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## Association News

# Curie Announces Resignation As SAMHSA Director

Rich Daly

**A leading federal coordinator for mental health services is stepping down after several years of efforts to implement the recommendations of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health.**



In a May 22 letter to President Bush, Charles Curie, M.A., administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, announced his intention to resign on August 5.

Curie, appointed in November 2001, was instrumental in the establishment of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health and the implementation of its 2003 recommendations. He led the mental health action agenda, which advanced the commission's recommendations through 20 federal agencies and 70 specific transformation steps.

Courtesy of SAMHSA

Curie worked to eliminate the use of restraints and seclusion in mental health care, and he led advances in integrated treatment for the dual diagnoses of mental illness and substance abuse.

"After years of debate, we have established that individuals with co-occurring disorders should be the expectation, not the exception for our treatment systems," Curie said in his resignation letter.

In describing his agency's efforts, Curie noted that illegal drug use by minors dropped by 19 percent in the last four years and that there has been a renewed emphasis on community-based care for mental health and substance abuse services.

"Our vision also recognizes that the community setting is the best environment for people to receive care—where people are connected to recovery support services through places of worship, employers, schools, and other settings," Curie said during the May 8 National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day congressional luncheon briefing.

Curie, a certified social worker with more than 20 years of experience in the mental health and substance abuse arena, was previously deputy secretary for mental health and substance abuse services for Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare.

If no replacement is named before Curie's departure, Acting Deputy Administrator Rick Broderick will run the agency. ■

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