



Dear Colleagues,

Greetings! I'm happy to reach out to you once again and share some updates on the work of our department. With a system as large as ours, it's easy to see or hear only about matters pertaining to your area of work, so I make it a priority to share what's happening within our department and how I represent the department locally and abroad. For instance, on Wednesday, May 16, I participated in the Your Big Idea Gala, an event where the University of Pennsylvania's Your Big Idea Challenge recipients were acknowledged. Launched this past February, the Your Big Idea Challenge was designed to help therapists in community mental health organizations throughout Philadelphia better understand their experiences with using evidence-based practices. It was my honor to lead the Your Big Idea Challenge Committee in identifying six winning ideas that were shared with those in attendance. This work will help to develop and share strategies to increase use of evidence-based practices in the work of mental health professionals and offer opportunities for healthier outcomes for those in need of support and treatment. [Learn more about the Your Big Idea Challenge now.](#)

Please take a moment to review some other updates regarding our system:

Bringing Attention to Mental Health Awareness Work

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month and many units within our

organization worked very hard this month to host events and provide services to the public to raise mental health awareness and eliminate the stigma often associated with mental illness. On May 9 and 10, true collaboration was exhibited when DBHIDS staff from throughout the department came together to host two special programs. On May 9, Caring for Every Child's Mental Health, a panel discussion and resource fair, was held at the School District of Philadelphia headquarters. Our staff members who participated on the panel represented us well as nearly 100 community members attended, including Philadelphia Mayor James Kenney. The following day, we held an after-school rally at Thomas Paine Plaza, where dozens of youth enjoyed a DJ, spoken word artists and the opportunity to win prizes while learning how to take care of their own mental health as well as the mental health of their peers. We were also fortunate to [#strikeoutstigma](#) at Citizens Bank Park earlier this week as the Philadelphia Phillies hosted Mental Health Awareness Night. Members of our Health Promotion Team provided baseball fans with information and resources on mental health, striving to help adults and youth learn how to be mentally well. And next week, Health Promotion will host a presentation featuring Jordan Burnham, a young man from Montgomery County whose battle with depression led him to attempt suicide in 2007. Fortunately, Jordan received support to deal with his mental struggles and now speaks to crowds large and small, encouraging people to seek help before it's too late. [Register now](#) for this event taking place **Wednesday, May 30**. [You can also watch a moving video of an ESPN feature of Jordan's story.](#)

I am so proud of the exemplary work our staff continues to produce. The topics we deal with are never easy and your passion and commitment to help others is truly admirable. I cannot thank you enough for all that you do to educate, strengthen and serve individuals and communities so that all Philadelphians can thrive.

Building the Framework: Strategically Working to Strengthen Our Impact

A few weeks ago, I shared our plans to develop a new strategic framework that will

serve as a blueprint or map and guide our work during this period of evolution. We have made this a priority since urgent needs in our city are calling on us all to focus on strengthening our overall impact. The planning process that will provide the direction and goals that will help us achieve that impact is now underway.

As I explained in my earlier message, we are working now to prioritize our work and focus even more intently on our core mission. While we will remain committed to the programs and services we currently provide, we will also be implementing population health elements that will have a broader reach and help all Philadelphians thrive.

Our internal Strategic Framework Planning Team has been working hard over the last several weeks to develop a process that will build a framework document organized in five planning areas. That process includes listening to your input and feedback. Soon you will receive an invitation asking you to be part of internal staff focus groups to be held in early June where you'll be asked for your input on the issues and needs that are most important to our stakeholders right now.

I want to reiterate what I stated early -- this process is not about one person or one group setting a vision. It really is an inclusive process that works when every team member participates and sees that they are a valuable and much-needed resource in us achieving greater impact and, ultimately, working to ensure that DBHIDS is more effective and efficient.

Thank you for your support and participation as we move forward with this planning process.

Making a Difference through Addressing Addiction and Recovery

In two weeks – on Wednesday, June 6, the 21st Annual Making a Difference Dinner will take place. This event, hosted by the Mayor's Commission on Addiction and

Recovery, recognizes individuals and organizations dedicated to offering support and hope to those impacted by substance misuse and addiction. This event aims to raise awareness and highlight the importance of eliminating stigma associated with addiction and encourage individuals to utilize resources designed to lead them on the road to recovery. I'd like to commend the Commission, led by Chairman James Baker, for giving their time to help those in greatest need. I'd also like to congratulate this year's awardees: **Treatment Provider: Akia Feggans** (Clinical Program Director, Philadelphia Fight TREE Intensive Outpatient Program); **Community Organization: Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church's Deliverance Ministry; Community Person: Thomas J. Nestel III** (Chief, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority – SEPTA - Transit Police); **Service Innovation: Curtis Watkins** (Chief of Adult Services, Defenders Association of Philadelphia) and **Special Recognition: Elvis Rosado** (Education and Community Outreach Coordinator, Prevention Point Philadelphia). [To get more information about this event or purchase a ticket, please click here.](#)

Welcome, Michele Henderson!



Please join me in welcoming Michele Henderson, Executive Assistant to Dr. Jill Bowen, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance. Michele comes to DBHIDS with more than 25 years of progressive experience serving the people of Philadelphia, 21 of those years with the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA), where she served in various roles within the Resident Development Department.

Her last role with PHA was as the Workforce Development Coordinator overseeing operations for pre-apprenticeship opportunities offered through PHA and the local labor unions. She collaborated with community partners and stakeholders to establish program requirements and budget guidelines, and supported the Executive Vice President of Community Operations to ensure adherence with federal compliance standards.

Michele is passionate about public service and improving the quality of life for those who call Philadelphia home. She holds a B.S in Psychology from Pennsylvania State University and volunteers for a variety of initiatives with community-based organizations. She is the mother to three wonderful children and enjoys spending time with her family and the seniors in her community. Michele can be reached at 215-685-4732 or Michele.Henderson@phila.gov. Michele is located at 1101 Market street, 7th Floor in the Commissioner's Suite. Please be sure to stop by and say hello to her.

As always, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve with such a dynamic group of talented and caring individuals. May you have a safe and enjoyable Memorial Day weekend!

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

City of Philadelphia



DEPARTMENT of BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
and INTELLECTUAL disABILITY SERVICES

Need help planning and promoting an event/awareness day? [Start Here](#).
To request a Recovery Advocate's support or assistance [click here](#).

Take a behavioral health screening, register for Mental Health First Aid training or invite DBHIDS to a community event at HealthyMindsPhilly.org.

For DBHIDS resources visit bit.ly/DBHIDSResources.