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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Innovative mental health service system focus of new article

AMHERST, MA – Mental Health Services at UMass Amherst is at the forefront of changes in how college psychological services care for their patients.

A new article co-authored by Harry S. Rockland-Miller, Ph.D., Director of Mental Health at University Health Services and published in the current issue of the “Journal of College Student Psychotherapy,” explores the positive impact of implementing a clinical triage system.

Triage – a process of rapidly sorting patients by severity of their condition – is standard procedure in medical health care, but has not yet been widely adopted among university-based mental health providers. Rockland-Miller and co-author Gregory T. Eells of Cornell University’s Gannett Health Services both lead organizations which have switched from a conventional intake and assessment model to the clinical triage system.

More college students are seeking mental health services, and the complexity and severity of their situations is increasing, according to the authors. In a traditional model, clients making a first call for services were given an assessment appointment, possibly requiring several weeks’ wait. Waiting often led to missed appointments, and a lost opportunity to provide help.

With the clinical triage system, new clients receive a same-day brief assessment by a senior clinician. Crisis situations receive immediate attention, while less-urgent concerns are scheduled. Students are also matched to providers and resources based on their individual needs, increasing satisfaction with care. Since UMass Amherst’s Mental Health Services implemented the system, 95% of clients surveyed described themselves as satisfied with their experiences.

Rockland-Miller is a clinical psychologist whose interests include individual, couples and family therapy; consultation and crisis intervention. He received his undergraduate degree from Union College, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the California School of Professional Psychology. He is licensed in Massachusetts and New York and is on the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology.

Mental Health Services is the University Health Services division dedicated to caring for students’ emotional and mental wellbeing. The program’s highly trained professional staff provides crisis intervention and short-term therapy for individuals, couples, families and groups. For more information, call (413) 545-2337.

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INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY:

- Harry Rockland-Miller, Ph.D., Director, Mental Health Services