



NEW YORK STATE  
OFFICE OF ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES  
*Addiction Services for Prevention, Treatment, Recovery*  
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor      Arlene González-Sánchez, Commissioner

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#### OASAS Mission:

*To improve the lives of New Yorkers by leading a premier system of Prevention, Treatment, Recovery.*

## OASAS Communicator

*Dear Friends,*

*I would like to congratulate Michael Botticelli, State Director of Massachusetts, and Secretary of the NASADAD Board of Directors, as President Obama [announced](#) last week his intention to nominate him to serve as the next Deputy Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy ([ONDCP](#)).*

*Michael is a colleague and friend that I have had the pleasure to work with on many occasions. This past October, I presented with him at the 13th Annual Conference of the Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers, Inc. (ASAP) in New York City. I look forward to working with Michael in his new role as the national leader in the field.*



*This edition of the newsletter also includes an update about our meeting with Dennis Romero, the newly appointed Region II Administrator for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); a provider visit to the Fortune Society; the introduction of the new "OASAS Medical Corner"; and more. I look forward to continuing to update you on what is happening at OASAS.*

*Arlene González-Sánchez  
OASAS Commissioner*

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## SAMHSA Regional Administrator Visits OASAS



On Tuesday, January 24, 2012, Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez and the Executive Staff met with [Dennis O. Romero](#) the newly appointed Region II Administrator for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Prior to being appointed to this position, he served as the Acting Director of SAMHSA's Office of Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse. Mr. Romero brings a wealth of experience, both policy and clinical, to this position.

During the meeting current OASAS initiatives, including the OASAS

Dashboard, the Behavioral Health Organizations (BHO), Scorecards and the Gold Standard initiative, were presented to Mr. Romero. The meeting included a discussion of the federal and state shared vision for the integration of SUD services with the addiction field being a lead partner in the effort. Mr. Romero shared the opportunities for SAMHSA to assist OASAS in the implementation of these initiatives through technical assistance support. He also shared the vision of SAMHSA's eight strategic initiatives and the field's role under the Affordable Care Act.

The Regional Administrators will help SAMHSA reach out to and provide information for States, Territories, Tribes, providers, communities and other stakeholders, whether about funding opportunities, federal policies affecting them, or disaster preparedness and response. They will also make it easier for SAMHSA to collaborate with other HHS colleagues in the regional offices and be better informed about behavioral health needs throughout the country. To learn more about SAMHSA and the eight strategic initiatives, visit [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

## Fortune Society Program Visit

The Fortune Society welcomed OASAS Chief Operating Officer, Ramon Rodriguez to three of their programs on Thursday, January 26, for a tour and an opportunity to meet and greet the staff and many of the residents. Executive director JoAnne Page; senior vice president Damien Cabezas and founder David Rothenberg accompanied Mr. Rodriguez on the tour. The [Fortune Society](#) helps formerly incarcerated people navigate the challenging process of reentry. The first stop on the tour was to their central office operations in Long Island City where they offer a mental health program, education and employment services. Participants can

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Visit the [OASAS Contact Us Webpage](#):  
for links and phone  
numbers to OASAS program  
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access these services under one roof, which has proven to improve and increase their successful outcomes.

Next on the tour, was a stop at the Fortune Society's residential facility on the upper west side of Manhattan known as The Castle. This very modern facility can house up to 67 residents. The residents live as a family in a very friendly and supportive environment and they have access to a variety of activities aimed at helping them transition to mainstream living. Mr. Rodriguez was able to attend a weekly group meeting with the residents where he heard first-hand some of their stories, daily challenges and riveting emotions as they discussed their issues and received feedback from members of the administration and other residents.

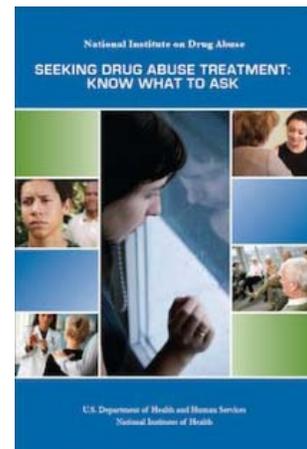
Last on the tour was a stop at The Fortune Society's apartments which are adjacent to The Castle. This facility provides long-term housing solutions for homeless people with histories of incarceration as well as low-income individuals and families from the five boroughs. This facility is a "Green" project and has received a variety of awards and recognitions. It is supported in part through the New York/New York III Program.

