

InPSights Newsletter

www.projectsamaritan.org • (718) 681-8700 • getinvolved@projectsamaritan.org

Summer 2009

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

I can remember, even as a child, my Father always used to say to me “aim high.” It became a mantra of his. He would write “Aim High!” on every birthday card, graduation card and say it on any occasion that would even remotely call for a step in a new direction. Sometimes I wondered what he really meant but I suppose, in retrospect, that it has led me to my new journey with HELP/PSI.

For the past twenty-six years, I have been working in health care administration and on May 18th 2009 I began this part of my journey as President and CEO of HELP/PSI. I want to thank all of the employees and clients for their warm welcome. My transition to this organization continues to be smooth and successful.

Over the past 60 days I have conducted many meetings with staff, clients, local community agencies, and “town hall” meetings with all employees. These meetings have been a good opportunity to get to know each member of HELP/PSI who carries out our mission every day. It is only by listening closely to our employees and clients that I will learn more about our organization and be able to uphold and strengthen the mission.



Paul Vitale, President & CEO

I hope to continue these meetings periodically and always have an open door policy.

HELP/PSI has built a good reputation over the years but I now hope to begin to take the organization to a new level. When I first looked to our mission: “Make Lives Healthier, In Partnership”, I realized that this quality partnership between our employees, clients, community agencies and other stakeholders allows us to grow. Without quality indicators and excellent service, we have no organization. I have asked all senior management to go back to their staff and develop quality measures for their departments. In many cases these measures have been developed and just need updating and fine-tuning. Once the indicators are developed we need to come up with benchmarks and give ourselves performance ratings.

Without a sound financial organization we cannot grow. Keeping admissions up and bringing in new patients, along with creating new channels of business are only a few of the ways we will grow. In this difficult time of economic strain we must also be mindful of our costs. We have recently taken on a new Business Development model to reach out to hospitals, managed care organizations and new grant opportunities. All these measures aim us toward making lives healthier, in a new stronger partnership.

Over the years, I have come to learn that what dad meant by saying “Aim High” was. “Set your sights on something bigger and it WILL be yours.” I have set my sights on an organization whose mission I whole-heartedly believe in; whose goals are firmly my own. I have set my sights on a mission that every member of the HELP/PSI family believes in “Make Lives Healthier, In Partnership.” That collective mission we share is so similar to the mission my Father set me toward. When a group of people with one mission come together to see a greater future, powerful things can be achieved. My one hope for HELP/PSI is to “aim high,” and together we can bring this wonderful organization to new heights!

Have a safe, happy summer!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

PSI IS BUILDING NEW PARTNERSHIPS



PSI has undertaken a dynamic new venture and is starting to build partnering relationships in the communities where PSI facilities are located. There will be many of these in the near future, but at this time, PSI is pleased to announce its recent partnership with CitiWide Harm Reduction. Located on 144th Street in the Bronx, CitiWide, with its expertise in doing community outreach to active drug users who are in need of the multitude of services PSI can provide, is a perfect partner as its specialty is services that are absent from PSI programs. This alliance will help PSI to benefit from CitiWide's proficiency in HIV prevention and their work with HIV+ and at risk individuals in the Bronx Community. The partnership will result in increased referrals into all PSI programs and services but primary care has been contracted specifically to provide the following services:

- Hepatitis C Testing
- Hepatitis A, B Vaccination
- Primary Medical Care
- Health Assessments
- Health Education, and
- Treatment Plans

PSI has also taken up the initiative to become part of the CitiWide SRO Outreach Team. One of our dedicated Nurse Practitioners, John Gargan, goes out with CitiWide in the evening to the Single Room Occupancy hotels they serve to provide health screenings and referrals for needed services. PSI would like to take this moment to acknowledge John in this devoted effort as it is often difficult to observe the living conditions and health status of these individuals.

On Thursday, July 16th, PSI and CityWide Harm Reduction will celebrate their partnership with food, crafts and music. All are welcome and encouraged to join in the fun. Look for future partnerships and more growth in the near future as PSI continues to build community partnerships.



