

In our own words:

‘I put effort into living my life now.’

*Submitted by **Bradley***

The Bridge PROS Program has helped me get back into society with a job and has given me friends. Everyone is friendly and supportive – it is meaningful for me to come to program and get the support I need.

My job means a lot to me, it gave me a perspective on life again, especially after living on the sidewalk for 20 years. I currently work at Madison Square Garden as a nighttime custodial cleaner. I talked to someone on the train about MSG and he told me they were hiring.

My employment specialist helped me do all the stuff on the computer; the application process was long. The employment group helped me reach my goal of getting a job – we worked on resumes, we talked about experiences and provided feedback.

When it was time for the interview my employment specialist helped me get all dressed up, she gave me encouragement, helped me calm my nerves and told me to “just be myself.”

PROS has helped me in other ways too. The gardening group has given me peace of mind, allowed me to bring something to life, like I’m doing with my own life.

Do you or someone you know have a PROS Success Story to share?

Contact the editor, [Stephanie D. Rodriguez](#), for more information on how to be featured in the Newsletter!



The cooking group has helped me to be open to working with others and provided me satisfaction to hear that they like what I made!

All the staff are very friendly and open. They ask me how work is going; they show interest and care. They give me encouragement. My counselor keeps me in sync. When I don't talk to her, I feel like I'm missing out. She helps remind me about things in my past and how they impact my life today. She helped bring me out of that lifestyle.

I'm more in touch with my emotions now, before I always avoided them. I put effort into living my life now.

Editor's Note: *It's great to hear how the skills and resources you've gained have let you overcome homelessness and be employed. You have come such a long way in your recovery journey, and we really appreciate you sharing your story with us all Bradley!*

Meet the NYESS Regional Employment Liaisons!

We would like to welcome the *NYESS Regional Employment Liaisons*, [Chris Coyle](#) (left) and [Jennifer Semonite](#) (right)!

They will be your primary OMH contact for all things related to the New York Employment Services System and employment. Chris is assigned to New York City, Long Island and Westchester County. Jennifer is assigned to Western New York, Central New York, and the Hudson River region (except Westchester).



PROS Redesign Update: Provider Workgroup Recommendations

OMH would like to thank all of the staff, managers, and administrators who participated in the PROS Redesign Provider Workgroup and Listening Sessions over the last year!

In an effort to keep everyone updated about PROS Redesign, we would like to share some of the formal recommendations made by the Provider Workgroup. These recommendations will be used to guide policy and operations decisions as we move forward with finalizing the new PROS model.

Below are a few of the recommendations:

- PROS needs to remain a person-centered supportive community setting that is flexible enough for individuals at all stages of recovery.
- Simplifying the base rate from 5 tiers to 3 tiers would better reflect current and projected utilization patterns in PROS.
- In response to participants' changing preferences related to service delivery, the reimbursement model should be updated to give adequate credit to 1:1 services.
- The due date for the initial assessments should be increased from 45 days from admission to 60 days.

In addition to the Provider Workgroup and MCTAC Listening Sessions, the Rehabilitation Services Unit collaborated with the Office of Advocacy and Peer Support Services to visit 18 different PROS programs to facilitate focus groups with program participants.

Participants identified many different areas where PROS has been helpful in their recovery process with the main themes being the community of people with similar life experience around mental health, the safe environment it provides, the group-based model, and the creativity that the model allows.

The most frequent feedback and suggestions from participants included:

- A request for expanded hours of operation for PROS programs to include weekend and evening availability;
- The desire for more community-based, offsite groups; and,
- The need for more diverse staff and diversity training for current staff.

We thank all of the programs and participants that allowed us to sit down with them to discuss these important topics. If you have any additional feedback or concerns related to PROS Redesign, please feel free to contact our PROS Redesign Project Manager, [Shokri Enbawe](#).

Need Assistance?

With the end of the Public Health Emergency on May 11, 2023, PROS Programs will have various questions come up. Fortunately, there are various resources and mailboxes available to provide support!

General PROS Program Questions/Resources:

- PROS@omh.ny.gov
- [PROS Guidance Site](#)

PROS Billing or CAIRS/RE Code Issues:

- PROSProgramBillingRelatedInquiries@omh.ny.gov
Reminder: CAIRS Admissions & New Services cannot be backdated. Be sure to update CAIRS regularly!
- [PROS Database Resources](#)
- [PROS Finance Handbook](#)

Managed Care Billing and Claiming:

- OMH-Managed-Care@omh.ny.gov

Telehealth:

- Telehealth@omh.ny.gov
- [Telehealth Services Guidance for OMH Providers](#)

Empowering Employment in PROS: BHSN's Strategies for Supporting Career Development & Growth

Successful engagement in employment requires a multifaceted approach that combines personalized support, skill development, collaboration with employers, and ongoing assistance. Behavioral Health Services North (BHSN) utilizes several different methods to engage PROS participants in employment. Here are some valuable tips they shared on fostering successful employment services:

