

Delaware Child Psychiatry Access Program Looks to Remove Barriers, Empower Primary Care Providers

WILMINGTON – The Delaware Children’s Department has launched a program that links pediatric primary care providers with free psychiatry consultations and assistance to streamline behavioral health care for children and youth.

Implemented in 2019, the **Delaware Child Psychiatry Access Program (DCPAP)** is a beneficial resource for primary care providers serving young people with behavioral health needs. The goal of this program is to remove barriers to behavioral health care and provide quicker services to patients when they need it, as well as empower primary care practitioners.

According to the Institute of Medicine, about 13 –20 percent of children living in the United States (**up to 1 out of 5 children**) experience a mental disorder in a given year. Children’s mental health disorders have a significant impact on children, their families and communities constituting an important public health issue. According to a study published in the [journal “Pediatrics,”](#) primary care providers have substantial interactions with children when it comes to managing mental health disorders with about 1/3 of children exclusively receiving their mental health care through primary care.

“Pediatric primary care practitioners (pediatricians, family physicians, nurse practitioners and medical assistants) are increasingly being asked to provide direct behavioral healthcare services for their patients. DCPAP supports pediatric practitioners by offering consultations and

trainings by a child psychiatrist, and referrals to resources and services by a behavioral health care coordinator. The goal is to empower health professionals to treat their patients within their practices,” said **Dr. Richard Margolis, DCPAP Project Director and Medical Director for the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services.**

“We want primary care providers to take advantage of these free services and look forward to helping them with their practices’ behavioral health needs. Integrating behavioral health care with primary care provides better access – and comfort – to our young patients and their families.”

Pediatric primary care providers enrolled in DCPAP can request a consultation with a board-certified child psychiatrist or behavioral health resources to help them address their patients’ needs. These services aim to help expand providers’ skill and comfort in managing their patient’s behavioral health disorders in their office, as opposed to referring their patients to limited psychiatry services that may take months to access. Providers interested in consultations or more information can call the DCPAP “warm line” at 302-513-0929 or fill out [this online form](#). Consultations often focus on questions about diagnosis, screenings, medications and treatment choices for behavioral health disorders.

So far, 175 pediatric primary care practitioners have registered for the program. Interested providers, including pediatricians, family physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants caring for patients up to age 21, can register by calling 302-513-0929 or by emailing DSCYF_DCPAP@delaware.gov. Enrolled providers will also have access to a newsletter, information and webinars.

DCPAP also offers various training and education opportunities for the pediatric primary care practitioners and their staff, as well as the general behavioral health community. These training sessions, accessed on a virtual platform and

available for free Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits feature live sessions with a child psychiatrist on a variety of topics. The current DCPAP fall training series is ongoing.

Please **Save the Date** for the below trainings by Dr. Mark Borer MD:

- Youth Suicide Parts 1 & 2: Tuesday 10/6 & Tuesday 10/13
- Bipolar Disorder Parts 1 & 2: Tuesday 11/10 & Tuesday 11/17
- Trauma & PTSD Parts 1 & 2: Friday 12/4 & Tuesday 12/8
- Look for the Autism Spectrum Disorder series to start 2021!
- ***All sessions will occur from 12:30 – 1:30 PM on Zoom.***

Sign up for the trainings via e-mail at DSCYF_DCPAP@delaware.gov. Participants will be sent the Zoom invitation.

DCPAP is funded through a five-year \$2.225 million federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to provide pediatric primary care professionals with child psychiatry consultation and behavioral health training. For additional information, DCPAP is modeled after the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program (McPAP) and receives consultation from the Massachusetts-based program. The McPAP program, in existence for 15 years, covers the entire state of Massachusetts and offers services to approximately 96 percent of the pediatric serving primary care practitioners in the state.

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