New Federal Award to Fund Health Integration and Training for At-Risk Youth

A new training program at the Mandel School aims to close the gap in behavioral health care services for at-risk children and transition-age young adults ages 18 to 25 while preparing social work master’s students for careers in advanced clinical practice.

The training program, known as Health Integration Training Expansion (HITE), is funded by a three-year, $421,000 federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration for the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program.

HITE is a new integrated physical and behavioral health training sequence (also referred to as integrated health) that builds upon and expands the strong behavioral health competencies social work students already acquire at the Mandel School. It will prepare students to practice from a more integrated health focus, working with other health care workers to provide comprehensive health care.

Under HITE, up to 30 second-year social work master’s students in the child or adult mental health specialization will receive a training stipend and gain first-hand experience working beside doctors and nurses in several Northeast Ohio agencies doing field work with children and transition-age youth.

HITE reflects the goals of U. S. Department of Health and Human Services’ “Healthy People 2020,” an initiative to eliminate health disparities nationally, said David Hussey, PhD, associate professor of research and co-director of the social work school’s Dr. Semi J. and Ruth W. Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education.

In Cleveland, integrated health approaches are critical because of high poverty levels, poor health behaviors, exposure to violence, and mental health and substance abuse issues, Hussey said.

“The presence of a mental illness is of particular concern for transition-age youth, because the illness often leads to poor outcomes across several areas, including housing, education, employment, social relationships and quality of life. These youth often have long social service histories across multiple agencies, such as child welfare, juvenile justice and behavioral health,” Hussey added.

HITE leverages and expands strong connections with premiere health providers in Cleveland, including the Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland, University Hospitals Case Medical Center, The MetroHealth System and Neighborhood Family Practice.

Each student will complete hands-on experience in a clinic or agency setting as part of their field work and advanced curriculum courses focused on health, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, or children, youth and families—all populations treated by local health centers. Field and course work will focus on social worker competencies in the areas of mental health, addictions, dual disorders, trauma treatment, violence and risk assessment (self harm), and integrated health practice. Students are also required to present a professional development seminar for peers addressing integrated health needs of at-risk youth.

For more information about HITE, contact David Hussey, Associate Professor (david.hussey@case.edu).

In Cleveland, integrated health approaches are critical because of high poverty levels, poor health behaviors,
The Child Welfare Fellows program, which was created in 2009 to increase the number of public child welfare employees with social work master’s degrees, has been funded again and expanded. In its first five years of funding, the specialized training program has been awarded more than $1.1 million from the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute with matching funds provided by the Mandel School and 25 child welfare employees in three Northeast Ohio counties (Cuyahoga, Lake and Summit) have obtained their Master of Science in Social Administration (MSSA) degrees. With the expansion, the program is now open to full-time public child welfare staff in seven additional Ohio counties: Medina, Stark, Ashtabula, Geauga, Richfield, Huron and Trumbull.

Strengthening the Current Child Welfare Workforce

The Child Welfare Fellows program has several distinguishing features, none more important than the fact that it supports professionals at local child welfare agencies who have demonstrated at least a two-to-three-year commitment to the work. The expectation is that graduates will either enter or expand leadership roles in their agency.

Expanding Professional Networks

Another distinguishing feature is that students move together through the master’s degree program as a cohort. This approach allows participants to expand their professional child welfare network, as their fellow students each weekend become their professional contacts during the week. It also encourages more in-depth learning, as student’s professional experiences and knowledge sharing enrich reading assignments and classroom discussions.

More Opportunities for Professional Development

Supervision and leadership coursework are part of the plan of study for each participant. The project also provides an enhanced field learning experience through individual and small group meetings to help students integrate field and course work. Prior to graduation, fellows prepare a portfolio presentation that documents their abilities and child welfare competencies over time in the program. These poster presentations culminate in a luncheon and presentation of a certificate for being part of the national initiative.

Mandel School faculty members involved with the program include: Associate Professor David Crampton (david.crampton@case.edu), Assistant Professor Zoe Breen Wood (zoe.wood@case.edu) and Beth Brindo, field faculty advisor and leadership coach (beth.brinbo@case.edu).

