



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

OASAS Communicator



Governor
Andrew M. Cuomo



Commissioner
Arlene González-Sánchez

In This Issue - November 2013

The Obama
Administration Issues
Final Mental Health
and Substance Use
Disorder Parity Rule

Dear Friends,

Last week, we received exciting news that is historic for the mental health and substance use disorder fields. There will now be parity between mental health/substance use disorder benefits in group and individual health plans.

OMH Acting Commissioner John Tauriello and I held the first Behavioral Health Advisory meeting last month. We want to thank the members for agreeing to serve and we look forward to their input and guidance. In addition, the New York State Health Exchange has gone live and we encourage all of our providers to inform and assist their uninsured clients/patients regarding how to access affordable health insurance through the New York State of Health Marketplace.

Sincerely,

*Arlene González-Sánchez
OASAS Commissioner*

The Obama Administration Issues Final Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Rule

The Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor and the Treasury today jointly issued a final rule increasing parity between mental health/substance use disorder benefits and medical/surgical benefits in group and individual health plans.

The final rule issued today implements the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, and ensures that health plans features like co-pays, deductibles and visit limits are generally not more restrictive for mental health/substance abuse disorders benefits than they are for medical/surgical benefits. Today's action also includes specific additional consumer protections, such as:

- Ensuring that parity applies to intermediate levels of care received in residential treatment or intensive outpatient settings;

First Behavioral Health Advisory Meeting Held in Albany

OASAS Launches New Veterans' Web page

NY State of Health, the Official Health Plan Marketplace Webcast Held November 4

Prequalification Requirements for Not-for-Profit Contracts

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- Clarifying the scope of the transparency required by health plans, including the disclosure rights of plan participants, to ensure compliance with the law;
- Clarifying that parity applies to all plan standards, including geographic limits, facility-type limits and network adequacy; and
- Eliminating the provision that allowed insurance companies to make an exception to parity requirements for certain benefits based on "clinically appropriate standards of care," which clinical experts advised was not necessary and which is confusing and open to potential abuse.

By issuing this rule, the administration has now completed or made significant progress on all 23 executive actions included in the President and Vice President's plan to reduce gun violence. An updated report summarizing the status of all 23 executive actions is available here: www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/november_exec_actions_progress_report_final.pdf.

To read the entire release, visit the [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services website](http://www.hhs.gov).

First Behavioral Health Advisory Meeting Held in Albany

On October 2, 2013, the first meeting of the Behavioral Health Services Advisory Council was held at the OASAS Administrative Offices in Albany and via live [webcast](#). This new body was created by Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2012. The Council combines the former OASAS Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services Advisory Council and the OMH Mental Health Services Council. These two bodies were merged to help further efforts to provide a more fully integrated and streamlined system of care to better serve all those within both the OASAS and OMH systems.



During the meeting, OASAS Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez and OMH Acting Commissioner John Tauriello each thanked the members for agreeing to serve and provided updates regarding ongoing initiatives at each of the agencies. These topics included: the integration of behavioral health services, Behavioral Health Organizations Phase II, integrated licensure, collaborative efforts in the area of prevention with other state agencies, Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT), prescription medication misuse, overdose prevention efforts, and the OMH Regional Centers for Excellence plan.

6th Annual NY Recovery Rally & 10th Annual Recovery Arts Festival Held in Albany

Odyssey House Holds Annual Run/Walk Recovery Event in NYC

OASAS Albany EAP Committee Starts Community Supported Agriculture

Open Letter of Thanks to OASAS from an American Soldier in Afghanistan

"What's New?" on the OASAS Website

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OASAS Mission:
To improve the lives of all New Yorkers by leading a premier system of Prevention, Treatment, Recovery.

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The Council also engaged in an interactive discussion regarding some of the areas they would like to focus on going forward, and emphasized that the needs of consumers and families served by the OASAS and OMH systems will help guide all of their efforts.



The Council membership consists of: the OASAS Commissioner, the OMH Commissioner, the Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors' Chair, consumers of behavioral health services, family members of consumers of behavioral health services, providers of addiction services, providers of mental health services, military veteran representatives, and state or local government representatives.

