

The Consultation Project is a state-wide cooperative consultation project between the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians, the Maine Academy of Family Practice and the DHHS Office of Adult Mental Health Services providing all primary care providers access to a psychiatrist. Developed by Dr. David Moltz in 2003 in cooperation between the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians and the Maine Academy of Family Practice, this has become a national model for a number of other states. Dr. Moltz is a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and has received national recognition for this project.

The project links volunteer psychiatrists with primary care practices throughout the state. An ongoing consultative relationship is developed in which the rural practitioner contacts the psychiatrist they have been assigned as needed for advice and guidance. The contacts are by telephone or email and are in the nature of “informal consultation” rather than actual treatment or supervision. The primary care provider (PCP) is an independent practitioner who is serving as the medical home for the patient for whom the consultant makes suggestions, but leaving the medical home as the site for the final decisions to be made. The relationship allows the facilitation of a long term advisory relationship between the psychiatrist and the various primary care practices which are paired.

In 2003 Dr. Moltz, Chair of the Clinical Practice Committee of the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians, with a steering committee, reviewed legal liability issues and other models for a statewide professional consultation possibility. Maine is primarily a rural state with a population of 1.3 million with a geographic concentration of its’ 300 psychiatrists in the lower quarter of the state, leaving many primary care providers without ready access to psychiatry. From an initial group of 20 volunteers, 22 individual practices were enrolled in the program. The District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association, the State Academy of Family Practice, and the steering committee facilitated the process-

In 2005, a part time coordinator was hired following the recognition of the program by a special grant from the American Psychiatric Association. This helped in approaching all primary care practices in the state, add 21 new practices, and provide for closer follow-up and monitoring of the process.

In 2008, following discussions with the DHHS Office of Adult Mental Health Services, a contract was signed which facilitated expanding the program to 52 practices with 26 consultants, providing training for the volunteer psychiatrists, in service presentations, conference opportunities, and a recognition of the value of this program for improving the care of those suffering from mental illness in the state.

Contact: Warene Eldridge

Executive Director of Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians

Phone: 207-622-7743

Email: weldridge@mainemed.com