



Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology

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Dr Stephen D. Hayes Community Mental Health Project
at the
Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology
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Remarks of President Nicholas Covino

Good morning everyone.

Public Service is a choice that some make and many do not. In the mental health profession, like the law, we are fortunate to have choices to make: private practice, academic research, teaching, consultation...all of which are more remunerative, they are sometimes more prestigious, commonly less stressful, and almost always they offer much better office space.

However, each year, graduates of MSPP find some way, some hours, sometimes many hours to bring their talents to serve those in the community who need mental health care.

This turns out to be a good thing, because 8% of our Massachusetts citizens experience severe depression; that number rises to 16% if you are Black, 25% if you are unemployed, close to 30% if you are uninsured and at 41% if you are disabled. We know, also, that chronic depression shortens life expectancy by as many as 25 years. This is just depression, not the schizophrenia, not the panic, trauma, family conflicts, developmental delays and substance abuse disorders that are treated every day by those who work in public sector mental health.

The work that is done by these clinicians has its rewards; very commonly one works with exceptional colleagues and on a good day one knows that he or she is making a difference. But, this work, however noble, needs a witness. This work needs a community to say what often those who are cared for in community centers cannot say: That we are appreciative; that we admire your values; that we are all advanced for by your work of caring for others and that we are grateful for your service.

Today we gather to witness the work of MSPP graduates who have spent years of their career in Community Mental Health and to say thank you and that we are very proud to have you among our alumni.

We chose this setting because many of the men and women who work in our Legislature are moved by these same values. They are sometimes thanked; yet sometimes find that they are the object of gratuitous criticism. This building is a home for a culture of public service and we are pleased to be talking about community mental health in its halls and with its members.

We are, also, here to inaugurate a teaching program at MSPP and to honor Dr. Steven D. Hayes; one of our graduates, whose name the program will bear: **The Dr. Steven D. Hayes Community Mental Health Project**. As with any leader who is worthy of such recognition, Steve will tell you that he shouldn't be singled out and that he has been just doing the right thing.

His "right thing" that began in a store front mental health clinic in Lynn 37 years ago, under his direction and through his dedication has grown to become the largest medical center on the North Shore with 400 staff members who complete 165,000 patient visits each year. While building this remarkable service, Steve has also been a model clinical teacher who has trained several generations of health care providers and infected each with his passion for serving the underserved.

Steve is a resourceful leader, a dedicated teacher, a tireless advocate for the underserved, and an inspirational model of what a mental health practitioner should be. MSPP is very proud to have him among our graduates and to have his inspiration available to our students who will become future practitioners in the Community.

We are honored to have Senator Richard Moore who is the Senate Chairman of the Joint Health Care Finance Committee and a friend of Dr. Hayes and Dr. Angela Wilbur who was both a student and now co-Directs Training at Lynn Community Health Center to introduce you to Dr. Hayes.

Presentations by Sen. Moore, Dr. Wilbur and Rep. Steven Walsh (Lynn)

Conclusion

This is a very good day for MSPP. Gathered in this room are our graduates, faculty, administrative staff, friends who have helped us to create curriculum, Senators Moore, Walsh, and Eldridge, Representative Walsh and Grant staff from the offices of Representatives Balser, Fennell, L'Itailian, Wolfe, Kahn, Rush, Murphy and speaker DeLeo from your constituents and your patients, "Thank you" for your commitment to Community Mental Health.

Drawing clinicians to this work is accomplished by having inspirational leaders and models such as Dr. Hayes. In addition, there are stewards in public service like Julia Dyke of the Dept. of Public Health. She isn't an elected official or someone in public view. But, behind the scenes and in a quiet way, Julia has worked to develop and promote Loan Forgiveness for new graduates who will work in Public Sector Mental Health. From her position as an administrator, she knows the importance of creating incentives to encourage and allow practitioners to begin a career in public sector mental health. She also deserves recognition for this important work.

The philosopher, Bishop Berkeley asked: "If a tree falls in the woods and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?" Today in many community mental health centers the good work of professionals such as Dr. Hayes and our graduates will take place. Thank you all for your witness and for listening to the trees.