The Council is expected to meet six times during the coming year and is charged with helping the OASAS and OMH commissioners establish statewide goals and objectives, making recommendations on statewide plans, reviewing applications seeking OASAS/OMH certification to provide behavioral health services, and reviewing OASAS/OMH rules and regulations. The Council may consider and provide recommendations on issues related to program closures, care and services for individuals with behavioral health needs, financing of behavioral health services, the integration of behavioral health services with health services, care and services for individuals with co-occurring disorders/multiple disabilities, prevention of behavioral health disorders and improvement of care.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for December 13, 2013. This will be a videoconference meeting with sites in New York City, Albany and Rochester.

Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez Announces Increased Outreach to Veterans

New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez today announced that OASAS has launched a [new veterans' web page](#) on the OASAS website that contains resources and information specifically for veterans, returning service members and their families struggling with addiction to alcohol and other substances.

Far too many of our veterans, including those who have recently returned from deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan, are facing the very difficult issues of addiction to pain killers, alcohol and other substances," said Commissioner González-Sánchez. "In observance of Veterans Day, OASAS is pleased to launch this new veterans' web page filled with essential resources to assist veterans throughout the State.

The web page provides:

View our videos on 



1-877-8-HOPENY
Find Help for 1-877-846-7369
Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Problem Gambling

Available
24 hours / 7 days
Toll-free, anonymous
and confidential

Visit the [OASAS Contact Us Webpage](#):
for links and phone
numbers to connect
you to OASAS program
area experts.

This newsletter is
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*Thanks to those of you
who have contributed
to this newsletter.*

If you would like to
submit an article
or have a story idea for
an upcoming
newsletter issue,
please send them to:
[Communicator@oasas.
ny.gov](mailto:Communicator@oasas.ny.gov).

- the new OASAS brochure entitled [The Long Journey Home and the Need to Heal](#), to help veterans and their families recognize the complex issues many of them are facing and provide direction on how and where to seek help;
- a list of OASAS-certified treatment providers who have developed veteran-focused and specific services. These providers offer trauma-informed care in environments that embrace the military virtues of service and devotion to duty; and
- a newly created e-mail address, veterans@oasas.ny.gov, which may be used to contact OASAS veterans services personnel directly.

OASAS has also implemented new protocols within its 24-hour, toll-free HOPEline (1-877-8-HOPENY) that require telephone operators and counselors to ask callers if they have ever served in the military and, if so, would they like to receive information on veterans-specific services offered through OASAS.

The HOPEline offers help, resources and referrals to callers seeking assistance with alcoholism, drug abuse or problem gambling. OASAS' system is available to any New Yorker in need of treatment, including the State's 1.1 million veterans and the estimated 80,000 who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"These new services and protocols will offer improved access to needed assistance for veterans, many of whom have brought the war home with them. Through these efforts, OASAS will be offering additional avenues for veterans and their families to access the right services at the right time," said Suzanne Bissonette, executive director of the Buffalo-based Cazenovia Recovery Systems, Inc. which operates Liberty Hall, an 18-bed community house for veterans on the grounds of the Veterans Affairs' Batavia Medical Center. "Improved access to treatment and services for veterans and their families is critical to promoting the hope that is so deserved by those who have fought for our country."

OASAS oversees one of the nation's largest addiction services systems with more than 1,600 prevention, treatment and recovery programs. OASAS treatment programs assist about 100,000 people on any given day and more than 240,000 individuals every year.

For more information, please visit www.oasas.ny.gov.

Follow OASAS: <http://twitter.com/nysoasas> / [facebook profile: NYS OASAS](#) / www.youtube.com/nysoasas / www.flickr.com/photos/nysoasas

New York State of Health, the Official Health Plan Marketplace Webcast Held November 4

During the webcast, OASAS providers learned more about the opening of the new Health Plan Marketplace and the importance for clients and staff.

OASAS General Counsel, Rob Kent, and Executive Director, New York State of Health, Donna Frescatore, provided information and answered questions that were submitted in advance.



[Sign up as early as October 1, 2013, for coverage that begins January 1, 2014.](#)

The [webcast](#) and [PowerPoint presentation](#) are available on the [OASAS website](#).

Prequalification Requirements for Not-for-Profit Contracts

All not-for-profit grantees are required to [prequalify](#) prior to any grant application and/or execution of a contract or a contract amendment. OASAS will not be able to enter into contracts with any grantee who has failed to complete the prequalification process. To learn more about prequalification, go to the Grants Reform website at www.grantsreform.ny.gov/Grantees where you can preview questions and required documents.

