

# PRESENTERS

## Accessing Behavioral Health Services: Can Peer Support Help?

May 24, 2017 • 3:00–4:30 p.m.

### MODERATOR



**Vetisha L. McClair**, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Vetisha L. McClair, Ph.D., joined the CMS Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) in 2012. She is a research analyst in the Research and Rapid Cycle Evaluation Group, Division of Special Populations Research. Dr. McClair leads the evaluation of many of CMMI's demonstrations in the area of mental health, including the group of Health Care Innovation Awards (HCIA) focused on behavioral health and substance abuse. The comprehensive evaluation of these diverse 10 awardees from the initial round of the HCIA initiative will yield findings with important implications for public policies and programs that affect individuals with behavioral and substance use disorders. Vetisha also leads the evaluations of the Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Program and the Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Demonstration. In addition, she provides consultation to CMMI and other CMS components in the development and evaluation of new projects in the area of mental health. Her research interests are mental health service utilization and the impact of psychosocial/demographic factors on treatment outcomes. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the Section on Developmental Genetic Epidemiology in the National Institute of Mental Health after earning her Ph.D. and M.S. in counseling psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her B.S. in psychology from Howard University. She has also provided psychological services in a variety of settings (Veterans Administration Medical Centers, disability services, and outpatient hospitals) and is a licensed psychologist in the state of Maryland.

### PRESENTERS



**Crystal Blyler**, Mathematica Policy Research

Crystal Blyler's work focuses on improving services and policies that are designed to enhance the health and well-being of people with behavioral health conditions and disabilities. Blyler has over 20 years of experience implementing and evaluating behavioral health services, systems, and policies. At Mathematica, she has provided senior leadership and counsel for diverse projects designed to evaluate inpatient and community-based behavioral health services, disability and employment support services and policies, evidence-based practices, and quality measures for behavioral health care. She directed the evaluation of the Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Demonstration, which was mandated by the Affordable Care Act, and designed to examine the effect of providing federal payments at the Medicaid matching rate for inpatient stays in private psychiatric hospitals for people who were suicidal, homicidal, or dangerous to themselves or others. Other projects include an evaluation of primary and behavioral health care integration, innovative approaches for addressing behavioral health challenges among Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries, and approaches to maximizing employment potential,

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self-sufficiency, and well-being while reducing dependence on public benefits among people with disabilities. Before she joined Mathematica in 2011, Blyler was a social science analyst at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where she directed the implementation and evaluation of initiatives to improve employment outcomes, health, and well-being among people with serious mental illnesses. She holds a Ph.D. in psychology from Harvard University, where she also was a postdoctoral clinical research fellow for the Laboratory for Clinical and Experimental Psychopathology.



**Kimberly Goodwin, Center for Health Care Services (CHCS)**

Kimberly Goodwin, L.M.S.W., worked as a peer supervisor on Project Health at CHCS, which received one of the Health Care Innovation Awards. Project HEALTH provided integrated care to people experiencing chronic homelessness. Ms. Goodwin went on to act as a CHCS team lead in peer workforce development, consulting on the effective integration of peers into the agency's existing clinical teams. She was honored by Via Hope Texas as a 2014 "Innovator in Recovery" for her implementation of effective supervisory practices in peer workforce development. Kimberly currently works within a First Episode Psychosis Pilot Project at the Center for Health Care Services and serves as adjunct faculty in the University of Texas, San Antonio's Department of Social Work.



**Jamie Neckles, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**

Jamie Neckles is the chief program officer in the Bureau of Mental Health in the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH). She is responsible for over 200 programs that benefit adults with mental illness by providing treatment, crisis services, rehabilitation, support with finding housing, and care coordination. Jamie is particularly proud of her earlier role as the project manager for Parachute NYC because of its strong focus on supporting people through a psychiatric crisis in a way that honors their human rights and dignity and engages both the person and the family in a process of hope and recovery. Jamie has been with the NYC DOHMH for almost nine years. Before that, she provided direct mental health and social services in Brooklyn, Montana, and Alaska.



**Dan O'Brien-Mazza, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Dan O'Brien-Mazza was selected as the first National Director of Peer Support Services in at the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and has held this position since September 2, 2007. From 1980 -1988 he provided vocational counseling and substance abuse services to veterans in Syracuse, before a formal substance abuse program was launched. Before his current position, he was team leader of the Syracuse VA's Psychosocial Rehabilitation & Recovery Programs where he supervised the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Services, Homeless, Mental Health Intensive Care Management and Vocational programs. Since coming to central office, Dan oversees the hiring and training of over 1,100 Peer Specialists in VA facilities across the nation. In 2014 he established the first formal provider classification for peer specialists in the nation with the National Uniform Coding Committee. His current focus is on expanding the deployment of peer specialists by integrating them into primary care and other VHA specialty clinics. Dan has been blessed with recovery from substance abuse and mental health issues. He holds a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Syracuse University.

