



The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force is the voice of the community on issues related to the quality and responsiveness of mental health and substance abuse disorder services.

Date: November 4, 2019

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Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force Congratulates 2019 Award Recipients

The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) is pleased to congratulate the recipients of our 2019 awards recognizing outstanding leadership and mental health advocacy. The awards will be presented Tuesday afternoon November 12th at the 2019 Karen Avery Forum, *“Pathways to Employments: Opportunities, Rights and Resources,”* at IndependenceFirst, 540 S. 1st street.

The 2019 Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force Award recipients include:

Karen Avery Award

Mary Neubauer will be the sixth recipient of the *Karen Avery Award*. The award was established to honor Karen Avery’s legacy as an advocate, mentor, peer, and leader in advancing the rights of people with disabilities. Mary is a respected leader in the mental health community. She is the Public Policy and Advocacy Coordinator for Mental Health America of Wisconsin, and most recently served on the Health Policy Advisory Council to Governor Evers Transition Team. Mary serves as a Co-chair of the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force, and represents the Task Force on the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board where she chairs the Quality Committee. She was instrumental in the statewide establishment of peer specialists, as well as a trainer for the Crisis Intervention Team training program. She is a consumer of the mental health system, recovering alcoholic of 36 years and tireless advocate for persons who are experiencing similar challenges. The nomination noted that Mary is “a dynamic and inspirational leader in mental health rights who has overcome tremendous odds. She continues to barrel through physical and mental obstacles to deliver vital information - often with her incisive wit that underlines the severity of needs still not met for individuals and their families who have a mental illness.”

Rising Leader Award

Marie Perry will be the first recipient of the Rising Leader Award in recognition of her outstanding leadership to advance mental health and recovery values in our community. Marie is a Certified Peer Specialist and peer specialist trainer. She is the supervisor of the Community Linkages and Stabilization Program (CLASP) at La Causa. She is currently pursuing a graduate degree in clinical mental health counseling at Northern Vermont University, in the Children and Youth track because of her commitment to intervene early to help change the course of recovery. Marie is a State of Wisconsin Independent Certified Peer Trainer and has played an active role in mentoring other peers. She has convened a study group for anyone preparing to take the state exam, and has helped to support and encourage many peers who are pursuing this certification. As noted in the nomination, “this is a young woman on a trek. She is truly a visionary leader making a daily impact in our community.”

Outstanding Achievement Award

The MHTF is awarding its first Outstanding Achievement Award to **Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey Altenburg, Deputy Public Defender Regional Attorney Manager Paige Styler, Assistant District Attorney Kelly Hedge and SPD Attorney Manager Dawn Rablin** for their working in creating a nationally recognized Early Interventions program at the front door of the criminal justice system to focus on remedial strategies for individuals facing criminal charging - many of whom have a history of serious and persistent mental illness. These lawyers have worked tirelessly to create

new opportunities for those with symptoms of mental illness at risk of being trapped in the criminal justice system. These efforts began in 2007 and expanded with grant funding by the National Institute of Corrections and the MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge. These lawyers became the fiercest advocates for the community mental health and housing services needed to break the often destructive cycle of homelessness, mental illness, police contact leading to arrest and then return to the community. They partnered with any agency or community advocate they could find to ensure the best possible chance of success for clients. They also worked closely with the Milwaukee Circuit Court System under the leadership of Judge Maxine White, the Office of County Executive Chris Abele and his key administrative staff including Mary Jo Meyers, DHHS Director; Mike Lappen, Behavioral Health Division Administrator; and James Mathy, Housing Division Administrator.

Congratulations to the following for their leadership:

- **Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey Altenburg** has been a prosecutor in the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office for over 20 years. He is in charge of work done by the Early Intervention and Community Prosecutors in his office. He has taken direct responsibility for the development of nationally recognized programs at the Front Door of the criminal justice system. This work began in 2007 and has been enhanced through substantial work and grant funding through the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and the MacArthur Foundation.
- **Deputy Regional Attorney Manager Paige Styler** has worked in the Office of the State Public Defender for over twenty years and now helps manage the Milwaukee Trial Office. As a lawyer and advocate she has distinguished herself in the representation of clients with mental illness, substance abuse and disabilities in our criminal justice system. Starting in 2007, she has been a critical voice in the development of the Early Interventions program and related projects funded by the MacArthur Foundation. She supervises the work of the Public Defender's Office that is tied to critical reform efforts among many other duties.
- **Assistant District Attorney Kelly Hedge** has been a career prosecutor with the Milwaukee District Attorney's office. In addition to her many assignments during her career she has been a Community Prosecutor focusing on homelessness issues in District One and the District Attorney assigned to Early Interventions to build some of the Early Intervention projects funded by the MacArthur Foundation including Post Booking Stabilization which was a pre-charging diversion of people with serious and persistent mental illness.
- **Attorney Manager Dawn Rablin** has been with the Office of the State Public Defender for over 20 years. She has distinguished herself in the representation of clients with mental illness, substance abuse and disabilities. As a supervisor with the SPD, she oversees a team of lawyers who work in the Early Interventions program include our Drug Treatment Court and Veterans' Initiative. She has been actively involved with all of this work including the projects supported by the MacArthur Foundation.

Congratulations to the award recipients and we thank them for their dedicated advocacy.

The ***Pathways to Employment*** forum supports the Mental Health Task Force's commitment to advancing recovery; employment can be an important part of recovery. The forum seeks to increase awareness of work opportunities and employment supports for people who live with a mental illness and / or a substance use disorder. There is no charge for the forum; however, registration is required, and space is limited.

Additional information about the November 12th forum including online registration is available at:

<http://www.milwaukeeemhtf.org/2019/10/03/registration-for-the-2019-mmhtf-forum/>