2013 Joint OASAS/OMH Public Hearing Held

On August 27, 2013, OASAS and OMH held the second annual joint public hearing on their statewide comprehensive plans, which are required under Section 5.07 of State Mental Hygiene Law. The hearing was conducted by videoconference at eight locations: Albany, Buffalo, Long Island, Manhattan, Ogdensburg, Staten Island, Syracuse, and Rochester. Commissioner González-Sánchez and Acting Commissioner Tauriello gathered input for consideration in the development of their respective plans and ongoing initiatives to deliver more integrated care that meets the unique needs of those with co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders.

A total of 240 representatives from local governments, advocacy organizations, providers, family members, and recipients of services attended the hearing with 29 individuals presenting testimony. Among the topics discussed were: Health Homes, regional planning, implementation of Behavioral Health Organization (BHO) Phase 2, recovery supports, opioid treatment expansion, peer recovery support, and supportive housing. Individuals also had the opportunity to submit comments in writing on the public hearing comment cards and by e-mail. OASAS will use the testimony and comments to inform its future planning and policy making. The commissioners thanked the many stakeholders in the addictions field who attended the hearing, especially those that presented testimony and submitted comments.

14th Annual Problem Gambling Conference Held in Albany

The New York Council on Problem Gambling (NYCPG) held its 14th Annual Conference September 17-18 in Albany. This year's conference was attended by more than 240 people from Canada, Florida, Connecticut, New

Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont and across New York State. Attendees received the most current information on issues surrounding the risks and potential consequences of gambling from local, national and international speakers. The conference highlighted NYCPG's "Know the Odds" public awareness campaign.

Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez and Acting Executive Director of the New York State Gaming Commission, Robert Williams, were the keynote speakers at this year's conference.

In a joint letter to conference guests, Commissioner González-Sánchez and Acting Executive Director Williams wrote; "With regards to the notion of expanded gaming in New York State, we want you to know that policymakers understand the serious nature of problem gambling. The law regarding the siting of any such casino has specific language holding gaming facilities accountable to the resources they provide."



OASAS Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez and Acting Executive Director of the NYS Gaming Commission Robert Williams

OASAS Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month in NYC and Albany

During National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, we celebrate the many contributions, heritage and culture of Hispanic and Latino Americans with great pride. In honor of this annual celebration, OASAS staff in both NYC and Albany welcomed keynote speaker Victor Antonio Perez on Friday, October 25, for the annual agency event. The event also included local Andean musicians from NYC, Inti and The Moon, along with refreshments.



Mr. Perez, currently a parole officer, has been active in Hispanic/Latino communities all over New York State in various capacities from a community organizer, to a counselor and teacher, to a defender of the rights of diverse

populations including Hispanic/Latino colleagues and clients. While initiating Youth Programs for inner city youths and working as a Spanish speaking counselor at Lakeview Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility, he became aware of, and has since worked to modify, the statewide problem of substance abuse and entry into the criminal system among all youths and

Latino youths in particular. Among other accomplishments Mr. Perez is a co-founder of PRIMA, an organization dedicated to address the negative portrayals and the unequal representation of Latinos in the Media.

Between both locations, nearly 100 staff members enjoyed learning about Mr. Perez's personal background and experiences, his work as a NYS parole officer and his role as a social worker and activist for the Latino community. To learn more about Hispanic Heritage, visit <http://hispanicheritagemonth.gov/about>.

Free Tuition for the Outreach Training Institute Available to Qualifying NYC Residents Interested in Training to Become Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselors

The Outreach Training Institute is offering scholarships and job placement assistance for its Credentialed Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) training program to those who qualify. The program has locations in Richmond Hill, Queens and Greenpoint, Brooklyn. In addition to free tuition, students receive help with resume-writing, vocational assistance, internship and career placement, and much more.



The scholarships are meant for low-income students and/or those with limited education, particularly those with a high school diploma or GED. Such candidates may be unemployed, working at low wage jobs, on public assistance or re-entering the workforce after a period of disability.

To qualify, students have to meet the following criteria:

- * prior and current year annual income of \$20,000 or less, or unemployed during that period (must be documented),
- * high school diploma or G.E.D (documentation required), and
- * residency in the five boroughs of New York City.

