

## Options in Outpatient Treatment

*Summarized by Thomas T. Thomas*

Several local organizations in Alameda County offer programs known as Outpatient Treatment Services (OTS), Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP), and Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOT). Since we last checked in with these providers, their programs have expanded the range of services available to consumers seeking skills to function at a higher level of recovery. The panel of speakers at the September 26 meeting included:

- **Luana Shiba Harris, OTR/L, MPA/HAS**, Director of Outpatient Behavioral Services at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, located on the Herrick Campus ([www.altabatesummit.org](http://www.altabatesummit.org)) in Berkeley. The campus offers two levels of intensive day treatment, an adolescent program, an eating disorder program, and a DBT program for patients with borderline personality.



*LEFT TO RIGHT: LENORE SCHUH, ROSLYN HEAD-LYONS, AND LUANA SHIBA HARRIS*

- **Roslyn Head-Lyons, LCSW, ACSW**, who is Senior Admissions Coordinator for the Highland Campus of the Alameda County Behavioral Health Care System ([www.alamedahealthsystem.org](http://www.alamedahealthsystem.org)) in Oakland. The campus offers an outpatient medication clinic and counseling services for MediCal-eligible patients. Similar outpatient programs are offered at the Fairmont Campus in San Leandro.
- **Lenore Schuh, MFT**, representing the La Cheim PHP in Oakland ([www.lacheim.org/php-iop](http://www.lacheim.org/php-iop)), with groups on Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Schuh herself conducts programs on paranoia, hearing voices, intrusive thoughts; mindfulness; and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Other programs include Trauma and the Body; Expressive Arts; and men's, women's, and LGBT groups.

### **Alta Bates Sutter Medical Center**

The Herrick Campus program started 26 years ago with Adult Day Hospitalization. The current program is for people with Medicare or MediCal insurance, with a sliding scale for private insurance.

This partial hospitalization program is for people with acute symptoms of severe psychiatric illness, including suicidality. The treatment is based on skills development, patterned after several programs offered by the Veterans Administration. The therapies focus on symptom reduction, stabilization, social and functional skills, and preparation for vocational rehabilitation.

A second program, the Adult Intensive Program, is for working adults experiencing emotional difficulties at work and at home. This program offers structured groups based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy; teaching life skills; relationship management; reduction of disabling symptoms; and coping with anxiety, depression, and loss.

The Adolescent Day Program provides short-term treatment for those transitioning from inpatient care or experiencing an acute crisis at home. It offers Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to focus on peer relations, family difficulties, and education related to the patient's specific psychiatric disorder. This is the only local adolescent PHP program, other than at John Muir in Contra Costa County, and is designed so that patients can go to school.

An Eating Disorders Program includes work with dietitians and CBT/DBT group therapies designed to teach skills and provide insights into managing relationships and practical daily living.

The Herrick Campus offers four inpatient units: two adult, one adolescent, and one general psychiatric. The campus then offers outpatient services on two tracks, both designed to follow inpatient hospitalization: partial hospitalization with sessions five days a week, and intensive outpatient with sessions three days a week.

Three years ago the campus began offering a program of DBT for people with borderline personality disorder, including impetuosity and self-destructiveness. This program focuses on mindfulness and emotional regulation.

Luana Shiba Harris noted that the Alta Bates Sutter organization is looking into expanding into a young adult program for ages 19 to 26, which will teach functional skills and vocational rehabilitation. "We have to learn what people are struggling with in the community," she said.

### **Alameda County Behavioral Health Care**

Roslyn Head-Lyons said she has been with the program for 16 years. They offer partial hospitalization for five days a week with four group sessions a day, and intensive outpatient treatment for three days a week with three groups a day. The topics include symptom and medication management; communication skills; Cognitive and Dialectical Behavioral Therapies; relaxation, stress, and anger management; and art, music, drama, and activity therapy. The programs are designed as a step down from inpatient hospitalization at the John George Pavilion or Villa Fairmont.

The county serves patients with diagnoses across the board: depression, bipolar, schizo-affective, and schizophrenia if the patient is stable on medication, as well as dual diagnosis. The outpatient clinic has a doctor on staff, can prescribe medication, and can offer the patient a therapist. The programs serve a diverse population but are now English only, although planning on expansion to Spanish language.

A year ago the campus began offering patients with mild to moderate symptoms and MediCal as their only insurance access to one-on-one therapy for up to a year. Other programs serve Medicare patients, Kaiser referrals, and other insurance by arrangement.

Alameda County's outpatient programs offer van transportation—which is not wheelchair accessible, although the facility is—and a hot lunch with the option of a

brown-bag lunch. The Highland Campus in Oakland serves north county patients from Hercules to Alameda, and the Fairmont Campus serves south county from San Leandro to Dublin.

### **La Cheim Partial Hospitalization Program**

Lenore Schuh has been with the organization 18 years. Their Valfer Life Renewal Program of outpatient services offers three groups a day, mostly process oriented, on a variety of topics including Cognitive and Dialectical Behavioral Therapies, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, mindfulness, anger management, expressive therapies, hearing voices and intrusive thoughts, yoga, transition planning, and on Fridays a group on weekend planning. They also offer a recovery group that meets twice a week for people with addictive behaviors.

Each patient gets a counselor to monitor his or her progress, and the staff meets once a day to discuss their patients. La Cheim also offers intern and training programs for psychiatric professionals.

“We’re very community oriented,” Schuh said. “And we offer a warm, supportive environment.” The facility, at 3031 Telegraph Avenue in Oakland, has the advantage of not being in a hospital setting, although the treatment team includes psychiatrists, licensed psychologists and therapists, and nurse practitioners.

Three years ago, La Cheim also started the Paroutaud Suicide Loss Program with specialized group and individual therapy services for those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

La Cheim has a contract with Kaiser and accepts commercial insurance and Medicare for up to six months. Fees are on a sliding scale based on financial need.

#### **Q. What is the enrollment process?**

At the Highland or Fairmont campuses, a person calls, meets with an admissions coordinator such as Roslyn Head-Lyons, and gets a psychiatric assessment. The criteria are that the patient must have severe mental illness and be eligible or at risk for inpatient hospitalization, such as being a danger to self or others or gravely disabled. The patient is then placed in a group if he or she is mild to moderately ill and can function in a group setting.

#### **Q. How does a young person get on Medicare?**

A person with the onset of a mental illness before age 21 can get Medicare coverage from a parent who is qualified in the system, or if he or she has worked enough quarters to qualify. MediCal—the California Medicaid program—is based on demonstrated disability and financial need.

#### **Q. My son is functional but doesn’t do groups. What is available for him?**

Alta Bates Sutter can help the family find the right program for a person from among partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient treatment. “Sometimes,” Lenore Schuh of La Cheim said, “the person is depressed and not motivated; so the main treatment goal may be just showing up.” There are ways to get around group anxiety, such as getting the patient to just go and sit for a limited time.

“People can visit the Highland or Fairmont campus to see if the group fits them and they can tolerate it,” said Roslyn Head-Lyons. “Our programs have great peer support and encouragement.”