

# TOP OF MIND

News from Portage Path Behavioral Health



## New President at Portage Path

2017 has already been a year of big change at Portage Path Behavioral Health. With the retirement of Tim Morgan, Tracy Davis Yaeger, Ph.D., took over as President of the 46 year-old agency. Dr. Yaeger brings 27 years of experience to the job, with the past eighteen years spent as Vice President of Clinical Services.

A native of Albany, New York, Dr. Yaeger received her B.A. in Psychology from SUNY at Albany, her Master's from Marist College, and her Ph.D. from The University of Akron. After completing a research-based fellowship, she joined Portage Path as a psychology resident.

The following conversation outlines Dr. Yaeger's vision for the agency.

### What do you feel you bring to Portage Path?

First, I bring a history with the company, and the institutional memory to know where we've been. I also bring my experience as a practitioner, and administrator blended with business acumen. My goal is to maintain the stability we've enjoyed for decades, and continue the work we do, even as we face some daunting challenges - we must adapt to Ohio's Behavioral Health Redesign, which will significantly affect our funding, the future of the Affordable Care Act is tenuous, and we have more people than ever coming to us for affordable treatment.

### What are some of your goals as President?

Longer term, one of the things we have started to do is build strong affiliations and partnerships with agencies and companies in the community. We are looking to collaborate where it makes sense, both from a business standpoint and also with vendors and donors. We've also started a number of initiatives to incorporate clinically-sound, evidence-based practices here, which is key to providing the highest quality care that we can. Take our work with co-occurring disorders. With support from the ADM Board, and in consultation with Case Western Reserve's Center for Evidence Based Practices, we're building a program to help our clients who have both a mental illness and a substance abuse disorder. We are also heavily involved with the Zero Suicide Initiative. Another goal we have is to continue to find ways to support our employees. We've addressed issues related to compassion fatigue and will continue to make sure that our valuable staff is properly supported. We want to make sure we retain our dedicated people and give them the tools they need to succeed. It's critical that we meet our mission.

### With the Behavioral Health Redesign, there are a lot of unknowns. What do we know at this point, and how do you plan to handle the BHR?

There are indeed a lot of unknowns. We know that we will be reviewing each and every one of our services and all of our programs and seeing what makes sense to continue, what needs to be modified, what needs to be revised. We need to figure out our reimbursement and working with a new set of rates as well. The one certainty is that we're going to work to stay fiscally healthy and continue to provide quality services to the Summit County community.

### Along with the BHR, what other challenges are you seeing in the future?

Funding, reimbursement, and revenue streams. We want to make sure that we are able to provide a cadre of services that really meets the needs of area residents, and that we're able to handle the ever-increasing demand. We want to make sure that our services remain accessible. A big challenge is also filling the gap between our service cost and our reimbursement rate.

### What kind of relationship does Portage Path hold with the ADM Board?

We have a very positive relationship with the ADM Board. We are grateful for their generosity and their support of us. We constantly work to collaborate with them, and to provide services in the most efficient and effective way under our mandate. We work with them to innovate, and they have very receptive to ideas that will help provide more services to more people. We've only been able to incorporate evidence-based practice training because of their support. When BH Redesign is in effect, our partnership with ADM will only become more essential. The ADM Board is a safety net not only for people who need services, but also for the agencies providing these services.

### What benefits does Portage Path's services provide to area residents?

Portage Path is the front door to the adult mental health system, both through Psychiatric Emergency Services, and as the operator of the Adult Admissions Department on the outpatient side. We have a very diverse patient base, some with very complex trauma, and we really see the whole spectrum of diagnoses. We are able to help people regain their lives, improve their functioning, manage their crisis, and really lead more productive lives. In that way, we're helping this be a healthier community. We work with a lot of the established community-based systems like hospitals, courts, jails, and social service providers to make sure nobody falls through the cracks. We found that we have a great many clients who also deal with chronic, serious physical health needs, but who also were not aligned with a primary care doctor. So we partnered with AxxessPointe Community Health Center to create a clinic in our Akron office. We also partnered with Genoa, ten years ago, to install a full-service pharmacy. As our clients often have transportation issues, these partnerships allow us to ease that burden by providing a "one-stop shop" for healthcare needs.

### Anything else to add?

## Case Management at Portage Path

In 2016, Portage Path Behavioral Health incorporated a new program to help our clients not only reach mental recovery, but find stability in their everyday lives. CPST - Community Psychiatric Supportive Treatment - helps our clients manage non-mental health life needs through case management. Case, or care management, is a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's needs.

Portage Path has a strong team of CPST staff dedicated to providing guidance to our clients. Led by Bill Cervenik, LPCC-S, the CPST Team ensures that all client needs are being met in the most efficient way possible, so clients can spend sessions focusing

on making progress on their mental health, instead of worrying where they'll sleep that night or how to get food for their family

"CPST staff provide services that assist our clients in maintaining an effective level of functioning in the community," says Cervenik. "This program is the community-based extension of our agency, set up as an adjunct to therapy and psychiatry. The main focus is to help our clients get their basic needs met, like food, shelter, health care, etc. When basic needs are more stable, the client is better able to focus on their therapy goals."

The CPST Team has access to many resources throughout Summit County. The team often works with local food banks, rooming houses, shelters and NAMI to help clients find resources they need.



Bill Cervenik, LPCC-S

