



Dear DBHIDS Team,

The City of Philadelphia continues efforts toward identifying and selecting the permanent DBHIDS Commissioner. At this time, I'm honored to continue to serve as the department's Acting Commissioner and will provide timely updates to you on the status of the search. Over the next several weeks, I will be out on intermittent family medical leave. As my time in the office is limited, I will be closely working with Deputy Commissioner [Roland Lamb](#), CBH CEO [Joan Erney](#), Director of Behavioral Health [Sandy Vasko](#), and other Executive Team members to ensure that daily operations of each unit remain smooth and efficient. As always, our administrative staff and Executive Team members are available for ongoing support.



Through these administrative transitions, DBHIDS remains strong and continues to thrive. Our stability is reliant on the dedication and commitment from our experienced staff, provider network, numerous community partners and the individuals we serve. During this period, if you have questions or requests reserved for the Commissioner, please contact [Nicole Connell](#), Special Advisor to the Commissioner, and/or [Chantha Sin](#), Executive Assistant. They will assist with directing staff to the appropriate internal resources during my time away from the office. Updates and messages will be delivered regularly to provide clarity and ensure our system remains well-informed. Consistent communication and awareness are crucial during transitions; therefore, please pay close attention to information distributed from the Executive Team and Communications Department. Do not hesitate to ask questions if you need additional information. DBHIDS has a remarkable team and we are here to support one another as well as the broader community.

#### **Updates on DBHIDS initiatives & unique programs**

- **DBHIDS' Behavioral Health and Justice Related Services Division (BHJRS)**

On January 27, 2016, the American Civil Liberties Union ([ACLU](#)) of Pennsylvania

entered into a settlement agreement with Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services (DHS) stemming from a class action law suit filed in response to delays in treatment for hundreds of defendants with severe mental illness. Under the settlement agreement, Pennsylvania agreed to increase the capacity of the commonwealth's behavioral health system by adding new treatment slots. In support of the commonwealth's efforts, DBHIDS' BHJRS and CBH have worked collaboratively to create new community-based forensic mental health resources in Philadelphia. Since January 27, 2016, twenty (20) Extended Acute Care (EAC) beds have been created at North Philadelphia Health System (NPHS); and a combined total of 26 Residential Treatment Facility for Adult (RTFA) beds have been created at Gaudenzia (14 beds) and New Vitae (12 beds). Additionally, BHJRS has worked collaboratively with Norristown State Hospital (NSH) and the Philadelphia court system along with justice partners to step-down Philadelphians from NSH into community placements when appropriate. As of March 6, 2017, 53 Philadelphians have been discharged from NSH and placed into community-based treatment facilities. We look forward to the continued success of BHJRS and CBH's collaboration.

- **We are building the DBHIDS Learning Hub!** This learning management system will include:
  - e-learning courses
  - online registration for in-person training events
  - content libraries
  - discussion forums

The Learning Hub will be open to all DBHIDS staff (including City, CBH and PMHCC employees) as well as 15,000 behavioral health staff in the provider network. Provider organizations are encouraged to visit the [DBHIDS](#) website to learn more and sign up to participate in the Learning Hub. DBHIDS staff can also use the Learning Hub to disseminate information directly to learners in the provider community (i.e. The Targeted Case Management Unit will be able to host a discussion forum for all Case Managers in the System and EPIC will share e-learning modules and resource documents with the provider network). During the first phase of implementation, which will last through May, we will generate accounts for 900 DBHIDS employees and more than 2,000 behavioral health staff from 21 provider agencies. Contact us at [Learning.Hub@Phila.gov](mailto:Learning.Hub@Phila.gov). We will continue to send out updates as we build your accounts.

#### **Featured Updates**

- March is nationally recognized as Problem Gambling Awareness Month. If you or a loved one are experiencing problems with gambling and need help, call **1-800-GAMBLER** for free, confidential and anonymous support. Contact [Tamika Harvey](#)

for more information on DBHIDS' Gambling Initiative.

- March is National Intellectual disAbilities Month. Please find information about remaining activities here
  - 3/22 Lunchtime at the Movies showing "*Born This Way*" at 701 Market St
  - [3/31 Brighter Futures Awards](#)
- [Faith and Spiritual Affairs](#) (FSA) and The Mayor's Drug and Alcohol Executive Commission is pleased to sponsor the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Faith and Spiritual Affairs Conference "*Have Faith in Recovery: Treatment and Recovery.*" [Register Now](#)

David T. Jones  
Acting Commissioner  
Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services

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Take a behavioral health screening, register for Mental Health First Aid training or invite DBHIDS to a community event at [HealthyMindsPhilly.org](http://HealthyMindsPhilly.org)

For DBHIDS resources visit [bit.ly/DBHIDSResources](http://bit.ly/DBHIDSResources)

Did you know? [DBHIDS Team Highlights Archive](#)