Mr. Rodriguez said, "This visit with The Fortune Society allowed me to witness a special kind of dedication offered by these converted professionals. I say converted, because most of the administrative staff is formerly incarcerated persons who turned their life around and are now 'paying it forward'. The Fortune Society extends their services to individuals that other programs will not even consider. Their success is a wonderful example of best practices and use of public funds to help those in need. I look forward to another visit."

### **NIDA Releases New Guidance Publication to Help Individuals Seeking Treatment**

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has developed a [new publication](#) entitled, "*Seeking Drug Abuse Treatment: Know What to Ask*," that is designed to assist individuals in need of treatment, as well as their family and friends, in identifying the right treatment program for addiction treatment services.

NIDA states that "the goal of treatment is to stop drug use and allow people to lead active lives in the family, workplace and community. One continual challenge however is keeping patients in treatment long enough for them to achieve this goal. That is why finding the right treatment



for a person's specific needs is critical.

Drug abuse treatment is not "one size fits all". The guide recommends asking 5 questions when inquiring about a treatment program's services:

- 1) Does the program use treatments backed by scientific evidence?
- 2) Does the program tailor treatment to the needs of each patient?
- 3) Does the program adapt treatment as the patient's needs change?
- 4) Is the duration of treatment sufficient?
- 5) How do 12-step or similar recovery programs fit into the program's treatment?

This brief Guide offers examples of evidence-based treatments and explains why it's important to ask about them as well as the subsequent questions. It is available for free and may be accessed at [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/seeking-drug-abuse-treatment](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/seeking-drug-abuse-treatment). The Guide will make a nice addition to provider and recovery centers waiting rooms and will help promote individuals in obtaining the right fit for their addiction treatment needs.

Any provider that would like assistance in learning more about evidence-based practices may contact the following OASAS staff for more information: Pat Lincourt, [PatLincourt@oasas.ny.gov](mailto:PatLincourt@oasas.ny.gov) or Susan Brandau, [SusanBrandau@oasas.ny.gov](mailto:SusanBrandau@oasas.ny.gov).

### **Friends of Recovery - NY is Sponsoring Advocacy Day on February 7**



Friends of Recovery - NY is sponsoring an [Advocacy Day](#) on Tuesday February 7. The day will begin at the Emmanuel Baptist Church at 10am where we will hear from various speakers about

their recovery perspectives and lunch will be provided. After lunch we will visit legislators to communicate our commitment to recovery services. Join us for this inspirational gathering and lend your voice as we share our message about the importance of recovery supports! The Emmanuel Baptist Church is located at 275 State Street in Albany. For more information, you may contact Friends of Recovery - NY at 518-487-4395. We hope to see you there!

## O-STARS

Laura Elliott-Engel, MA, CASAC-G, LMHC, has been the Executive Director of the Cattaraugus Council on Addiction Recovery Services in Olean, New York since 2002. Prior to that she was Executive Director at the Livingston Council in Geneseo, New York. Laura's first work in the field was with women, case finding and counseling in two rural counties. She moved into management in 1991. Her breadth of experience includes prevention, education, and counseling in both outpatient and inpatient settings. Laura became active in public policy through Finger Lakes Consortium and CANYS and is currently a board member for CANYS.



She is also a founding board member of FOR-NY and has served as Secretary of that board. As President of FOR-NY Laura Elliot Engel has been a dynamic and solidifying force for the Recovery Community in New York State. With grace and refreshing humility, she has led the way as FOR-NY has circumvented numerous



obstacles to firmly planted roots in New York moving quickly to establish relationships, recruit key supporters, unite stakeholders and strengthen ties across cultures, disciplines, and geographic regions.

Laura was elected President of the Board in 2009 and serves in her second term. She acknowledges the challenges and opportunities to lead a grassroots organization with infrastructure challenges and the huge responsibility to connect with families, friends, allies and individuals touched by addiction so that our voices are heard. The annual Legislative Recovery Day on February 7, 2012, affords an opportunity to acknowledge our right and responsibility to be heard at the state, local and national levels about decisions that affect our lives.

Laura has advanced the recovery movement through her tireless efforts, unwavering passion and heartfelt commitment to those in recovery and their family members. Humble, unassuming, fair,

thoughtful and diplomatic. She has truly flourished in this role, juggling an exhaustive schedule to always be present when the need arises. She is a shining example for thousands of people. She is also considered a beacon of hope for an ever growing community.

Laura is the proud mother of Amaris and Jeremy and has been in sustained recovery since 1975.

