

# **New program seeks to help city kids overcome obstacles to receiving mental health services**

October 21 2010

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Research has shown that nearly 40 percent of youth in low-income communities exhibit significant mental health needs – needs which remain largely unaddressed due to a myriad of barriers, including system-level obstacles, such as waiting lists, stigma related to seeking mental health care, poverty, family stress and competing priorities.

Mount Sinai School of Medicine is launching the first-ever Center for Collaborative Inner-City Child Mental Health Services Research (CCCR) to conduct research that can inform the creation of child mental health service delivery options for urban youth and their families that help overcome the factors related to lack of engagement early drop-out of services. The National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) have awarded Mount Sinai School of Medicine \$4.2 million to lead the CCCR, an initiative that will take a unique, multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to addressing mental health concerns of children and their families.

"Research suggests that due to unique influences in their environment, inner city children are not receiving mental health services, or are discontinuing them early," said Mary M. McKay, MD, Professor of Psychiatry and Preventive Medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine and Director of the CCCR. "This program of research incorporates family members, community advocacy groups, social workers, and psychiatrists into the planning, implementation, and dissemination of

findings from urban child mental health services research studies supported by the CCCR."

The Developing Center will also develop and test novel clinical practices and service delivery models, and analyze the outcomes of the collaboration. Dr. McKay and Mount Sinai are collaborating with the New York State Office of Mental Health, two community advocacy boards representing inner-city families, and Hunter College School of Social Work. The researchers expect the program will have a widespread impact on public health and plan to publish and disseminate their research findings widely. They hope the program will have a positive effect on inner city children and that it can be replicated throughout the country.

"Mount Sinai is committed to providing underserved populations with access to important health care services, while conducting critical research in mental health to help further improve those services," said Wayne K. Goodman, MD, Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and the Esther and Joseph Klingenstein Professor of Psychiatry in the Department of Neuroscience at Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

"Considering Mount Sinai's location on the border of East Harlem, we are in a unique position to address the [mental health](#) concerns of the community here, developing a turnkey program that can be replicated in other cities. We are honored to pioneer this collaboration with support from the NIMH."

Provided by The Mount Sinai Hospital

Citation: New program seeks to help city kids overcome obstacles to receiving mental health services (2010, October 21) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-10-city-kids-obstacles-mental-health.html>

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