- ❖ **Team-based approach to employment:** The entire BHSN staff is trained in the IPS model. By “breaking down silos” staff from across the program can assist participants to connect with the vocational specialist at any time. In addition, the vocational specialist is introduced to all participants regardless of interest in employment, so they are aware of what’s available.
- ❖ **Education around employment is essential:** Their local Social Security Office has free brochures that address common myths around employment (such as if you work you will lose benefits), which are kept onsite and given to participants. PROS components are tied into getting a participant ready for employment in a person-centered way. BHSN emphasized structured skill development as an especially helpful service in this regard.
- ❖ **Develop employment skills before enrolling in ORS:** BHSN has recently reopened the PROS kitchen that is staffed and run by participants. In addition, a small convenience mart named “Wellmart” is run by a participant onsite in their gym. With program space a limited commodity, a volunteer group also goes to a local community action program where participants put food items in bags. Participants on average prepare food bags for 146 students and feel connected to their community by being able to give back. These volunteer opportunities give participants a chance to develop confidence in their skills and abilities.
- ❖ **Utilize community time:** BHSN’s vocational specialist finds community time is very helpful for engaging participants who isolate. ORS or engagement meetings are done in the community, which also allows the participant to search for potential job sites. For example, with one participant they walk around the mall near a person’s house to see what work is available. Community time can also be used to foster partnerships with community resources. BHSN has partnered with a local ACCESS-VR program which has referred several participants to their ORS services and allowed them to coordinate warm handoffs, which has led to better participant outcomes. Other potential local ORS referral sources mentioned were staffing agencies, care managers, and small businesses.

PROS Billing Overview for Program Staff (Pre-Recorded)

There have been several training requests related to PROS Billing. In the one-hour pre-recorded webinar linked below, the OMH Rehabilitation Services Unit covers topics such as CAIRS registration and RE codes, calculating program participation time and an overview of the PROS Unit, co-enrollment restrictions, and best practices.

This training was developed for program staff who are new to the program model or who need a refresher on standard PROS billing.

Recording link:

<https://meetny.webex.com/meetny/ldr.php?RCID=c113992d11447f903e987eb75c380f47>

The Department of Health has begun sending Medicaid recertification renewals to Medicaid enrollees.

It is critical that all providers, including PROS programs, are aware of Medicaid recertification dates so that you can support participants with submitting necessary renewals and maintaining their benefits.

You can check recertification dates through ePACES. For more information, please review the MCTAC webinar which was recorded on 04/26/23.

[Recording and slides are linked here.](#)

OMH offers free LGBTQIA+ Resources

Even though Pride Month is wrapping up, OMH reminds you that it proudly supports the LGBTQIA+ community and behavioral health providers who serve LGBTQIA+ families:

Creating Safe Spaces

- [At Work](#)
- [For LGBTQIA+ People of Color](#)
- [For LGBTQIA+ Youth](#)

Get Help

- [Tips for Parents of Transgender Youth](#)
- [Tips for Parents of LGBTQIA+ Youth](#)
- [OMH Find a Program](#)
- [The Trevor Project](#)
- [Trans Lifeline](#)

Learn More

- [OMH Spotlight on Gender](#)
Highlighting the unique issues surrounding gender identity.
- [Language Matters: Gender](#)
Learn about some of the gender-affirming terms to use and which terms to avoid.

Resources

New LGBTQ+ Module is Now Available: AFFIRM Talent

AFFIRM Talent is a web-based training program and resource center to prepare and mentor employers who are looking to recruit and retain transgender and nonbinary talent and, as a result, create job opportunities for gender-diverse people. Organizations and companies that support transgender and gender nonbinary (TGNB) people become places gender-diverse folks choose for employment. This is beneficial for businesses that recognize the value of a diverse workforce and its impact on productivity and creativity. Administrative efforts can significantly enhance the employment experiences of TGNB people, aid the recruitment and retention of a gender-diverse workforce, and improve employment inequality.

To access this module:

- Log into the Learning Community using your username and password at: <https://rfmh.csod.com/client/rfmh/default.aspx>.
- Click on "Browse for Training"
- Click on "Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Queer Topics"
- Click on "AFFIRM Talent"
- Click on "Launch"



This module is presented by the Program for the Study of LGBT Health with support from the New York Community Trust.

The Behavioral Health News Spring 2023 Issue is Now Online!

["Stigma: How We Can Make a Difference"](#) This is the second issue of a two-part series on "Stigma" produced in partnership with the New York State Office of Mental Health.

Part 1 of the series was: ["Understanding the Impact of Stigma"](#)

PROS Newsletters since 2022 are catalogued at: <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/pros/newsletter.html>

PROS Newsletters from 2015-2021 are archived at: [Resources – Rehabilitation & Recovery Clearinghouse](#)



Office of
Mental Health

This newsletter is written by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Treatment, and Care Coordination at the New York State Office of Mental Health.

Please distribute to all PROS staff.