For more information about the Child Welfare Fellows program, contact Victor K. Groza, Grace F. Brody Professor of Parent-Child Studies (victor.groza@case.edu) or Gerald A. Strom, Senior Instructor and Intensive Weekend Program Director (gerald.strom@case.edu).
Doctoral Training: Studying Protective Factors that Promote Well-Being for Maltreated Children

The Mandel School received a two-year, $200,000 training grant to fund three studies about why some children thrive despite being abused and witnessing violence in the home.

Megan R. Holmes, PhD, assistant professor and the study’s lead investigator, believes the research could help victims of abuse and neglect by learning why some children are more resilient to it. By understanding child resiliency, social workers and policymakers can implement interventions and programs that focus on protective factors that promote resiliency in maltreated children.

The training grant provides support for three studies of children ages 3 to 17: One by Holmes, plus two dissertations by Mandel School doctoral candidates Julia Kobulsky and Susan Yoon, whom Holmes will mentor.

Holmes’s study will focus on how witnessing domestic violence in the home impacts the academic performance from preschool to middle school. Kobulsky will examine the use of substances in children up to age 17, with a particular interest in those who begin using before age 13. Yoon will study the development of behavioral problems of children 4 to 13.

The researchers will share what they learn with social workers and policymakers who address children’s issues. They expect to present their findings during a symposium in 2016 with the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services.

The Mandel School was one of just five schools nationally to receive this training grant funding, which was provided by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Fellowships for University-Based Doctoral Candidates and Faculty for Research in Child Maltreatment from the Administration of Children, Youth and Families division of the Children’s Bureau.

For more information, contact Megan R. Holmes, PhD, Assistant Professor (megan.holmes2@case.edu).

Interdisciplinary Training: The Early Intervention Related Service Training Program

The Early Intervention Related Service Training Program (EIRSTP) is a collaborative project between the Department of Communication Sciences at Case Western Reserve University and the Mandel School. It is designed to provide speech-language pathology students and social work students the professional skills needed to become certified early intervention service providers for young, at-risk children or children with disabilities and their families. The interdisciplinary specialty program was funded by a grant from the United States Office of Special Education Programs.

“Studying with the speech therapy students provided a unique experience and perspective of combining two schools of thought that I have been able to implement into my current field placement.”

Kaitlin Carden

This project addresses the significant shortages of social workers and speech-language pathologists qualified to provide services to children birth to age 5 with disabilities. During each year of the five-year project, four speech-language pathology graduate students and social work graduate students will be accepted into the EIRSTP. The result will be a total of 40 additional related services personnel qualified and credentialed to provide

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Leadership Fellows Program

The new training programs described in this newsletter complement the existing Leadership Fellows Program at the Mandel School, which is designed for exceptionally qualified, highly-motivated candidates who are interested in leadership, best practice approaches to human service delivery and community practice, and making a positive influence in the world.

The Leadership Fellows program awards full-time, two-year students pursuing a Master of Science in Social Administration (MSSA) with full-tuition scholarships, plus annual funding for participation in professional development activities (such as attending or presenting at conferences). The program includes the Louis Stokes Fellowship in Community and Social Development. Established in honor of Cleveland civil rights pioneer and former Congressman Louis Stokes, it provides a full-tuition scholarship to an African-American or Hispanic student who has demonstrated leadership in community development.

For more information, visit: socialwork.case.edu/finaid/leadership-fellows-program

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evidence-based services to Ohio’s eligible infants, toddlers and preschoolers in Part C Early Intervention (EI) and Part B Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE).

Trainees receive a stipend and tuition support to attend a summer institute on early intervention, plus tuition support for the following academic year. The first training cohort began in the summer of 2014.

For more information, contact Barbara A. Lewis, PhD, Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences, Communication Disorders program (barbara.lewis@case.edu) or Gerald Mahoney, PhD, Verna Houck Motto Professor at the Mandel School (gerald.mahoney@case.edu).

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