### **OASAS Medical Corner**

From Dr. Steven Kipnis, OASAS Medical Director

*The OASAS Medical Corner will be an ongoing part of each edition of the Communicator newsletter moving forward. It is intended to provide timely information on educational events, new research and/or updates that can lead to better performance by the field. Addiction Medicine is a dynamic and relatively new specialty and this column will help to filter some of this information.*

**The NYS Adult Hepatitis Vaccination Program** is now filling orders for adult hepatitis A, B, and combined A & B (Twinrix) vaccine which were placed after August 1, 2011. At this time there is sufficient supply of vaccine to fill all back orders; additional orders are being taken and will be filled as vaccine supply allows. For any questions, please email [immunize@health.state.ny.us](mailto:immunize@health.state.ny.us) or call Geri Naumiec at (518) 473-4437. To place an order or inquire about the status of your order for adult hepatitis vaccine, call 1-800-543-7468 (1-800-KID-SHOT).

### **UPDATE: Amended HIV Testing Public Health Law**

Chapter 308 of the NYS Law went into effect on September 1, 2010. The amended HIV testing law is meant to increase testing and promote treatment of the positive individual. The law mandates the offer of voluntary testing in the 13 - 64 age group utilizing any approved HIV diagnostic test or HIV rapid screening test. *Mandated professionals include physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and midwives who are providing primary care (pediatric practice, primary care practice, internal medicine practice, family practice and ob-gyn practice). Addiction Medicine is considered a subspecialty of internal medicine under this mandate.*

The settings that are included in this amended law are inpatient units of a general hospital, emergency departments of a general hospital, primary care services in the outpatient department of a hospital, primary care services in a diagnostic and treatment centers, school-based clinics and family planning sites that provide primary care, pediatrics, obstetrics, or gynecology services. *In the OASAS system, those facilities that have medical staff and have the capacity to order/perform blood work are included in the covered requirement.* Examples would be OTPs, Detoxification/Withdrawal services (excluding most medically monitored programs) and 822-4 programs with medical staff where routine healthcare is addressed

with ordered laboratory work-ups by prescription and/or performed onsite. In these facilities, it is expected that if the offer to do the test is accepted, the test will be performed at the facility.

*The law mandates the offer of the HIV test at a minimum of one time. However, consistent with the CDC guidelines, patients who present with risk factors (ie. unprotected sex, needle sharing) must be offered the test more frequently.* The mandated practitioner must explain causes of HIV/AIDS, give information on available treatment, explain prevention strategies and explain voluntary testing. Informed consent can be part of a general consent and oral consent is allowed for rapid testing. The patient must be told whenever an HIV test is to be performed and this must be documented in the medical record. Model consent forms can be found on the New York State Department of Health (DOH) [website](#).

**Free CASAC and CME Accredited Training Offered:** The Street Drugs & HIV [webinar](#) is now up on the CEI Training website.

**Chantix (varenicline) may be a suitable treatment for cocaine dependence:** Investigators at the University of Pennsylvania's Treatment Research Center reported in the February issue of Drug and Alcohol Dependence the results of a nine-week double-blind placebo controlled clinical trial of varenicline in 37 cocaine dependent participants. Compared to placebo-treated participants, those who received varenicline had significantly decreased rates of cocaine reward, as measured by the Multiple Choice Procedure. "Varenicline appears to decrease cocaine use and reward, suggesting that further investigation of varenicline may be warranted," said the researchers. (Source: [Results of an initial clinical trial of varenicline for the treatment of cocaine dependence](#). Drug Alcohol Dependence; 2012, Feb 1;121(1-2):163-6. Epub 2011, Sep 16. PMID: 21925806 [PubMed - in process]; Plebani JG, Lynch KG, Yu Q, Pettinati HM, O'Brien CP, Kampman KM)

### **Preventionfocus, Inc. to Host an "Evening with the Stars!" February 17 in Buffalo**

[Preventionfocus, Inc.](#) will host an "Evening with the Stars" at the Holiday Inn in downtown Buffalo from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on Friday, February 17, 2012. The red carpet affair will celebrate "Stars" from schools and communities that partner with Preventionfocus. There will be live music, a dinner buffet, Chinese auction, movie trivia, prizes and more.

To purchase tickets or for more information, contact Preventionfocus via e-mail at [kjherman@pfocus.org](mailto:kjherman@pfocus.org) or by calling (716) 884-3256.

For questions and/or comments about this newsletter, please contact: Jannette Rondó, OASAS Communications Director at [communicator@oasas.ny.gov](mailto:communicator@oasas.ny.gov)

