



For immediate release:
Feb. 14, 2012

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Medical Director named for Department of Mental Health

(Columbus) Tracy J. Plouck, director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH), today announced the appointment of Mark A. Hurst, M.D., as medical director for the cabinet-level agency. In this role, Hurst will provide clinical supervision and leadership to the medical and psychiatric staff at Ohio's state-run psychiatric hospitals. He will also advise the ODMH director on matters related to recruitment, research, community mental health plans, and licensure of private hospitals and residential facilities.

Hurst advances from his current ODMH position as chief clinical officer at Twin Valley Behavioral Healthcare (TVBH), Columbus. TVBH is one of the state's six regional psychiatric hospitals that provide short-term, intensive treatment to people with serious mental illnesses and those committed by the criminal courts. He joined TVBH in 1993 as psychopharmacology consultant, progressing to assistant chief clinical officer for addiction psychiatry in 1998, and chief clinical officer in 2008. Hurst graduated from the Medical College of Ohio at Toledo in 1985 and completed residency training at the University of Michigan and The Ohio State University, where he served as chief resident in his final year of training. He is board-certified in psychiatry and addiction psychiatry and has been recognized as a "Best Doctor in America" since 1995.

A native of Zanesville, Hurst graduated from Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, in 1981 as class valedictorian. Prior to his career with ODMH, he held leadership positions in psychiatry and addiction psychiatry in the VA health system, at Harding Hospital and at Ohio State, where he remains an active clinical faculty member.

Director Plouck expressed her appreciation for the leadership that Dr. Hurst will continue to provide to ODMH in this new and expanded position. "His commitment to quality clinical treatment of brain diseases and his knowledge of mental health issues will support the work we do to improve health and wellness in communities statewide," said Plouck.

Dr. Hurst voiced his appreciation of the appointment and commitment to service. "I am honored that Director Plouck has selected me to serve the people of Ohio as medical Director of ODMH. Our care and concern for individuals with mental illness and the mental health of all Ohioans is an important mission. I look forward to the opportunity to work with the Director to meet the mental health needs in our state as we collaborate with patients experiencing brain diseases, their families, their treatment providers and others in this effort."

ODMH's mission is to promote and establish mental health as a cornerstone of health and wellness for individuals, families and communities throughout Ohio. The department's major responsibilities are to fund and monitor local systems of care, provide quality inpatient services, improve mental health linkages to the criminal justice system and provide quality community services that improve the mental health of Ohioans at all stages of life. ODMH operates six regional psychiatric hospitals, serving 6,000 patients annually. These facilities provide comprehensive services to patients in both an inpatient and community-supported environment. All are fully accredited by the Joint Commission.

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John R. Kasich, Governor • Tracy J. Plouck, Director

Establishing mental health as a cornerstone of overall health

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