



CHANGE

A Message from the Office of the Commissioner

Change is something with which we all have varying degrees of difficulty — I don't think it is ever "easy" for anyone. When my now 18-year-old son was much younger, he had particular difficulty with change. If I moved where a picture was hanging in the house or suggested a slight change in some family routine, it often led to a complete meltdown of my then four-year-old. If we changed any tradition, he was unhappy. As we decorated our Christmas tree this past weekend, I was reminded of this, but I also noted how much he has grown over the years—and, yes, changed. One of his favorite Christmas ornaments (a flying superhero, purchased when he was about eight) was discovered, broken, in one of the boxes of tree decorations. Years ago, this would have precipitated a major meltdown. Instead, his response was "well, I guess it can't hang on the tree, but we can display it here on the table." He didn't want to throw away this piece of his past, but he was willing to adapt. At that moment, it occurred to me: This is what we are all facing in our lives of late— change and the need to adapt. This is not something that's easy — it can take time (hopefully, not fourteen years) — but it can be done.

This year has been one of considerable change for everyone, both around the world and within DMHAS. Many dedicated DMHAS employees began a new chapter in their lives entitled "Retirement." Their departure and the decline in state revenues have presented meaningful new challenges for this agency and our shared commitment to provide the best system of care for the individuals we serve. We may have to think differently about how we do things, but I am optimistic about our resilience and abilities to creatively tackle whatever obstacles may come our way. As we strive toward a truly recovery-oriented system of care, we will need to work more closely together to ensure that individuals who are hoping for recovery receive the services they need in order to succeed. Since my recent appointment as Commissioner, my confidence in what a great team of dedicated and talented people can achieve is reaffirmed every day.

There are so many positive aspects to our roles in helping people achieve success. We are there to assist them in taking the next step(s) toward recovery and more satisfying lives in the community. Hope is one of the key ingredients that fuel their journey toward the goal of recovery. Continuing to foster hope during difficult times can be hard, but we need to do so, both for ourselves and for the people we serve. As we spend time preparing for the many different holidays that we celebrate with family and friends, let's all remember to take a moment and be thankful for the small things in life that we often overlook.

I want to thank each of you for what you do in support of the health and recovery of individuals and families, both now and throughout the coming year. My warmest wishes to you and your families for a joyful, healthy and safe holiday season.