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**OASAS Mission:**

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

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Arlene González-Sánchez  
Commissioner  
NYS OASAS



Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor

*Dear Friends, I would like to thank all of you for your assistance with the agency's emergency preparation plans during the recent Tropical Storm Irene a few weeks ago. In particular, I would like to recognize the ATC Directors and their supporting staff as well as the Crisis Management team that managed and monitored throughout the storm duration. Your collective efforts were very important in helping to ensure that the patients and staff's safety and well-being was protected. It is also wonderful to know that many staff members volunteered in Greene County to help with the widespread destruction caused by the storm. Your generosity continued when more than 400 backpacks were donated to school-age children in need as a result of the storm. Whatever the need, time after time, OASAS employees are always available to help. I truly thank you for your tremendous outpouring of compassion!*

**Arlene González-Sánchez, OASAS Commissioner**

**Commissioner Presents OASAS Vision on Health Care Reform to the Acacia Network**

On September 9, 2011, OASAS Commissioner González-Sánchez was honored as the guest speaker at the Acacia Network's (formerly BASICS/Promesa Systems) 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Board of Directors Retreat held in West Point, New York. A significant focus for the Acacia Network is ensuring quality care coordination within their comprehensive system and in close partnerships with other health care and social service providers. The Commissioner presented her vision for OASAS in the context of federal health care reform and the New York State Medicaid Redesign and also provided Acacia Chief Executive Officer Raul Russi a Governor's Proclamation designating September as Recovery Month. During her speech, she emphasized that her focus is to transform our system of care to ensure that the issues of alcohol, substance use and mental health are addressed in a comprehensive, integrated system that is accessible and responsive to the multiple and complex needs of all individuals and families. The Commissioner indicated that this will ensure that we are always putting the needs of the individuals we serve in the forefront of everything that we do. She spoke to the members about restructuring the Medicaid program; key recommendations the Medicaid Redesign Team made to the Governor; moving forward with Behavioral Health Organizations and Health Homes, as well as the workgroups and subcommittees involved in those initiatives. Commissioner González-Sánchez also talked about serving as Co-Chair of the Health Disparities Workgroup and their charge, along with her message to the members that critical reforms in Medicaid will reduce health care disparities, improve patient outcomes and lower health care costs.



**Bronx ATC Welcomes Commissioner**



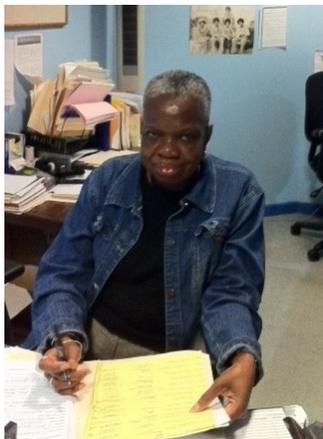
On September 6, Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez visited the Bronx ATC, one of 12 OASAS operated inpatient treatment facilities. During her visit, the Commissioner presented 13 "Making a Difference" awards to staff for their commitment to ensuring quality patient care during Tropical Storm Irene. Additionally, the Commissioner was able to interact with both staff and patients which provided motivation in going forward in their recovery journey. The Bronx ATC provides inpatient treatment for approximately 590 men and women as well as 380 family members. They also focus on prevention education and the alumnae support the recovery message at the community level.

**Governor's Advisory Council Holds Quarterly Meeting**

The Governor's Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services held its quarterly meeting on September 7 at OASAS in Albany. At the meeting, Commissioner Sánchez provided an update on OASAS' response to Tropical Storm Irene, the SAGE Commission, Program Monitoring and Enforcement, Recovery Month, Block Grant, and the OASAS-OTDA supportive housing initiative. During the meeting, the Council established a committee that look further into health information technology and provide recommendations for the Commissioner. The Advisory Council meetings are broadcast live. [Links to live webcasts](#) will only be available while the event is occurring. The next Governor's Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2011.

