advocacy and education.

The Criminal Justice–Community Outreach Department can manage 75 high-risk, problematic, severely mentally ill consumers who have co-occurring disorders on the short-term and forensic intensive case management caseloads. In the 12-month period from December 1998 to November 1999, the intensive case management program made 2,449 consumer contacts, with a hospitalization rate of only 1.3 per month.

The emergency service chief executive officer and medical director, Rocio Nell, M.D., works directly with department staff with inmates with mental illness at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. Approximately 50 inmates are evaluated each week, and the department provides services for these consumers via the criminal justice, forensic, mobile crisis intervention, and intensive case management programs. The department provides evaluation, follow-up, and referral services to ensure that inmates receive the appropriate services. With funding by a recent grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, a forensic social worker is housed in the correctional facility to identify, evaluate, and divert severely mentally ill persons from incarceration back to the traditional mental health community.

A multidisciplinary forensic task force works in collaboration with law enforce-



The US Dept. of Justice estimated that in mid-1998 a total of 283,800 inmates in US jails and prisons had a mental illness. Of these, over one third, 96,700, were in local facilities.

Source: Mental Health and Treatment of Inmates and Probationers

Bureau of Justice Statistics, July 1999

These estimates reflect the closing/down-sizing of state hospitals, the lack of resources for the mentally ill who come in contact with law enforcement, and limited training of police in identifying the mentally ill.

MCES has focused on these issues for more than a quarter century.



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Montgomery County Emergency Service, Inc. is registered with the PA Bureau of Charitable Organizations. A copy of our official registration and financial statement may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll-free, within PA, 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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ment and criminal justice agencies, mental health and substance abuse services, the Veterans Administration, the Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and the correctional facility. The task force identifies problems related to persons with mental illness who become involved with the criminal justice system and works to solve them. The task force has helped standardize mental health court order for common pleas court and has helped develop a specialized probation officer to deal directly with mentally ill offenders.

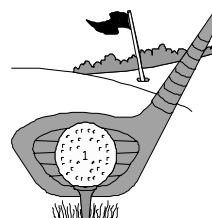
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PLEASE MARK THE DATE

June 26, 2001



The 8th
MCES

CHALLENGE

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All proceeds benefit our patient programs and activities.