

## ASSISTANT SECRETARY ADDRESSES ISMICC

- As I was preparing for this meeting, it struck me that one of the very first things I had the pleasure of doing when I took the position of Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use was chairing the first meeting of the ISMICC and giving the charge to the group.
- Since that time, about 15 months ago, SAMHSA has really transformed in both its focus and operational approach. I feel strongly that the Administration and Congress chose a psychiatrist quite deliberately for the position I hold. I take that choice very seriously in my guiding this Agency and setting a policy direction to address this issue across the nation. As such, I have re-oriented SAMHSA to take a much more clinically and scientifically, evidence-based approach to its work. This is demonstrated through numerous activities such as the implementation of an Evidence-Based Resource Center, ensuring the appropriate attention to the clinical treatment of SMI through pushing programs like AOT and ACT, establishing the Clinical Support System for Serious Mental Illness, and re-focusing SAMHSA's data collection efforts.
- I have believed for a long time that without the education and training of a qualified workforce, the mental and substance use conditions of Americans across the country will never be adequately addressed. As the primary agency addressing these issues, I see SAMHSA at the center of making available this critical training. That is why I re-configured SAMHSA's entire approach to the provision of training and TA from a DC-based contractor provided, grantee focused approach to an approach that utilizes local and regional expertise and focuses on the field at large. We will never achieve the effective treatment of these conditions without broadening the audience who benefits from federal resources for training on evidence-based approaches.
- The ISMICC has been one of the many tools we have utilized to advance the use of evidence-based approaches to treat serious mental illness. In only 15 months, ISMICC has done some amazing things. In a very short timeframe, our non-federal members pulled together a set of compelling recommendations which were rolled out by federal members across ten Departments and agencies for an on-time report delivery to Congress.
- In my reaching out to our ISMICC federal partners for collaboration in this effort, I have been most impressed with the collective interest and dedication to this issue among colleagues at my level and have been equally impressed with the staff support of 55 members across ten departments and agencies. Without that joint effort, many of the successes we have shared in the report you received would not have been possible.
- As we begin ISMICC's third operating year, I think it is important to re-iterate the role of the non-federal members as ambassadors across American communities. We

count on you to provide your insight on what is happening in communities and also to serve as our liaison to communities about the important steps we are taking.

- As an official FACA body, the ISMICC reports to me as the chairperson designated by the Secretary of HHS. That means that recommendations, progress reports, and updates come to me from this group.
- It is equally important that we all understand that this committee itself is not authorized to implement recommendations. Whether and how the recommendations are implemented is up to the individual federal agencies that comprise ISMICC. Although the federal departments are not compelled to act on those recommendations, as I noted, their dedication to the implementation of your recommendations has been impressive. We have seen tremendous involvement and participation over the past year from our federal ISMICC members. I think that says a lot about the quality and foresight of your recommendations, it also says a lot about the federal designees and their commitment to improving the lives of people with SMI and SED and their families.
- Your role in the field is extremely important and we count on you to utilize what you are seeing and hearing as you provide advice and recommendations. Your participation and communication about ISMICC will help us to ensure that improved federal coordination is not the end in itself. Improved coordination should result in helping people living with serious mental illness get the care, treatment, and ongoing psychosocial and community supports they need.
- Your aspirational recommendations go beyond the authority and scope of the federal government. To achieve the meaningful change you have envisioned, local and state government, public and private organizations, and community members must be engaged and involved. I am asking you to consider how you and other stakeholders can help us get this message out across communities.
- We've structured the agenda today to get your input and thoughts on how best to do this. Before I turn the meeting over to Dr. Everett, I wanted to also take a moment to acknowledge that this meeting is David Morrissette's last ISMICC meeting. Dave has been an integral leader in this effort. Dave, I thank you for your service to this Committee and to SAMHSA and I can say with certainty that we would not have gotten to this place without your contributions. I will now turn things over to Dr. Everett, our new Director for the Center for Mental Health Services, to walk through the day's agenda.