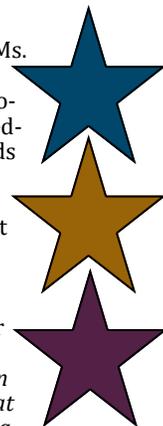


### O-STARs



Meet Jennifer Henry, a member of the CREATE, Inc. outpatient treatment program team. Ms. Henry has worked at CREATE, Inc. for 34 years as a CASAC and more currently as a case manager. Supervisors, colleagues and patients have all praised Jennifer for consistently going above and beyond to help the patients remain calm, reassuring them with positive feedback, and supporting their recovery efforts. Because of the relationship that Jennifer builds with each individual that enrolls in the program, most are comfortable in seeking her out when they need special assistance or help. Ms. Henry has had a positive impact on so many individuals in both the outpatient and residential programs. She has a natural talent for serving the patients and she makes some of the most challenging tasks seem easy and natural. Others have described her as inspiring.

On behalf of all New Yorkers, OASAS would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Jennifer Henry for serving New York with such commitment and dedication, and advancing the OASAS mission *to improve the lives of New Yorkers by leading a premier system of addiction services through prevention, treatment, recovery.* *If you know an outstanding individual that works or volunteers in the field of addictions who performs at an outstanding level to make a difference in the lives of New Yorkers, please e-mail [communicator@oasas.ny.gov](mailto:communicator@oasas.ny.gov) to be featured as an O-STAR.*



### September is Recovery Month!

This year, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has proclaimed [September as Recovery Month](#) in New York State. The next few issues of the Communicator will include information about Recovery events around the state. If you are planning a Recovery Month event, I encourage you to send [the details](#) to OASAS so that your event will be counted. There are more than 15 Recovery Month activities posted in the [Upcoming Events](#) section of the OASAS website, and many more happening throughout New York State.



The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse held their *Health and Recovery Rally* on Saturday, September 10, 2011, in honor of National Recovery Month and National FASD Awareness Day. The event was intended for those in recovery, those who know someone struggling with addiction, those who wanted to learn more about health and recovery, and preventing fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Nearly 100 Erie County residents registered for this event which covered what was happening locally in the addictions field and personal stories of recovery. Speakers included ECCPASA staff members Robin Mann and Erica Boyce, Cynthia Cray who shared her personal and inspiring story of recovery and hope, and Dr. Luther Robinson, Director of Dysmorphology and Clinical Genetics for the Women and Children's Hospital, who discussed the clinical aspects of FASD.



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### Samaritan Village Offers Unique Women Veterans Addiction Treatment Services

On January 31, 2011, Samaritan Village, Inc. opened the first and only women veterans program in New York State. This program is designed to address the unique clinical needs of women veterans in a trauma-informed environment. The program is located on the grounds of the Samaritan Village campus in Ellenville, NY, and offers comprehensive addiction treatment and health and mental health services in a beautiful residential setting. There are thousands of women veterans in New York State who have experienced the physical and emotional traumas of combat, in addition to sexual harassment or assault. The new program provides trauma-informed care; treatment for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); gender-specific counseling on issues such as specific military sexual trauma; individual and group counseling; vocational and educational rehabilitation; and family reunification services. In addition, the program has an overnight suite for child visits.

"Samaritan Village is proud to build on our 15-year history of providing specialized behavioral services for male veterans by extending the service for the first time to women veterans from around the state," said Tino Hernandez, President and CEO of Samaritan Village. "This unique service employs trauma-specific care to these patriotic women who have given so much to our country, and now need us to care for them." Thanks to the quality treatment offered to the women veterans at Samaritan Village, the women can walk out the doors gainfully employed, financially stable and have their family intact. Tarah, a patient conveyed, "Samaritan's Women Veterans Program has helped me heal the relationships with my children after the strains on it from serving in Iraq. I feel extremely grateful to be here getting help specifically for veterans." To learn more about the services offered at Samaritan Village, Inc. please visit their website at [www.samaritanvillage.org](http://www.samaritanvillage.org).



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Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Problem Gambling

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For information on **grant and funding opportunities**, visit the OASAS [website](#) ([www.oasas.ny.gov/hps/grants/index.cfm](http://www.oasas.ny.gov/hps/grants/index.cfm)).

