

Very Important Stakeholder:

The engagement of Certified Peer Specialists in the Pennsylvania behavioral health system is a major component in the state's "Call for Change" *and your expertise is needed to move forward on some critical next steps*. At the invitation of the Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), the Pennsylvania Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (PAPSRS) will facilitate a Certified Peer Specialist Workgroup. The Workgroup will assist in the continued quality implementation of Peer Support Services in Pennsylvania, and I would like to invite your participation.

The Workgroup will be a time-limited *Implementation Workgroup*, comprised of representatives from a broad array of stakeholders and other knowledgeable persons and statewide partners. It is meant to be complementary to the work of the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association's Peer Support Coalition, and will focus on operational and implementation issues related to the CPS service.

Our project is based on Objective 3 in the New Freedom Initiative 2007-2009 Strategic Plan developed by Pennsylvania peers during their Consumer Driven Services Summit in July 2007 (appended). Accordingly, the Implementation Workgroup will:

- Assess the primary intent and needed resource development or system changes to accomplish Objective 3
- Determine what resources (expertise, skills, training/educational opportunities, material assistance, technical assistance, etc.) may be available and offered by the various stakeholder organizations, including
 - assuring the consistency of peer specialist availability throughout the system
 - creating quality assurance and quality improvement mechanisms for the peer support initiative and
 - developing a career path for peer specialists
- Make recommendations to the Deputy Secretary and OMHSAS regarding resource gaps, or challenging barriers believed to impede the full or timely implementation of Objective 3

PAPSRS is excited to collaborate with Joseph Rogers, Chief Advocacy Officer for the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania and a dedicated Peer Services advocate, in facilitating the Workgroup. Together, we also look forward to working with you or someone from your organization. Please contact Dan Sylvester at papsrs@comcast.net or 1-888-490-0404 by September 10, 2008 to indicate your interest and ability to participate or if you have any questions about the CPS Task Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joan Erney J.D.", written in a cursive style.

Joan Erney
OMHSAS
Deputy Secretary

Dan Sylvester

Dan Sylvester
PAPSRS
Executive Director

**New Freedom Initiative 2007-2009 Strategic Plan
Objective 3**

County/Provider Development & Implementation of Peer Support Services

- 1) *Insure provider competency related to Certified Peer Specialist role and responsibility through training and technical assistance*
 - a. *Develop ongoing forums for Peer Specialist supervisors*
- 2) *Peer Specialist Training and Retention*
 - a. *Assess and develop needed resources to support peer certification training. Incorporate “Peer Specialists” orientation into agencies to prepare the environment for the inclusion of Peer Specialists.*
 - b. *Provide training on reasonable accommodation to all agency staff, including peer specialists*
- 3) *Collaborate with Coalition to offer examples of how to overcome fears, discussing new relationships and boundaries, how to examine the “hard stuff”, including language and other needed changes.*
- 4) *Help define career pathways for Certified PS (i.e. CPS Supervisor)*