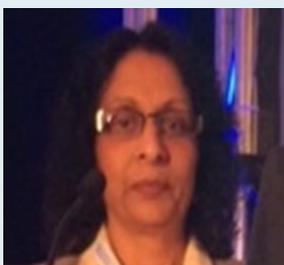
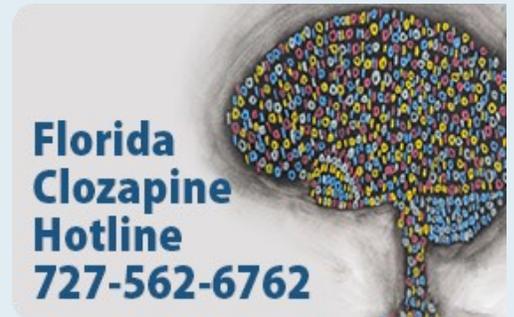


Florida Medicaid Drug Therapy Management Program for Behavioral Health, University of South Florida

Spring 2015

Program Highlights and Updates — Spring 2015

- ◆ **New Clozapine Hotline is now available for Florida providers to call at 727-562-6762!** The hotline service is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with calls answered by Dr. Randolph Hemsath, the Medical Director of Boley Centers in St. Petersburg, FL. He has 20+ years of experience prescribing clozapine to patients. This hotline was established to address the under-utilization of clozapine for treatment resistant schizophrenia and bipolar disorder in the State of Florida, and give providers access to information about prescribing and monitoring clients while taking clozapine.
- ◆ **Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) features our Program in Medicaid Quality Issue Brief, April 2015—Improving the Quality of Behavioral Health Treatment for Children and Adults.** The issue brief highlights the programs and resources that Florida Medicaid has put in place through the Florida Medicaid Drug Therapy Monitoring Program for Behavioral Health to improve the quality of treatment for individuals with behavioral and mental health disorders. The issue brief can be accessed on our website at <http://medicaidmentalhealth.org/>.
- ◆ **May is National Mental Health Awareness Month!** In 2013, President Obama officially designated May as National Mental Health Awareness Month to raise awareness of mental health issues in the United States. Currently, half of all U.S. citizens will receive a diagnosable mental health condition in their lifetime, with 1 in 5 having a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year. Among those with chronic mental illness, half of all cases begin before the age of 14. Sadly, it takes an average of 10 years before people receive any sort of mental health treatment. The White House issued a Presidential Proclamation for the 2015 National Mental Health Awareness Month stating that this month “we stand with those who live with mental illness, and we recommit to ensuring all Americans have access to quality, affordable health care.”
- ◆ **We celebrate National Mental Health Awareness month by honoring** an important contributor to our Program and to Florida psychiatric practice, child psychiatrist **Dr. Bhargirathy Sahasranaman**. Dr. Sahas (as she is known) has been employed at Henderson Behavioral Health since 1991 and has been their Medical Director since the year 2000. Henderson Behavioral Health is a large CARF accredited behavioral health organization in Florida that serves over 30,000 individuals each year. She is also the child psychiatrist consultant for several organizations such as Camelot Community Care, Children’s Harbor and Kids in Distress.



Dr. Sahasranaman is Board Certified in General Psychiatry and in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and is a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. She has served on various committees and panels at the district and state levels. She has been a member of the expert panel for the “Florida Medicaid Drug Therapy Management Program for Behavioral Health” that has developed best practice medication guidelines for treatment of various behavioral health disorders in children and adults. She has provided numerous presentations,

Florida Medicaid Drug Therapy Management Program for Behavioral Health, University of South Florida

Spring 2015

Program Highlights and Updates — *Spring 2015 continued*

workshops, and trainings and has received several awards and recognitions.

Dr. Sahasranaman is Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine, and is also on the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry, Florida International University College of Medicine.

Dr. Sahas was asked “Why is being a psychiatrist satisfying?” She said, “Working as a psychiatrist is particularly exciting in our current era of neuroscience. Within my past 25 years as a practicing psychiatrist, I have watched the field blossom; what was once a little-understood area of medical practice has evolved into a field in which we seek, without bias or prejudice, to understand the biological and physiological bases of behavioral health. Psychiatry has become a dynamic field of medicine that integrates neurobiology, organic pathology, primary psychopathology, and social processes in seeking to understand human behavior. Groundbreaking research provides us with evidence-based and outcomes-focused treatments that allow psychiatrists, like me, to take a holistic approach to patient care. All of these advancements allow me to make impactful differences in the overall health and well-being of individuals; when I can help to influence their lives in a positive way, it is extremely fulfilling.”