The grant program will support scholarships for students with the following:

- 350 hours of classroom and hands-on training over tracks of 5 or 11 months, leading to fulfillment of all the course work required by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) for Credentialed Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC),
- student advisement on attendance and course-related matters, and individual meetings with students on a monthly (or more often, if needed) basis,
- ongoing life skills group counseling related to finding and keeping a job, etc.,
- comprehensive test-prep services to prepare graduates for the State

CASAC Exam, including: regular study group sessions facilitated by senior faculty, one-day test prep courses on test-taking and study skills, etc., and

- internship, job placement services, and post-graduate follow-up assistance.

Outreach, a nonprofit organization, is a premier provider and champion of quality, life-changing drug and alcohol abuse care. Since 1980, Outreach has provided the New York metropolitan area with unmatched substance abuse treatment and training services, specializing in residential and outpatient programs for teens, intensive daytime treatment for women and women with children, adult outpatient treatment services, and training of professionals for careers in treating addiction. On an annual basis, Outreach offers care and treatment to nearly 2,000 individuals and families and nearly 300 students participate in training activities.

For more information about scholarships, please visit Outreach Training Institute at <http://opiny.org/outreach-training-institute>, or call (718) 847-9233, ext. 2382.

Camelot Counseling Opens New Staten Island Residence for Substance Abuse Recovery

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. - An idea that was more than 35 years in the making - to help young men battling substance abuse in a Sea View facility - became a reality Friday with the opening of Camelot's new Male Adolescent Residential Program.

"It's a fantastic occasion," said Camelot Executive Director Luke Nasta. "But what is it associated with? It's associated with a terrible aspect of our lives on Staten Island."

Camelot Counseling Centers has been serving the borough since 1971 and has a residential program in Port Richmond. In 1977, Nasta said he got the idea to open up a facility on the grounds of the old Sea View Hospital. The idea stalled and sputtered for decades, he said. At one point, it was near completion, but the city's Health and Hospitals Corporation would only agree to a three-year-lease, which wouldn't satisfy the state agency that was going to fund the program.

To read the full article, visit the [Staten Island Advance website](#).

YES Community Counseling Center Opens its Doors in Levittown

YES Community Counseling Center, a nonprofit community-based organization opened its satellite office at 152 Center Lane, Levittown on September 13, 2013. This location offers specialized and evidence-based treatment programs to adolescents and families impacted by alcohol and substance abuse. The center will also respond to the gap in programs created when the past provider closed its doors to the community.

The satellite's program hours will be on Mondays and Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and will expand based upon needs of the surrounding community. Referrals and questions can also be made to the Massapequa office which will open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm.

To read the full article, visit the [Levittown Patch website](#).

For additional information about YES Community Counseling Center programs, visit their website at www.yesccc.org or call the main office at (516)799-3203.

O-STARS

The OASAS mission is to improve the lives of all New Yorkers by leading a premier system of addiction services through prevention, treatment and recovery. If you know an exceptional individual who works or volunteers in the field of addictions and consistently performs at an outstanding level and makes a difference in the lives of New Yorkers, we want to hear from you. For consideration as an O-STAR, please e-mail no more than two to three short paragraphs about the individual with a picture (in .jpg format) along with your contact information to communicator@oasas.ny.gov. Self nominations are also accepted.



In observance of Addictions Professionals Day on September 20, OASAS Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez [announced](#) the 2013 Addictions Professionals Awardees. The awards ceremony was held in New York City to honor their work and achievements in the addictions field.

There are approximately 20,000 addictions professionals working tirelessly to improve lives and make New York State's communities safer and drug-free. These individuals maintain the highest degree of proficiency and ethical practice and engage in continuous learning and professional development

OASAS would like to congratulate each of the recipients and honor them as O-STARS! To learn more about each of these extraordinary individuals and the difference they are making in the lives of others, visit the [OASAS website](#).

OASAS Medical Corner

Dr. Steven Kipnis, OASAS Medical Director

The OASAS Medical Corner is an ongoing part of each edition of the Communicator newsletter. It is intended to provide timely information regarding 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.

