

UT News

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****Professional mental health workers and family learn to work together at workshop.

DALLAS--A two-day workshop on "New Partnership in the Treatment of the Mentally Ill: Mental Health Professionals and the Family," will be held May 30 and 31 at the Sheraton Centerpark, 1500 Stadium Drive East, Arlington.

Sponsoring the meeting is The Menninger Foundation of Topeka, Kan, says Dr. Douglas Puryear, associate professor of psychiatry at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas. Puryear, who also acts as director of Parkland Memorial Hospital's emergency psychiatric services, will be one of the key workshop leaders along with Jan Larson, MSW. Larson, a schizophrenia researcher, is director of The Menninger Foundation's Family Education and Support Program.

Puryear has been working with the Dallas and Tarrant County chapters of the Alliance for the Mentally Ill, family member advocacy coalitions, the Tarrant County Psychiatric Institute and the Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association in planning the meeting.

"This kind of new partnership is a real breakthrough in the treatment of the mentally ill," says Puryear. "It's an important concept and a major step forward." The psychiatrist hastened to add that the patient also must be included in the new partnership.

"This kind of approach cuts down on hospitalizations, symptoms medications and improves the quality of life for both the family and the patient as they all learn new skills in coping and being more helpful," Puryear says.

The first day of the workshop is designed for professionals. It will offer an integrated approach to a range of treatment options for major psychotic disorders. Work with families as a part of the treatment team will be included in the curriculum.

On the second day, the focus will be on understanding schizophrenia, and family members will be taught "survival skills." Goals will include learning ways to improve the quality of life and reduce relapse rates for severely mentally ill family members.

Tuition is \$100 for professionals and \$20 for family members. For information call (214) 827-2561 in Dallas County, or (817) 923-7617 in Tarrant County.

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