John Gargan, Nurse Practitioner

*For information about partnering with PSI, contact us at info@projectsamaritan.org or (718) 299-5500.***

After coming to PSI, my life is forever changed. I'm a better person because of the work I've accomplished through this program.

-PSI Client

FUN TIMES WITH THE PSI FAMILY



Christina, Carlos, Amanda & Antonia, from PSI's ADHC

Every year, thousands of families leave the comfort of their homes to be dropped from insane heights at unimaginable speeds. The PSI family is no different. On Friday, June 19th, 450 members of the PSI family (staff & clients and their guests) spent the day at Six Flags Great Adventure. Each client was able to bring one guest. The group met for a continental breakfast before picking up their bagged lunches, prepared by Tasty Catering, and boarding 9 busses at 8am. These were not your average NYC buses, these buses were full of laughter and singing. One bus even boasted chefs who cooked and passed out fried chicken and macaroni and cheese. One client remarked, **“The drive was one of my favorite parts of the day, I ate and talked with my best friends. I laughed so hard I thought I’d pass out.”** Still, among all of the commotion and excitement, some were surprisingly able to sleep during the one hour and fifteen minute commute to Jackson, NJ.

Nine days of rain, prior to Great Adventure day, worried us that the trip might be postponed. Luckily, when the day arrived, the sun came out and the weather was perfect. Every amusement park enthusiast knows that perfect weather and short lines are the best ingredients to make a summer day at Great Adventure a great experience. The morning started with no lines and toward the afternoon, the lines were longer but moving quickly. On the ride home, one guest remarked, **“I think I got on every roller coaster in the park! Nothing beats this rush!”**

At 6:30pm, the 9 busses returned to the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. Some guests returned exhausted, some exhilarated and others a little of both. It was a great day with the PSI family and only a part of this year’s activities scheduled by our therapeutic recreation department. Upcoming events include a visit to the Palisades Mall, an Arcade Day, Swimming & Picnic at Lake Welch, a Concert at Wingate Park and the Family BBQ at Orchard Beach. Antonia Deleonardis, Assistant Director of Recreation for the Bronx ADHC explained, **“There are so many fun outings planned. This is sure to be a memorable summer!”****



For Information About Our Programs & Services:
www.helppsi.org • 718.681.8700 • info@projectsamaritan.org

HIV PREVENTION AT PSI

During the past few months, outreach workers from PSI have been creating and distributing thousands of safe sex packets for distribution throughout the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. They have also been persuading high-risk individuals to visit our clinics for HIV testing. This push has been made possible because, for the second time in two years, PSI obtained a grant from the City of New York to provide HIV prevention, counseling and testing to communities of color. At a time when the number of new HIV infections, across the whole of the United States, is still occurring at an astounding rate, it is particularly prevalent in the communities PSI serves and it is in everyone's best interest to get these communities tested as soon as possible.

Jaymie Kahn, Director of Clinic Operations, reports that recent HIV Prevention efforts have increased the amount of people being tested for HIV at PSI. 143 people were tested during May and June of 2009. It is regrettable that 5 of these individuals tested positive for the first time. It is fortunate, however, that PSI is equipped to provide immediate qualitative counseling and services to help in dealing with the diagnosis.

Since its inception in November 2007, the PSI Primary Care division has been rapidly growing and providing medical services to the general population. Guided by its esteemed leader, Dr. Barbara Zeller, the team of medical and psychiatric service providers, HIV specialists, nurses, medical technicians and social workers has formulated a highly skilled interdisciplinary team of professionals in service of the clients presenting for care. The compassion of our medical team and quality of care creates an ideal atmosphere for clients who are working to achieve a healthy life.



*To discuss how you can get involved with our outreach and prevention efforts, contact us at getinvolved@projectsamaritan.org or (718) 681-8700.***

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

As we've been increasing our outreach and HIV prevention programs, it's meant more work for our volunteers. They're in the office making calls, passing out information at festivals and health fairs and creating thousands of safe sex packets. Without the efforts of our team of dedicated volunteers, these initiatives would not be as successful as they have become. We can't thank our volunteers enough for the energy and enthusiasm they bring to their work at PSI.**

When I came to PSI, I looked like a different person. I was underweight, unhealthy and unhappy.
Today my health is great and I am loving life.