New Buprenorphine Product

Orexo has released a new formulation of Buprenorphine called Zubsolv™ (Buprenorphine/Naloxone), a sublingual tablet CIII. Zubsolv is indicated for use as maintenance treatment for people suffering from opioid dependence and should be used as part of a complete treatment plan to include counseling and psychosocial support. Zubsolv is a once-daily, sublingual tablet with a formulation of Buprenorphine and Naloxone that fully dissolves within minutes. Compared with other Buprenorphine/Naloxone treatments, Zubsolv is reported to have higher bioavailability, faster dissolve time, and smaller tablet size with a new menthol taste.

Phenibut Warning

Phenibut is available as a nutritional supplement and is being sold over the counter for treatment of anxiety, insomnia, stress, fatigue, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and as an aid in improving memory. **However, the product is being reported as the cause of near fatal overdoses in parts of upstate New York.**

Developed in Russia, Phenibut is a chemical that is similar to a brain neurotransmitter, gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA). It is a phenyl derivative of GABA. The calming action is similar to other GABA agonists, but it also binds to the GABA site that is responsible for sedative effects. The binding to GABA sites could potentiate the effects of tranquilizers, narcotics, alcohol and neuroleptics if used together. **Thus the potential for overdose exists.**

Phenibut HCL is a white, crystalline powder and the taste is very sour. It is readily soluble in water and alcohol. Doses vary from less than 500mg to upwards of 4grams. Price can range from \$0.30 to \$1.00 per gram. Effects of use can be felt at approximately 60 to 90 minutes and typically it takes 2 to 4 hours for the full effect when consumed orally. The effects can last 4 to 10 hours.

Users note a feeling of well-being, relaxation, and slight disinhibition, which is comparable to low dose alcohol use. At high doses, effects can include intoxication, nausea, and vomiting. Side effects can include headache. At higher doses, blurred vision or nystagmus, lack of coordination, depressed respiration, nausea, memory loss ("blacking out"), and hangover have been reported. Tolerance develops rapidly. Rebound anxiety can develop after 2-3 days of use.

There are many reports of withdrawal symptoms on Internet blogs. The withdrawal is similar to other GABA agonists such as sedatives with "nervousness and shakiness, psychomotor agitation, feeling easily annoyed and irritated, fatigue, poor appetite, heart pounding and racing, nausea, insomnia, and feeling tense and keyed up". Phenibut will not show up on a routine toxicology screen.

NEW! OASAS Nursing Corner

Welcome to the OASAS Nursing Corner. As an ongoing part of the newsletter, this column will provide an opportunity for nurses working in the field of addiction to obtain information relevant to their practice and will focus on nursing education, training and regulations in addiction.

Addiction is a growing public health issue and an occupational hazard for nurses. It is a chronic, relapsing brain disease, characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite negative consequences. Drugs change the structure and functioning of the brain. Like other chronic diseases, it is preventable and treatable (NIDA, 2008).

Nurses are not immune from this disease. Research indicates that 15-20 percent of nurses struggle with a substance use disorder (SUD) at some time in their careers (Bettinardi-Angres, K. & Bologeorges, S., 2011). Employers of nurses have a vital role in ensuring patient safety by assisting nurses as they strive for optimal health. Yet many employers terminate nurses' employment, making it difficult for them to obtain the proper treatment for their substance use and to later find nursing jobs.

New York State has two programs to help nurses with serious addictions and less severe substance use disorders. Each program offers assistance to the individual nurse, to the employer, and to the public. The Statewide Peer Assistance for Nurses (SPAN) program is a confidential support and advocacy program for nurses who are anywhere on the continuum from substance use to addiction. The Professional Assistance Program (PAP) is an Alternative to Discipline Program, which monitors nurses with SUDs and affords immunity to qualified nurses from two counts of professional misconduct related to substance use. For more information call SPAN at 1-800-457-7621 or PAP at 518-474-3817 (ext: 480).

OASAS ATC Spotlight

The Charles K. Post Addiction Treatment Center ([CK Post ATC](#)) is a unit of the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services. Begun in 1955, it serves residents of Suffolk and Nassau Counties. It operates a chemical dependence inpatient rehabilitation program, capacity 79 beds, and a community residence program, capacity 21 beds. It serves more than 1,200 patients annually. It has New York State Operating Certificates for both programs.



CK Post ATC admits adults who are abusing alcohol or other drugs. Referrals are made by organizations providing other levels of treatment or other functions. Admissions are voluntary. The admission telephone number is (631) 434-7207 and calls should be made between 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. No one is refused admission due to lack of funds but third party reimbursement is expected and there is a sliding scale fee. CK Post ATC is handicap accessible.

