



HRA/DSS PERSPECTIVE

COMMITTED TO ASSISTING PEOPLE IN
REACHING THEIR MAXIMUM LEVEL OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY



2nd Anniversary of WeCARE Marked by Achievement

The Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, and Employment (WeCARE) program celebrated its second anniversary in February. During its two years of operation, this innovative program has become a model for other social service districts struggling to help their clients with functional limitations to employment reach their highest level of health and self-sufficiency.

The WeCARE model begins with a biopsychosocial (BPS) assessment that results in an employability determination that identifies an individual's functional strengths and limitations and necessary accommodations and supports.

In WeCARE's first two years, over 90,000 BPS assessments were completed. While 7.3% of these clients were determined to be fully employable and referred back to their job centers to participate in traditional job preparation and placement programs, 92.7% of post-BPS clients continue in one of WeCARE's components: vocational rehabilitation (45.7%); wellness rehabilitation (37.3%); advocacy for federal disability benefits (9.7%).

Through February 28, 2007, 3,460, WeCARE clients have obtained jobs and 2,306 were approved for federal disability benefits. WeCARE job placements and federal disability approvals have increased by more than three times during the program's second year. This shows that although WeCARE implementation has been challenging because of the complexity of the program and the unexpectedly high number of clients served, it continues to improve service delivery that results in better outcomes.

Recently WeCARE added a new service component, the Clinical Review Team (CRT) to improve service delivery. CRT, under the direction of a board certified physician, enables WeCARE to re-evaluate already medically assessed clients who report that their medical conditions may have changed and determine its impact on their employability without these clients necessarily having to undergo another BPS assessment.

Each WeCARE job placement represents an individual who, with customized services and support, has stabilized health conditions and/or overcome significant employment barriers to become a productive working person. "Implementing WeCARE has taken much effort by many different HRA divisions and it is gratifying to see that we have had significant success," said Executive Deputy Commissioner Frank R. Lipton, M.D. "We are in an ongoing process of improving the program, which over time, will help even more clients achieve their maximum functional capacity."



HRA Program Updates

WELFARE CASELOAD AT A NEW LOW

The welfare caseload has decreased to 369,601 as of February 2007. This advances a 42-year low achieved last March when the caseload fell to 402,281. An additional 32,680 people have now left public assistance. This is a decline of 68.1% from the caseload peak of 1,160,593 in March 1995 achieved through the programs of Welfare Reform.

JAMAICA JOB CENTER HOLDS ITS FIRST JOB FAIR

The Jamaica Job Center and Food Stamp Office, the Jamaica Medicaid Office and the Queens APS Office moved to the newly constructed Muss building at the end of December and opened as model offices. On March 29, the Jamaica Job Center and FIA's Employment Services will host the center's first job fair in the evening, from 4 to 8 p.m. 750 job seekers are expected to attend. The Back to Work vendor servicing Jamaica Model Center, Goodwill Industries, has recruited over 20 employers with job openings at varied skill levels.

HRA SERVES HOUSING FIRE VICTIMS

On February 4, 2007 a 6-alarm fire destroyed a building at 1056 Neilson Street in Far Rockaway, Queens. Twenty-one families were burned out of their apartments and many more were affected.

The HRA Crisis Unit reported the following day to American Red Cross headquarters (ARC) and the Westway hotel to assist families with a variety of HRA services and with the completion of emergency assistance applications. FIA expedited the delivery of emergency assistance by setting up a hub location to process these applications and a special unit within the Rockaway Center where those affected by the fire could be served.

HRA Perspective Monthly Bulletin

Published by the City of New York
Human Resources Administration/
Department of Social Services

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Robert Doar, Administrator/Commissioner

Office of Public Information & Communications
Barbara Brancaccio, Exec. Deputy Commissioner
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Event Calendar

GIVE BLOOD GIVE LIFE

In the winter weather, the New York Blood Center's blood supply dropped to a critical level, please help by donating blood now.

Support **HRA's Blood Drives** by donating blood at one of the following locations in March:

Friday, March 9, 2007

General Support Services (GSS) and Investigation Revenue & Enforcement Administration (IREA), 250 Church Street, Manhattan, First Floor Training Room, from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM. To make an appointment, call Valerie Sheafe at (212) 274-6414.

