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## NEW MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR YOUTH TARGETS EARLY DETECTION AND PREVENTION

**BOSTON** – The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH), in collaboration with the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) Department of Psychiatry, today announced the opening of the **Center for Early Detection, Assessment, and Response to Risk (CEDAR)**, a specialized clinic for young people experiencing clinical signs of risk for psychosis, and their families.

The clinic is funded by a grant from the Sidney R. Baer, Jr. Foundation to Drs. Larry Seidman and Anthony Giuliano of the BIDMC Department of Psychiatry, affiliated with Harvard Medical School and the Commonwealth Research Center, one of two research Centers of Excellence funded by DMH.

The CEDAR clinic, representing a public-academic partnership, is located in Roxbury at “The Spot,” a storefront satellite community support program for youth operated by DMH through the Massachusetts Mental Health Center.

The CEDAR clinic is designed to work with teenagers and young adults who are showing early warning signs of psychosis. These signs can include new or worsening difficulties in school or social functioning or declining interest in people, activities or self-care. When these signs emerge in someone with a family history of psychosis, the risk for psychosis increases according to a paper published in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* by Cannon and colleagues in January 2008. Drs. Seidman and Giuliano contributed data to the multi-site study.

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“We are very excited that DMH research funding is able to leverage broader financial support for cutting edge programs such as CEDAR,” said DMH Commissioner Barbara A. Leadholm, M.S., M.B.A. “Early intervention is key to prevention and recovery from mental illness. This particular specialized care for young people serves as a model and will help keep them on track and support a successful transition into adult life.”

“We are very pleased that these innovative services are taking root in Massachusetts and are hopeful that they will grow and develop over time,” said Larry J. Seidman, Ph.D., director of the Commonwealth Research Center. “We are dedicated to improving methods for prevention and recovery from psychosis in its earliest phases and working closely with the DMH to implement and disseminate this knowledge.”

The CEDAR clinic joins a world-wide movement towards earlier detection and treatment of the earliest warning signs of psychosis with a goal of increasing resilience in order to prevent the development of severe and persistent mental illnesses such as schizophrenia. The aim of these programs is to provide specialized outpatient clinical services to persons at risk for psychosis and their families to stem the progression of illness and deter disability.

The CEDAR clinic is under the direction of Suzanna Zimmet, M.D., and Michelle Friedman-Yakoobian, Ph.D. The CEDAR staff is committed to increasing the capacity of the Metro Boston community for early recognition and referral by providing outreach and training. CEDAR staff are available to consult with clinicians, middle/high school and college personnel, youth program personnel and other concerned adults in the community about identifying and providing services for young people who might be at risk for psychosis or to provide outreach and education programs.

For more information or referrals to the CEDAR program, please contact Michelle Friedman-Yakoobian, Ph.D. at 617-516-5120 or email [mfriedm3@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:mfriedm3@bidmc.harvard.edu).

### **ABOUT DMH**

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) is one of the 17 state agencies that comprise the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. DMH provides services to adults, children and adolescents with long-term or serious mental illness and serious emotional disturbance; provides early and ongoing treatment for mental illness; and conducts research into the causes of and treatments for mental illness. Through state operated inpatient facilities and community mental health centers and through community services and programs provided by nearly 200 mental health providers, DMH directly serves 21,000 citizens, including about 3,500 children and adolescents, with severe and persistent mental illness and serious emotional disturbance.

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