### OASAS Awarded SBIRT Grant

OASAS received notification by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) that the agency has been awarded a five-year grant totaling \$8.33 million. This Cooperative Agreement is designed to provide screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment (SBIRT) services to two historically underserved populations: the 525,000 patients served each year through the New York City public community health centers and the 100,000 service members, veterans and their families in the Fort Drum area of upstate New York. NYSBIRT will lead the expansion of these services statewide through developing and implementing service protocols and financing models. Over the five-year grant period, the project is targeted to screen 277,460 individuals, provide brief intervention to 26,946 people and refer 2,692 individuals to substance abuse treatment.

### OASAS Holds First of Three Public Hearings - Albany

On September 8, 2011, OASAS held the first of three public hearings. The Albany public hearing was held to enable counties, providers, and the general public to offer comments on the OASAS 2011 Outcomes Dashboard. The Dashboard identifies OASAS' system-wide priorities and is the foundation for the agency's State-wide Comprehensive Plan. The objective is to obtain useful input from stakeholders that will be used in developing the OASAS 2012 Outcomes Dashboard. This will enable OASAS to develop a Dashboard that more closely reflects county and provider priorities. The public hearing demonstrates OASAS' commitment to collaborating closely with counties, providers, and other stakeholders in developing meaningful, manageable, and measureable metrics. Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez provided introductory remarks and indicated the Dashboard advances Governor Cuomo's pledge to bring greater accountability and transparency to government. She stated that collaboration with government and local providers at every level is critical to enhancing the quality and diversity of services we are able to provide. The two remaining hearings will be held on September 15 in Buffalo (*which was recently changed from September 14*) and September 19 in New York City. For specific details, visit the OASAS [website](#).



### Addiction providers defend turf in plan to merge services with mental health

By CATHLEEN F. CROWLEY Staff writer, Times Union.com, 9/9/11

ALBANY -- The state's effort to combine addiction and mental health services has people in the addiction field nervous that they will become the ugly stepsister again. The state Office for [Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services](#) and the [Office of Mental Health](#) have been working toward combining treatment services to provide "one-stop shopping" for New Yorkers who suffer from both problems. The Rev. [Peter Young](#) recalls a time when alcohol addiction was a bureau within the mental health department -- and it's not a fond memory.

"We were just a sidebar to their agenda," Young said Thursday at an OASAS hearing on the agency's goals for 2012. Young founded an addiction treatment and residential program in Albany. "We need to defend our turf," Young said. Alcohol and substance abuse were moved out of the former [Department of Mental Hygiene](#) in 1977, and each became its own separate agency. In 1992, the two merged to form today's OASAS.

To read the full article, please visit the Times Union [website](#).



Commissioner Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez, NYS OASAS, speaks during a public hearing in the Legislative Office Building in Albany, N.Y. Tuesday April 12, 2011. (Lori Van Buren / Times Union) "Used By Permission of the Times Union"

### Annual Conference to Hold Pre-Conference Leadership Institute

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual ASAP Conference will be held at the New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge from October 30 to November 2, 2011. Included in the line-up of events is a pre-conference Leadership Institute on October 30, entitled "Managing and Leading Through Change" presented by Gwen Webber-McLeod, President/CEO of Gwen, Inc. This Institute will focus on how a leader can support employees and organizations through the dynamics of change and how this directly affects the achievement of workplace goals and business outcomes. Participants will learn specific strategies for helping employees and the organization thrive during change. For more details about this session as well as other educational, networking and sponsorship opportunities at the conference, go to the [ASAP website](#).

### OASAS Medical Director Participates on New York State Senate Prescription Drug Misuse Panel

The OASAS Medical Director, Dr. Steven Kipnis represented Commissioner Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez at a roundtable on Prescription Drug Misuse Panel which was convened by Senators Hannon, Klein and Marcellino on August 31. The Senators were commended for examining the issue of prescription drug misuse. Prescription drug abuse accounts for the second most commonly abused category of drugs, behind marijuana and ahead of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and other drugs. Prescription drug misuse poses a unique challenge because of the need to balance prevention, education, and enforcement, with the need for legitimate access to controlled substance prescription drugs. Prescription drug misuse occurs in all social, economic, geographic and cultural groups and children as young as 12 are using prescription drugs to get high. (According to the 2009 SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), an estimated 20.6 percent of people in the United States (51.8 million people, ages 12 and older) have used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons).