



KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

ANN MARIE T. SULLIVAN, M.D.
Commissioner

MOIRA TASHJIAN, MPA
Executive Deputy Commissioner

July 19, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

We are all aware of the stark reality that people with mental health conditions, especially individuals of color, face disparities in health care in terms of access to care, quality of care, and treatment outcomes; challenges that have only been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) believes that all New Yorkers should have equal access to quality mental health services. To reach this goal, we are implementing data driven processes to improve quality and reduce disparities for populations historically and currently known to have unequal access to quality mental health services.

To that end, we have developed a new data tool – the Vital Signs Dashboard (VSD) – that will increase attention to health equity in the mental health population. The VSD is a major component of OMH’s equity strategy and aims to highlight and monitor access and quality at the State, regional and provider level, and complements our other primary equity initiatives.

Our long-term goal is to make the VSD available on our OMH public website. However, currently we are only sharing the VSD with providers and county mental health authorities. We invite you to look at this data with us, as we try to examine and understand the disparities that exist in our public mental health system. We are excited to share with you a tool that we hope will allow our system – at the macro and micro level - to respond to the critical issues of our time.

We will host a live training webinar, to be offered at several different times in August and September, to share our vision for promoting health equity, introduce the VSD, review how measures were chosen and what data sources are used. Beginning in October, we will hold monthly office hours to give you the opportunity to ask questions on how to use the VSD and interpret the data and to hear your thoughts and concerns.

We are confident that the VSD will prove to be an informative and useful tool for your organization and hope that you will make full use of it. We look forward to your attendance at our training webinars and hearing your feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Marie T. Sullivan, MD".

Ann Marie T. Sullivan, MD
Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Moira Tashjian".

Moira Tashjian, MPA
Executive Deputy Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Canuteson".

Matthew Canuteson, MA
Diversity and Inclusion Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Smith".

Thomas Smith, MD
Chief Medical Officer