-PSI Client



HELP/PSI PRIMARY CARE UPDATE

In 2007, HELP/PSI opened three primary care clinics at our sites in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. During these past two years of operations, primary care has successfully served 540 men and women. Our clinics are staffed with providers who are HIV specialists, however, we serve individuals who may or may not be living with the virus. HELP/PSI understands the importance of quality health care, and has therefore made expanding medical services a priority. Currently, all three sites provide primary medical care, women's healthcare and psychiatric / mental health services, as well as HIV testing and counseling. With many new services coming in the near future, the Bronx site has been the pilot for implementing many new initiatives. Recently in the Bronx, we have begun to see patients for colposcopies and anal papilloma screenings, and starting with a new partnership with CitiWide Harm Reduction, HELP/PSI is now a Hepatitis C Screening site for the city. With a grant from the city, HELP/PSI will also begin to provide dental services onsite. With this expanding medical care being provided, HELP/PSI is better able to provide a continuum of care to individuals being serviced by the agency, starting with residential services, to COBRA Case Management, to Adult Day Health Care, and ensuring health is a priority with Primary Care!**

ANAL PAP TESTING IS NOW AVAILABLE AT PSI

The PAP smear has saved countless lives that would have otherwise been taken by the ravages of cervical and anal cancer. PSI's Bronx locations have begun a pilot program providing anal pap tests.

The Link Between Anal and Cervical Cancer

Anal cancer in men and cervical cancer in women are both thought to be linked to the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). HPV, the same virus that causes genital warts is common, especially in bisexual and gay men. Women also have a high incidence of HPV, passed to them through unprotected vaginal intercourse with HPV infected men. The belief is that it is this prevalence that has caused the rise in anal cancers. Gay and bisexual men with HIV are especially at risk because they are at higher risk for persistent HPV infection. And unlike other sexually transmitted diseases, condoms are not effective in preventing HPV infection.

The Anal Pap Procedure

The anal PAP screening is very simple, painless, and quick. The entire procedure requires less than one minute. The physician uses a swab and collects cell samples from the anal canal by swabbing all surfaces of the anus and rectum. These cell samples are sent to a lab where technicians prep the samples and look at them under a microscope to identify any cellular changes that may indicate cancer. In a few days, the physician will have the results and will discuss them with you.

Who Should Be Tested?

People at high risk for anal HPV and anal cancer. This group includes:

- Men and Women who have been the receptive partner (bottom) in anal sex
- Men and Women who have had anal warts, even if they were removed
- Men and Women with HIV
- Women who have ever had pre-cancerous lesions or cancer of the cervix or vulva

*To schedule an appointment or to speak with a Primary Care professional about Anal Paps or with any medical questions , please contact us at primarycare@projectsamaritan.org or (718) 299-5000.***

When I first came to PSI, I just wanted to do something for others.
I didn't realize volunteering would be so much fun!

-PSI Volunteer



**1401 University Avenue
Bronx, NY 10452**

Return & Address Correction Requested

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Medical Director

PSI operates under the leadership of our Senior Staff and two Boards of Directors (1. PSI, directing RHCF, ADHC & COBRA and 2. HELP/PSI Services Corp, directing Primary Care).

LOCATIONS & PROGRAMS

Executive Office & Residential Health Care

1401 University Ave, BX, NY 10452
(718) 681-8700

Brooklyn Adult Day Health Care & Primary Care Clinic

803 Sterling Place, BK, NY 11216
(718) 804-0900

Bronx Adult Day Health Care, COBRA Case Management & Primary Care Clinic

1543-45 Inwood Ave, BX, NY 10452
(718) 299-5500 (ADHC)
(718) 299-3000 (COBRA)

Queens Adult Day Health Care & Primary Care Clinic

105-04 Sutphin Blvd, Jamaica, NY 11435
(718) 725-5000

Queens COBRA Case Management & PSI Finance Office

89-31 161st St, Jamaica, NY 11432
(718) 739-2800

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