

# OPAL Center at Columbia Psychiatry

## NEWSLETTER



Optimizing and Personalizing interventions for schizophrenia Across the Lifespan—an NIMH Center

Issue 2 December 2018

[www.columbiapsychiatry.org/opal](http://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/opal)

### OPAL News

NIMH conducted a site visit on September 6<sup>th</sup>. Matthew Rudorfer, Adam Haim, and Bob Heinssen from the NIMH Division of Services and Intervention Research came to NYSPI for the day. Our OPAL team described the workings of the Center and was pleased to be able to demonstrate that our efforts are on track. NIMH has made a substantial investment in ALACRITY Centers and wants us to succeed in our efforts to improve treatments and services.

We held our first Annual Meeting on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. After OPAL investigators provided an overview of Core and Unit functions and updates on the Developmental Projects, we had an extended brainstorming session on the research topics that might bring new perspectives and enhance the effectiveness, delivery, and reach of interventions for people with schizophrenia.

### Methods Core

The Methods Core pursues the development of methods that are applicable to the OPAL aims of developing and adapting treatment and services for schizophrenia that optimizes their effectiveness in real-world clinical settings.

In addition, the Methods Core provides investigators with support needed to conduct OPAL projects.

The OPAL Center supports several interdisciplinary activities including seminar series, research and outreach symposia, workshops, and student interest groups. OPAL seminar series are on either 1st or 2nd Tuesday every month. Qualitative Method Unit is hosting a qualitative interest group monthly workshop every 4th Tuesday. For more information, please visit OPAL website at <https://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/opal/opal-center-seminars-and-events>

### Developmental Projects

Projects 1 and 2 are underway.

**Project 1: Improving Accessibility and Personalization of Cognitive Remediation for Schizophrenia.** Led by Dr. Alice Medalia, Project 1 is testing a way to better match cognitive remediation to the needs of clients and to make it more accessible. Recruitment is going well at 5 OMH clinics that were already providers of cognitive remediation.

**Project 2: Adapting Critical Time Intervention to Support Inpatient Medical Care Transitions.** Led by Dr. Thomas Smith, an adaptation team of key stakeholders including the proposed study psychiatrist, CTI consultant, CTI care managers and hospital care coordination staff has been adapting CTI for this study and working with our community partners (HealthFirst, Montefiore Medical Center, and BronxCare Health System) on study implementation. The first research participants are expected to be enrolled in early 2019.

**Project 3: Using mHealth to optimize pharmacotherapy regimens.** This will begin later in 2019.

### Voice from Stakeholders Advisory Board Committee

We have assembled a distinguished Stakeholders Advisory Board to help guide our work:

**Patricia E. Deegan, Ph.D.**, Owner of Pat Deegan PhD

**Sherry Glied, Ph.D.**, Dean of New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

**Brian M. Hepburn, MD.** Executive director of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)

**Debra Joy Perez, Ph.D.**, Senior Vice President of Organizational Culture, Inclusio and Equity, Simmons University

**Ruth S. Shim, MD, MPH**, Luke and Grack Kim Professor in Cultural Psychiatry, University of California, Davis

**Ann Marie T. Sullivan, MD**, Commissioner of the New York State Office of Mental Health

The first SAB meeting was held on December 4<sup>th</sup> at NYSPI. Stakeholders want us to focus on interventions that are scalable and sustainable. Addressing disparities is an important priority, as is keeping in mind the goals and preferences of consumers. Helping consumers find jobs and improving the mental health workforce were both seen as important. Other topics of interest included violence and suicide prevention. Addressing issues facing people with schizophrenia as they grow older was identified as a priority area, especially with our "across the lifespan" commitment.

### Pilot Projects

The OPAL Center supports research that tests innovative ways to accelerate the development and implementation of effective, individualized treatments for schizophrenia in real clinical settings. We congratulate the recipients of the OPAL Pilot Award for Fall 2018:

**Natalie Bareis, MS, LMSW, PhD**

**Leslie Marino, MD, MPH**

**Stephanie A. Rolin, MD, MPH**

**Alice Saperstein, PhD**