Friday, March 23, 2007

IREA/Bureau of Eligibility Verification (BEV), 253 Schermerhorn Street, 7th Floor, Brooklyn, from 11:00 AM to 4:30 PM. To make an appointment, call Crystal Griffin-Scott at (718) 923-7939.

PAI LUNCH & LEARN WORKSHOP

Thursday, March 29, 2007

HRA Headquarters, 180 Water Street, 12th floor conference room, 1:00 PM. Dr. Robyn Moncrief, breast surgeon at St. Vincent Comprehensive Cancer Center, will speak on "Breast Cancer Awareness."



Library Director Hildy Dworkin will give a **library research seminar** demonstrating important research tools and techniques that will

assist staff in their research. Topics covered will include an overview of library services and of McMillan's more than 20,000 holdings and an introduction to Internet search engines and techniques.

Where: HRA McMillan Library, 180 Water St., 12th fl.

When: March 22, 2007

Time: 2 sessions: 12-1 and 1-2 PM.

To Register: send e-mail to HRALibrary@hra.nyc.gov

20 people per session (first come, first served)

HRA's Family Circle Widens at This Year's African American Heritage Month Finale

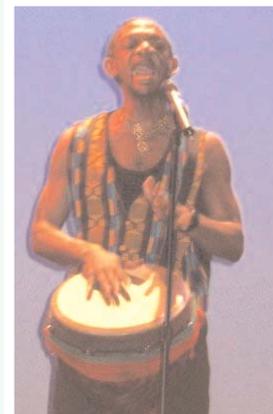
Each year at HRA the artistic talents of staff makes the finale presentation of African American Heritage month a time when we can all share in the messages of African American history and carry renewed energy into the world.



The Heritage Committee and performers chose the theme of "Family Reunion: A Wish for Our Children" to remember the lives and achievement of African American ancestors. The theme of "Family" also invited us to recognize how greatly our connection to one another through the work we do and being part of the shared history of our agency has contributed to each of us.

HRA's family circle was expanded at the celebration by the presence of Commissioner Doar and

a visit from former Commissioner Eggleston. Commissioner Doar invited former Commissioner Eggleston to join him as a keynote speaker. Commissioner Doar recalled finding his vocation as a boy growing up in Brooklyn when his father came to work in Bedford Stuyvesant in the anti-poverty program. Commissioner Eggleston shared the arc of her connection with HRA, which began in 1956, by introducing her 81-year old mother, in the audience.



This was the first time the presentation was a scripted dramatic story. The scenario moved from ancient West African civilization, through the middle passage to the world we live in today, illuminated by thought-provoking narrative and songs, dance, and dramatic sketches by HRA's gifted performers.

Top-left: Commissioner Doar and Heritage Committee chair Brenda Eley; Middle-right: Winston Hoppie's stirring drum solo; Bottom-left: From "When We were Kings"

Photos: Donna Gibson

IREA's Mission Expanded to Include Medicaid Provider Fraud

HRA's Investigation, Revenue and Enforcement Administration (IREA) has extensive experience detecting and prosecuting client-related Medicaid fraud. Working through its Bureau of Fraud Investigation and its Prescription Drug Fraud Division, IREA, in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, achieved combined recoveries and cost avoidance of \$70 million in 2006.

In 2007, HRA will also have the authority and responsibility to pursue Medicaid fraud committed by hospitals, doctors and other health care providers. The new Medicaid Waste and Abuse Demonstration Project, announced by former Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg on December 29, gives local governments the legal authority for the first time to monitor and investigate Medicaid providers.

IREA is now organizing an Office of Medicaid Provider Fraud Investigation (OMPFI), staffed with approximately fifty investigators, data analysts, and auditors. OMPFI will work in partnership with the New York State Medicaid Inspector General to review and investigate Medicaid providers suspected of fraud, waste and abuse in New York City, and is expected to begin operation in mid-2007. The expansion of IREA's investigative and audit authority to include Medicaid providers is expected to contribute significantly to the effort to root out Medicaid fraud and to the recovery of fraud dollars.