

• *Strategic Plan Highlights* •

FY 21 Third Quarter

Mississippi State Hospital Psychiatry Residency Program Receives ACGME Accreditation

Strategy 3.5.4—Establish a psychiatric residency program at Mississippi State Hospital that increases psychiatrists available to practice in state hospitals and mental health service providers.

Mississippi State Hospital received approval in February 2021 for 24 psychiatry training positions through the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) accreditation process.

With the ACGME accreditation secured, the new MSH Psychiatry Residency Program is on track to have six psychiatry residents join the hospital this July. Six new residents will join the program each year until 24 psychiatrists are in the program by July 2024.

“This is only the first step in our mission dedicated to becoming the fertile crescent of mental health training opportunities in Mississippi,” MSH Residency Training Director Jon Corey Jackson, MD, said. “Our program is dedicated to serving Mississippi and surrounding states through the expansion of the psychiatric workforce.”

MSH was referred by U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith to Dr. John Mitchell with the Office of Mississippi Physician Workforce (OMPW). OMPW provided MSH with consultants and other resources needed to become a sponsoring institution with the ACGME in January 2020. The program began interviewing candidates in December 2020.

Workforce projections show that the national need for psychiatrists will rise and demand will eventually outstrip supply significantly. This program is one way

to support the expansion of residency training.

The MSH Psychiatric Residency Program currently has three affiliated sites: Merit Health Central, where psychiatry students will complete their emergency psychiatry rotation, consult-liaison and neurology rotations; and both Region 8 Mental Health Services and Region 9 Mental Health Services, where residents will treat individuals at both Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs).

One of the primary benefits of the residency training program is increasing the number of psychiatrists practicing in Mississippi. This alone will provide an additional workforce within state hospitals, area hospitals, local community mental health centers, and crisis stabilization units. It will also offer potential partnership opportunities down the road with local community mental health providers, collaborative care clinics via telemedicine, local emergency rooms, as well as local hospitals in the areas of primary care, geriatrics and neurology.

“Our vision is to continue bridging the gap between community services and inpatient care,” Dr. Jackson said. “This program will bolster the status of Mississippi State Hospital in providing valuable training opportunities, but most importantly, it will improve access to care.”



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‘Behind the Mask’ Campaign Offers Outreach in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Strategy 3.2.1—Develop comprehensive outreach efforts to inform Mississippians and stakeholders of how to access services, types of services available, and how to file grievances related to services provided by DMH Certified Provider agencies

In the first half of FY 21, DMH received an Emergency Response to COVID-19 grant to provide mental health and alcohol and drug addiction services needed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of this funding, DMH launched the Behind the Mask campaign in December 2020 to help promote the availability of these services for Mississippians in need.

This campaign is designed to encourage individuals facing mental health problems not to hide “behind the mask,” but to seek help for their mental health problems, to understand that the pandemic has affected all kinds of people around the state, and to realize that these issues are common.

Grant funding provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration was distributed to 15 mental health providers statewide through an application process. Dubbed MERC-19, it uses a three-pronged approach:

1. It allows Mississippi to provide community-based services with an emphasis on remote, telehealth offerings.
2. It allows Mississippi to facilitate the growth of sustainable tele-medication-assisted treatment (MAT) capacities throughout the state, particularly in remote, rural areas.

3. It allows Mississippi to support the proactive provision of mental health and alcohol and drug treatment services to healthcare professionals, crisis hotline workers, and first responders who have experienced trauma due to COVID-19.

The Behind the Mask campaign includes a web site that allows someone in need to quickly and easily find a service provider near them. Available at www.behindthemaskms.com, the site also includes easy contact info for crisis lifelines and Mobile Crisis Response Teams, includes links to mental health screenings, and includes testimonials from people who have been impacted by the pandemic.

Social media messaging developed specifically for the Behind the Mask campaign has also been shared through the DMH Facebook and Instagram pages. In February 2021 alone, posts from the Behind the Mask campaign on Facebook reached 2,321 people.

Calls to the DMH Helpline have increased during the past year. In the first half of FY21, there were 5,004 calls to the Helpline. In the same time period in FY20, there were 3,015 calls; there has been an increase of approximately 66 percent in FY21.

Visit www.behindthemaskms.com to see more from the Behind the Mask campaign.

