



“Addressing a Major Health Disparity and Improving Outcomes:

Integrating Primary and Behavioral Health for Patients with Serious Mental illness Across Hospital and Primary Care Settings”

Speaker Biographies

Johanna Ferman, MD
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center



Johanna Ferman was appointed as Director for Behavioral Health in the County’s Ambulatory Care system in October, 2009 and works closely with AmCare’s leadership to build an integrated behavioral health capacity into the County’s ambulatory health system. This robust system is comprised of their fourteen clinics across nearly 60 miles, serving 100,000 children and adults. In this first year, their highest priority is the development of an integrated primary care-behavioral health clinic that will serve more than 1,000

individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders. Nationally, the seriously mentally ill have been identified as a major health disparity group.

She returned to the public sector following nearly two decades as the CEO and Medical Director for a safety net non-profit, the Center for Mental Health, in Washington, D.C. There, her work focused on the integration of mental health and addiction services for families, adults and children. Prior to her current position, Dr. Ferman served as the Deputy Commissioner for Clinical Programs within the New York State Office of Mental Health.

Her earliest training was in Neurophysiology at the University College London (England), she moved into community and behavioral health as she completed medical school at Wayne State in Detroit, residency in Psychiatry at Cornell-Westchester and gained experience with consultation-liaison psychiatry (at Albert Einstein), with its emphasis on the psychological and neuropsychiatric factors in health care and systemic transformation for improved outcomes. As a core concept, her interest has been in how systems of care impact on outcomes and what factors, including management, allow dynamic systems to flourish.

Dr. Ferman has been recognized through several awards, including the Gold Achievement Award of the American Psychiatric Association, and the Community Mental Health Award of the District of Columbia Medical Society.

Joyce B. Wale, LCSW

New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation

Ms Joyce Wale, LCSW, currently serves as Sr. Assistant Vice President of Behavioral Health for the New York City Health & Hospitals Corporation. As the Executive responsible for behavioral health, she provides leadership, support and direction on policy, planning, performance improvement, operations and finance. Over her thirty year career, she has held leadership positions in state and county governments, community mental health, and human services agencies. Ms. Wale has served as a Board President for the Mental Health Association in New Jersey, in addition to providing therapy in her small clinical practice. Her career has woven both a provider, organizational, and governmental perspective with a commitment to patient centered recovery oriented care. Her publications are geared toward practical implementation of evidence based practices. She is a fellow with the NY Academy of Medicine, a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Behavioral Health Improvement, and serves on a variety of task forces and committees.