Alcohol and drug dependency is a complex disease with biological, psychological and social aspects. Staffing at CK Post includes physicians, psychiatrists, registered nurses, credentialed alcoholism and substance abuse counselors, social workers, and other qualified health professionals. Each patient has a primary therapist. It is an intensive and comprehensive program. Each patient receives several assessments including screening and intake, nursing, physical examination, routine laboratory tests, mental status, psychosocial functioning, and nutrition. Individual treatment goals and objectives are determined with the patient's participation. The treatment services provided include group therapy, individual therapy, medical care, education, recreational activities, aftercare and referral and case management. Smoking is not allowed and nicotine therapy including patches is provided. Length of stay is individually determined and is generally up to 28 days for the inpatient rehabilitation program and up to 90 days for the community residence program. The special needs of female patients are addressed. Referrals are made routinely to outpatient, day, and halfway house alcoholism and drug abuse programs and other services as needed. Linkage with self-help organizations, mainly Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, is established.

Admission to the community residence is limited to those who have completed the inpatient rehabilitation program. The community residence provides services in the areas of finding a job, savings, housing, continued group and individual therapy, development of a sober support system through attendance at self-help meetings, and return to independent living.

Charles K. Post was a pioneer with unique foresight and commitment who was responsible for this facility's establishment in 1955. He was a

recovering alcoholic.

Over the decades thousands of patients have gone on to lead productive lives, raise families and contribute to society in multiple areas. They are proof that: **Treatment Works.**

Patient Advocacy FAQs

Mike Yorio, Patient Advocacy Supervisor

The Patient Advocacy FAQs will be included in each edition of the newsletter. In addition to addressing patient complaints, OASAS Patient Advocacy advises provider staff on matters related to patient rights and treatment standards. For immediate assistance, patients may call 1-800-553-5790 and staff may call 646-728-4520. Here is a sample of questions addressed by PA recently.

Can methadone programs require me to see my counselor or the doctor before giving me my medication? Sometimes, I don't have time to meet with anyone, especially when I don't know of the appointment ahead of time. Similarly, can the program delay the medication until after I give a toxicology sample? Here too, sometimes, I just can't provide a sample in a short period of time.

PA: While it's always better to cooperate and meet with staff when requested, even if the meeting is a surprise, no, methadone programs cannot delay medication for the reasons you describe. Methadone programs can delay administering methadone to a patient for only one reason: medical or psychiatric necessity. At such times, the nurse must immediately contact the prescribing professional and inform him/her of the necessity that warrants the delay so that proper medical direction can be given regarding the dose for that patient for that day. In general, delaying methadone administration for non-medical reasons violates OASAS requirements [Sections 815.6(b); 815.9(c); 822-5.6(i) and Administrative Bulletin 90-8].

My counselor gets mad at me almost every day. He uses foul language all the time, even in front of other patients and staff. I think his behavior is unprofessional and it's really beginning to affect my treatment. I complained to his supervisor, but so far, the counselor continues to harp on every little thing. What can I do?

PA: First, you should inform the supervisor again that the counselor's behavior is continuing. Like any place of business, a supervisor is responsible for addressing instances of unprofessional behavior. Second, if your counselor is credentialed by OASAS, you may file a formal complaint against a CASAC or a CASAC-T by calling the Credentialing Unit at 1-800-482-9564 (option 5) for further assistance.

After 10 years of treatment in a NYC methadone program, I moved upstate to be closer to my mother, who is ill. As a result, I am continuing my treatment in a new methadone program. However, at my old program, I came in once a week for my medicine. At my new program, I have to come

in three times a week. Why? Don't all methadone programs have to follow the same rules? If I qualify for once a week, why must I attend three times a week?

PA: Yes, all methadone programs are covered by the same regulations [Part 822-5], however, each program can, and usually does, operate differently, just like stores or businesses that have different people working in different locations - no two places are exactly alike. Nevertheless, methadone programs accepting patients transferred from other methadone programs must continue treatment for that person on the same methadone dose and the same visit schedule, unless new medical or clinical information indicates otherwise and the program explains this information to the patient before the change is made [Section 822-5.4(w)(6)]. If you haven't been told already, you should ask the doctor why your schedule was changed, and what you might need to do to return to your old schedule. More importantly, do your best to adjust to your new surroundings in your new home. And I hope your mom feels better.

