

**The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**

*John G. Rowland*  
 Governor

**A Healthcare Service Agency**

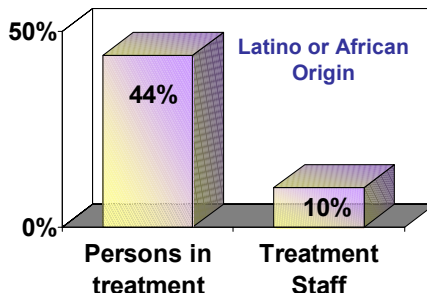
*Thomas A. Kirk Jr., Ph.D.*  
 Commissioner

***Cultural Competence and Career Development***

A person's unique social, cultural, and linguistic life experience often influences whether he or she seeks treatment for mental illness or substance use disorders, how the person experiences such treatment, and whether or not the treatment is effective. Behavioral health staff must have the **cultural competence necessary to help persons from different backgrounds** such as Latino, African Origin, Asian and Native American who often live in Connecticut's large cities, and who may be involved with the criminal justice system as well.

**The Project for Addictions and Cultural Competency Training (PACCT)** is the most recent of DMHAS' strategic activities to "provide culturally competent...services to persons whose needs are particularly challenging or not being well met..." and to also address important workforce issues. The program is supported for four years with funds from the Byrne Memorial Grant Program which is administered by the state Office of Policy and Management. **PACCT is a comprehensive recruitment, training, mentoring, and internship program**; it aims to increase the numbers of Latino, African Origin, and Asian behavioral health professionals treating persons in New Haven, Hartford and Bridgeport by providing specialized career development opportunities.

*44% of all persons in DMHAS  
 substance abuse services compared  
 to 10% of all certified treatment staff  
 are Latino or African Origin.*



**PACCT Career Goal:  
 Licensed Alcohol  
 and Drug Counselor  
 (LADC)**

The **Recruitment** process is an important first step. Providers must have clear and concise standards in recruiting PACCT candidates. The recruit/trainee must be committed to a rigorous career preparation path leading to certification as a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

**Training** includes 64 hours of classroom work. The Connecticut Institute of Cultural Literacy and Wellness will conduct the training in Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. The PACCT trainee must complete a series of written, verbal and demonstrative tests in order to complete the training phase of the program.

**Mentoring** - In the third week of training each trainee will be assigned a mentor from a group of culturally sensitive behavioral health professionals. The close relationship between the mentor and trainee will help to guide the trainee throughout classroom work, internship experience, and hopefully beyond.

**Internship** is an intensive work experience and course of study in a culturally diverse setting during which time the trainee will learn first-hand the cultural and procedural dynamics of behavioral health service delivery. The internship consists of twenty hours per week for twenty weeks.

**PACCT will prepare seventy culturally diverse and qualified behavioral health professionals to enter Connecticut's work force each year.**