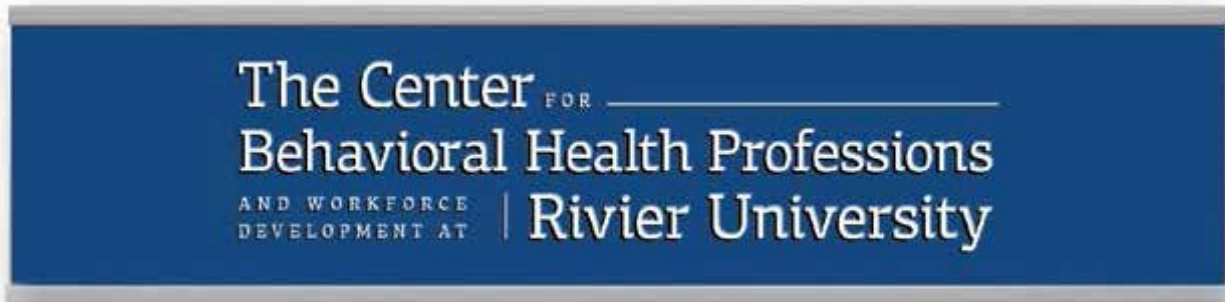


BUILDING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

Groundbreaking initiative addresses New Hampshire's behavioral health needs

Michelle Marrone
(From *Rivier Today*, Fall 2017)



Early in November 2017, Rivier elevated its response to New Hampshire's opioid abuse crisis. Redeploying its resources to address the state's critical need for behavioral health professionals, the University officially launched The Center for Behavioral Health Professions and Workforce Development.

The Center will serve as a single point of contact in promoting the University's behavioral health graduate programs, as well as sponsoring speakers and workshop programs for current healthcare professionals, to expand the region's workforce for increased availability and access to services.

New England is nationally recognized as one of the hardest hit regions in challenges related to behavioral health and substance use disorder. A recent state report asserts that New Hampshire is experiencing "one of the most significant public health crises in its history." Over the past five years, the New Hampshire Medical Examiner's Office reports a nearly 300% increase in drug-related deaths, along with 6,084 opioid-related emergency department visits and the administration of 2,895 life-saving Narcan treatments in 2016.

A demonstrated strain on the state’s healthcare system, the report cites “the shortage of a trained, licensed, and available workforce is one of the greatest barriers to increasing access to substance misuse prevention, treatment, and recovery support services in New Hampshire and throughout the country.”

“The Center for Behavioral Health Professions and Workforce Development has the collective synergy and strength to make deep inroads in addressing the opioid crisis and improving the health and wellbeing of those suffering from substance misuse and mental health issues,” says **Sister Paula Marie Buley, IHM**, Rivier’s President.



Photos by Jodie Andruskevich

Meet Executive Director Nadine Sacco

Center for Behavioral Health Professions and Workforce Development

Nadine Sacco has been appointed to the leadership role at Rivier’s new Center. She brings a wealth of experience in workforce development; training program development; partnership, client and project management; one-on-one and group counseling; and recruitment and onboarding.

Prior to joining Rivier, Sacco served as a Workforce Development Manager at Penn Foster in Boston. She has held management positions at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Child and Family Services/Family Connection Center, the Office of Workforce Opportunity at the NH Department of Resources & Economic Development, and Southern New Hampshire Service, Inc.

Sacco holds an M.A. in Community Social Psychology from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, and a B.A. in Psychology from the University of New Hampshire.

Education and training

The Center will expand the workforce pipeline through the delivery of academic programs and clinical or work-based placements in counseling, school psychology, psychiatric mental health nursing, public health, and healthcare administration. It will also serve as an educational resource for current regional providers by hosting conferences and online education tools, and professional development opportunities for its network partners and practitioners.

Rivier’s longstanding relationships with local healthcare and social service organizations provide diverse training opportunities. Graduate and doctoral students receive real-world experience and academic credit for their time spent in clinical rotations and internships at community partner locations. Students, faculty and staff also dedicate time to University partners’ missions throughout the year through community service and research support for their programs.

National and regional support

In addition to graduate education resources and community partnerships, the University has received a \$1.1 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Grant funds are earmarked to build the behavioral health workforce serving rural New Hampshire, with specific allocations for virtual learning tools and stipends for psychiatric nurse practitioners during their last semester of clinical training.

“The grant focuses on the integration of behavioral health and primary care,” says **Dr. Paula Williams**, Dean of the Division of Nursing and Health Professions. “Additionally, it supports cultural diversity in the labor force, interdisciplinary and interprofessional training, and the expansion of clinical training opportunities, especially in medically underserved communities.”

THE CENTER FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Rivier's community partners played a key role in securing this grant. Letters of support from the City of Nashua's Division of Public Health and Community Services, Genesis Behavioral Health, New Hampshire Hospital, Harbor Homes, The Mental Health Center of Greater Nashua, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College, Home Health & Hospice Center, and the Organization of Nurse Leaders accompanied the grant proposal, reinforcing the need in the region and Rivier's ability to make an impact.

Center leadership

Ms. Nadine Sacco has been appointed Executive Director of The Center. Her extensive background in counseling and workforce development provides a strong foundation for The Center's leadership role in the community. Through collaborative engagement with employers, government agencies and practitioners, Sacco will spearhead Center initiatives and increase awareness and access to Rivier's resources.

More than 25 Rivier staff members, professors and clinicians contribute to The Center's mission to enhance behavioral health education, treatment, and programming in the region.



Nursing and Public Health Team



Counseling and School Psychology Team

"Rivier's response to the substance use disorder crisis and commitment to the region's wellness are remarkable," says Sacco. As an academic center and community resource, The Center for Behavioral Health Professions and Workforce Development has the potential to save lives and make substantial contributions to New Hampshire's future." ■

Behavioral Health Programs

These Rivier degree programs specifically support expansion of the behavioral health workforce.

Counseling and School Psychology

Master's Degrees

- M.Ed. School Counseling
- M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- M.Ed. Education Studies – Counseling and School Psychology concentration

Post-Master's Degrees

- Ed.S. School Psychology
- Ed.S. Counseling

Doctoral Program

- Psy.D. Doctor of Psychology in Counseling and School Psychology

Nursing and Public Health

Master's Degrees

- MSN Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- M.P.H. Master of Public Health

Post-Master's Certificate

- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

Doctoral Program

- DNP Doctor of Nursing Practice

Business

- MBA Healthcare Administration

For more information on The Center's resources and education opportunities, visit <http://www.rivierbehavioralhealth.org> or email TheCenter@rivier.edu