If you have a question that you would like to see addressed in the Patient Advocacy FAQs column, please send it to Mike.Yorio@oasas.ny.gov.

Participate in an Overdose Prevention Survey

The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) are working together to prevent overdose injuries and deaths associated with the use of opioid drugs, including: heroin, morphine, codeine, methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, and hydromorphone.

If you are a medical director, healthcare coordinator, program director, counselor, or other OASAS-licensed drug treatment program staff member, please participate in a brief overdose prevention survey. Your responses to this survey will help inform efforts to improve opioid overdose prevention in drug treatment settings. Please share this link with all of your staff: www.surveymonkey.com/s/OverdoseStudy. The survey will only take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

6th Annual New York Recovery Rally & 10th Annual Recovery Arts Festival Held in Albany

The *6th Annual New York Recovery Rally* was held at the Riverfront Park, Corning Preserve in Albany on September 29. The annual statewide event drew hundreds of individuals from providers to individuals in recovery, to alumni and their families to celebrate National [Recovery Month](#) with the theme "*Join the Voices for Recovery: Together on Pathways to Wellness*." This year's theme emphasizes that there are many unique ways people can prevent behavioral health issues, seek treatment, sustain recovery and achieve wellness.

"Recovery Month is a time of hope, help and promise for all New Yorkers to

raise awareness of the chronic disease of addiction. It is an opportunity for people to share their stories of recovery, recognize individuals' renewed participation in community life and the positive effects they can produce by contributing to society," said Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez.

During the event, OASAS Executive Deputy Commissioner Sean Byrne and FOR-NY Executive Director, Laura Elliott-Engel, presented awards to the winners of the *10th Annual Recovery Fine Arts Festival Contest for the Commissioner's Choice Award*.



OASAS Executive Deputy Commissioner, Sean M. Byrne and FOR-NY Executive Director, Laura Elliott-Engel

For the first time in history, two winners were chosen this year. Peggy Giguly for her tapestry submission entitled, "The Roads" and A.S. Wick for "The Ignominious Supplication - For my friend, you finally have peace," were the winners.

There were more than 100 submissions of original artwork submitted to the *10th Annual Recovery Fine Arts Festival* showcasing the creative expressions of individuals in recovery throughout New York State. The artwork was also on public display at the Empire State Plaza Concourse in Albany through September.

OASAS would like to congratulate the winners and thank all of the artists for their support of this annual Recovery Month event!

For more information about recovery, visit the [OASAS website](#).

Odyssey House Annual Run/Walk Recovery Event Held in NYC

The Odyssey House *Run for Your Life 5K Run & Recovery Walk* was held on September 28, 2013, at the Icahn Stadium on Randall's Island. This annual event is held in support of men and women who are in recovery from substance use disorders. It also helps to increase awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders, and promotes the message that behavioral health is essential to health,

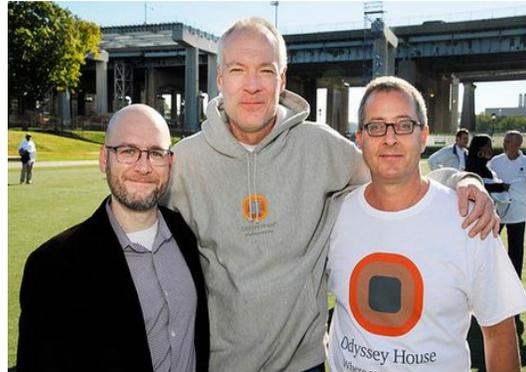


prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover. In addition to the run/walk, the event featured a variety of family-friendly activities, including: children's races and games, fitness competitions and

demonstrations, free entertainment and refreshments.

Participants included individuals in treatment, their families and friends, and supporters of recovery services. As the premier recovery month event in New York City, *Run for Your Life* attracts entrants from all the major NYC treatment programs. Some of the programs represented were Odyssey House, Samaritan Village, Educational Alliance, Palladia and many more.

OASAS Special Assistant, Russell Shaw attended the event and gave opening remarks to the crowd of more than 1,000. He provided encouraging remarks to the families and individuals in recovery. "We applaud the fact that you have faced and conquered your addiction. You have faced great challenges and your recovery is a tribute to your strength and the importance of programs like Odyssey House," said Shaw.