- ◆ **Café PERC at Lakeview Center, a peer-support organization and drop-in center, has an average of 65 clients who visit each day.** Café PERC is located on the Lakeview Center campus in Pensacola, Florida, and provides an array of peer services to clients. Melanie Turner and Lucia Dolan are the Peer Specialists who staff Café PERC and combined they have more than 30 years of experience in the mental health field. Ms. Dolan was a psychiatric nurse at Lakeview before becoming a peer specialist. Ms. Turner worked as a volunteer at Lakeview Center prior to her current position, and she also serves as a board member for NAMI Pensacola and a crisis-intervention trainer for local law enforcement. When asked what contributes to their success at Café PERC, both agreed that it is the quality of relationships that are most helpful in supporting people’s recovery. As Ms. Dolan said, “We are like a family at Café PERC.” Services and activities at Café PERC include peer-facilitated wellness seminars and support groups, access to a gym and group physical activities, recreational arts and crafts, recreational music composition, computers with Internet access, free WIFI, a lending library, and a peer-led snack shop. For more information about Café PERC, go to <http://www.elakeviewcenter.org/BehavioralHealth/SpecialtyServices/CafePERC.aspx>.



Melanie Turner and Lucia Dolan

- ◆ **The Registry Project currently contains 2,099 children who received antipsychotic medication treatment prior to the age of six.** The Registry Project is a database constructed from the Second Medical Review Program (formerly known as the Prior Authorization (PA) Program) which is a program to ensure safe and appropriate prescribing of antipsychotic and antidepressant medication to children in the state of Florida. The Registry began in April 2008 and has information on children’s demographics, medical and behavioral diagnoses, and psychotherapeutic medication use. The goal of the registry is to track the long-term outcomes of antipsychotic medication use in young children. Risperidone and aripiprazole are the two mostly commonly prescribed antipsychotic medications used to treat conditions in young children such as disruptive behavior disorders, developmental delays, and autism. Reports from the Registry Project will be forthcoming in future newsletters and publications.

Florida Medicaid Drug Therapy Management Program for Behavioral Health, University of South Florida

Spring 2015

Program Highlights and Updates — *Spring 2015 continued*

- ◆ **Sponsored children’s behavioral health presentation and exhibit booth at Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) Annual Conference, February 18-22, 2015 in Weston, FL.** The presentation entitled “*Psychotherapeutic Medication Use in the Florida Pediatric Population*,” was presented by Dr. Sahas. Key points of the presentation include that 1 in 5 children have a diagnosable mental health condition, but only 1 in 3 of these receive any help or treatment. Dr. Sahas emphasized that psychotherapeutic medications are only one component of a treatment plan. She reviewed the best practice information contained in the *Psychotherapeutic Medication Guidelines for Children and Adolescents*, and also highlighted the importance of physical health monitoring of children who receive antipsychotic medication and are vulnerable to side effects such as metabolic syndrome.
- ◆ **New guidelines for the treatment of neurodevelopmental disorders will be available in the Summer of 2015.** We held an Expert Panel Meeting in Miami, FL on May 8-9, 2015 to revise and update the 2013 guidelines—*Neurodevelopment Disorders: Psychotropic Medication Recommendations for Target Symptoms in Youth*. Speakers at the meeting were Daniel Castellanos, MD and Jeremy Veenstra-VanderWeele, MD who reviewed the literature on the pharmacologic management of children with neurodevelopmental disorders and common co-occurring disorders and symptoms such as aggression and sleep disturbances. Please contact sabrinasingh@usf.edu to preorder the free guidelines.
- ◆ The **following guidelines are currently available** on our website at <http://medicaidmentalhealth.org>. Please contact sabrinasingh@usf.edu if you would like copies mailed to you.
 - *Florida Psychotherapeutic Medication Guidelines for Children and Adolescents*
 - *Florida Best Practice Psychotherapeutic Medication Guidelines for Adults*
 - *A Summary for Monitoring Physical Health and Side-Effects of Psychiatric Medications in the Severely Mentally Ill Population*



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