



The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services A Healthcare Service Agency

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

Cultural Competence

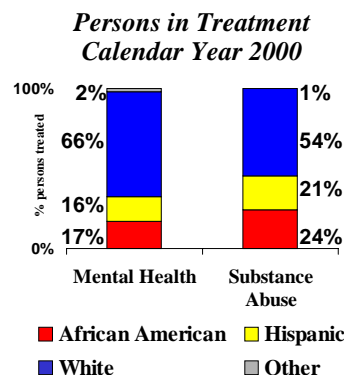
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Deputy Commissioner

A person's cultural background may influence whether or not one seeks treatment, how one experiences treatment, and whether or not the treatment is effective. One of DMHAS' four major strategic goals is to **"provide culturally competent and integrated mental health and substance abuse services to persons whose needs are particularly challenging or not being well met..."** Cultural competence has clinical and economic benefits; it improves access to care and it promotes better outcomes.

Cultural competence includes behaviors, attitudes and policies that enable a person or organization to work effectively with people of varying cultural backgrounds. DMHAS' Office of Multicultural Affairs and its Multicultural Advisory Committee support efforts to promote quality behavioral healthcare services that are culturally competent. These efforts include training, special program initiatives, and monitoring of provider cultural competence plans.

Training - DMHAS supports intensive multicultural training for program staff in policies and practices that improve behavioral healthcare outcomes. Specially designed training institutes for managers and supervisors are provided several times a year. Another specialized training institute is provided for consumers and persons in recovery. 280 people to date have completed intensive multicultural training programs.

Cultural Competence Plans – Programs funded or operated by DMHAS prepare annual plans to strengthen the cultural competence of their client services. Plans focus on clients' **access** to treatment, as well as **engagement** and **retention** in treatment. DMHAS has developed a set of multicultural clinical best practices which include specific outcomes and performance indicators. This year, 128 providers implemented cultural competence plans.



New Specialty Programs – DMHAS supports many initiatives which focus on particular groups of persons. A sampling of these projects include:

- Hartford Engagement and Recovery Support Program for African American and Latina women
- Mental Health Outpatient and Case Management for Southeast Asian men and women.
- Latino Outreach Program
- African Origin Men in Recovery
- Latino Family Connection Program
- Latino HIV Integration Project
- Exemplary Practices for Latinos with Dual Diagnosis
- African Family Connection Program

"...we will emphasize services that are culturally competent and that better meet the needs of persons who are not well served by the current system." Commissioner Kirk's testimony to Legislature's Appropriations Committee, February 16, 2001