For more information about Odyssey House, visit their [website](#).

OASAS Albany EAP Committee Starts Community Supported Agriculture

As a way to offer healthy foods and to provide a wellness experience for OASAS employees, last spring the OASAS Albany EAP Committee offered employees the opportunity to participate in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). The participants included 17 OASAS employees and four staff from The Legal Project (located in Stuyvesant Plaza), as in the beginning they did not have the minimum number of shares (15) required to have a CSA site.



The CSA started in mid-July and ended in mid-October. The OASAS group was one of 21 weekly delivery sites which also included other state agencies, private companies and hospitals. OASAS participants represented 17 out of the total 500 shares that were in the CSA. Employees signed up for either a "full" or an "individual" weekly share. Every Thursday afternoon the van pulled into the parking lot of OASAS to deliver food boxes pre-packaged with an assortment

of freshly picked items such as: lettuce, beets, cucumbers, carrots, celery, fennel, kale, endive, corn, acorns, butternut squash, melon, swiss chard, peppers, tomatoes, squash, yellow and red onions, turnips, regular & and sweet potatoes, bok choy, spinach, savoy and regular cabbage, scallions, and eggplant. Each week, they received five to seven of these produce items in their share along with recipes to try out that featured that week's produce.



OASAS employees also generously shared their favorite recipes with each other. Everyone reportedly enjoyed eating the fresh picked produce, and felt good about helping support a local farm and being part of sustainable agriculture. They were also able to each add variety to their diets and try new vegetables (even if they were not all were to their liking). Also, at least one person took advantage of the "pick your own" at the Farm, available most Saturdays, which included herbs, flowers and small vegetables.

Participation in the OASAS CSA enabled the Patroon Land Farm to donate more than 51,000 thousands of pounds (or 25 tons) of farm fresh veggies to the Regional Food Bank (RFB) for their distribution. Moreover, recently a few of the participants also donated a check for \$85 to the Regional Food Bank in appreciation of their CSA coordination efforts. Participation in Community Supported Agriculture was such a great experience for the participants. As a result, OASAS Albany EAP Committee are hoping to offer it again in 2014.

Next spring please look for information about the 2014 CSA season. If you have any questions about the OASAS CSA, contact Margo Singer at Margo.Singer@oasas.ny.gov. For more information about the CSA, visit <http://regionalfoodbank.net/farm/community-supported-agriculture/>.

Open Letter of Thanks to OASAS from an American Soldier in Afghanistan

This letter was sent to OASAS staff thanking them for providing care packages to American soldiers currently serving in Afghanistan.

To the OASAS Staff:

I am currently serving in Wardak Province, RC East, Afghanistan with 3-15 Infantry, Task Force China. Right now, I and my unit are operating in the most kinetic area in RC East, if not Afghanistan. Every day out here is a tough fight, but I am privileged to serve with the best, motivated, and truly brave Americans. We are proud of what we are doing and continue to accomplish



every task and mission set before us.

In saying that, we could not do what we do, without wonderful people and organizations like yourselves. Yesterday, I received two packages of food, candy, and various other items that we quickly and happily distributed amongst ourselves down here at Combat

Outpost Sultan Khel. I have attached a picture of myself and some of the guys who were able to enjoy everything!

Once again, as we count down our limited time left here until we come back home in a few weeks. We are all reflecting on the amazing support we have received. Thank you again for your love and support, it means the world to us and keeps us going!

By the way, please tell Jami (Campbell) Russell that I appreciated her note!

Very Respectfully,

Tom Witkowski
1LT, MI
TF China A/S2
COP Sultan Khel, Afghanistan
"CAN DO!"

"What's New?" on the OASAS Website

- [Free OASAS Sponsored Regional Trainings](#)
- [New Impaired Driver Management System \(IDMS\) Feeder Forms](#)
- [Updated Impaired Driver System \(IDS\) FAQs](#)

- [NY/NY III Permanent Supportive Housing for Homeless Families - Round Three RFP and Q&A](#)
- [2013-2014 Flu Season Health Alert](#)
- [Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder \(FASD\) In the News - New Articles](#)

For questions and/or comments about this newsletter, please send them to communicator@oasas.ny.gov.