

June 25, 2021

Colleagues and Stakeholders,

It is with pleasure that we announce the hiring of Mr. Donald Clark as a Project Director to lead our dual systems initiative of the highly anticipated pilot of PA START. Don holds a Master of Education from Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania. He served as the Deputy Director of the Allegheny County Office of Intellectual Disabilities for more than 20 years, the Acting Deputy Mental Health Administrator for Allegheny County on an interim basis and has worked closely with the behavioral health and hospital systems in the western region. In addition, he has experience in the management of Community Residential Programs, along with numerous recognitions and awards.

The START model is a crisis intervention and prevention program designed to support individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism (ID/A) and co-occurring mental health challenges. National data surrounding this program demonstrates significant outcomes and cost-effective system improvements.

Funding for the pilot is being provided by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Money Follows the Person (MFP) program which offered a unique opportunity to apply for supplemental funding for capacity building efforts. The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) partnered to present the PA START pilot. Pennsylvania was one of the first states to apply and receive this award.

In his role as the Project Director for START, Mr. Clark will be working with diverse stakeholder groups, the University of New Hampshire/Center for START Services and Allegheny County.

Please join us in a warm welcome to Don to the ODP/OMHSAS team!

Sincerely,



Kristin Ahrens
Deputy Secretary
Office of Developmental Programs



Kristen Houser
Deputy Secretary
Office of Mental Health and
Substance Abuse Services