

## Philadelphia CSP holds 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Health & Wellness Conference

By: *Velma Kennedy, Philadelphia CSP Liaison*

On Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, Philadelphia CSP held their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Health & Wellness Virtual Conference which included four presenters and two recognition awards.

The Philadelphia CSP Committee recognized two individuals that have done outstanding work in the community and behavioral health system.

**Roland Lamb**, Deputy Commissioner of Philadelphia's DBHiDS (Department of Behavioral Health & Intellectual Disabilities) was the recipient of the "Community Honorable Services Award". Mr. Lamb has devoted years of service, making outstanding contributions to the development of the Philadelphia Behavioral Health System. The award so lovingly captured Mr. Lamb's known quote, "The Struggle Continues, But Victory is Certain", and as always, he was prepared to provide remarks of encouragement and inspiration.

**Gregory Martin**, RHD's Regional Director for Philadelphia Behavioral Health and Housing Division, received the "Most Honorable Mentioned Award" for his continued devotion and support to Philadelphia CSP. Mr. Martin, along with his team at RHD, began providing support and technical assistance to Philadelphia CSP in 2018, and never missed a beat. He has been very instrumental in Philly CSP's mission to provide resources, information, presentations, and training to the community.

The Virtual Conference included the following presenters:

### **Dr. Stuart Burstin**

Dr. Stuart Burstin works with the AIDS Healthcare Foundation. Dr. Burstin has experience working with a well-known pharmaceutical company. He has worked in the field of epidemiology and disease for over 40 years. Dr. Burstin spoke on Covid19 testing. He discussed how the testing right now is most limited to individuals due to supply and demand and how that is affecting the community. In regards to the actual vaccine, based on his background in pharmacology, he shared his feelings that efforts to create a vaccine to address the pandemic is working too fast; there is not a clear path as to whether the second or the first wave would survive in hot climates and no evidence based that the virus would calm down in the cooler climates. As far as social distancing, individuals should still wear their masks appropriately covering the nose and mouth, and not just on the mouth or the chin. Individuals need to be cognizant of wearing their masks, whether they are asymptomatic, and continuing social distancing. They should also report to their physician immediately if they are experiencing symptoms such as cough, fatigue, sneezing, loss of taste and smell.

### **Leah Forrest**

Leah Forrest is the Environmental Design Specialist at RHD (Resources for Human Development). Leah provides interior designing services for those persons with disabilities and designs their living spaces based on the individual's preference and interests. She stressed how

different components such as how furniture is arranged, the color paint used on walls, carpets and other decorations could impact how a room look and provide comfort.

### **Dr. Nichole Johnson**

Dr. Nichole Johnson is current Clinical Director at Jefferson University Social Work Program and has a Doctorate in Christian Counselor. Dr. Johnson presentation, “My Mask, Their Mask, Trauma Informed Care for Certified Peer Specialist” stressed the importance of self-care while doing your job. People think that as a Peer Specialist, you are fine, your smiling and looking good, but sometimes it is the very people doing the work that need to take some time for themselves.

### **Nancy Scheible**

Nancy Scheible has over 28 years in experience with CSP. In addition to her role as a committee member, she also served as CSP Coordinator for Bucks County, and co-chair for SE Regional CSP. Nancy has since moved on to work in direct care, currently as the Clinical Outpatient Supervisor at Merakey. Nancy provided an outstanding presentation and overview of “CSP History”, beginning with the criticism of National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) policies on deinstitutionalization and the failure of communities to have the resources necessary to provide adequate services and supports to person's with long-term mental illnesses. Over the years, workgroups and committees have been formed to help design and promote the development of community-based service systems for adults with long-term mental illnesses. CSP, in Pennsylvania, began in 1984 with the formation of a state-wide CSP Advisory Committee to the State Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS). She also addressed the social inequities in our country and how behavioral health systems have impacted these communities. To date, the CSP committees continue work locally and regionally in bringing the resources and opportunities to the committee for them to advocate for better behavioral health policies.