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Rome social worker named Outstanding Behavioral Healthcare Professional of the Year

Bridget VanLieshout, LMSW, a social worker in Rome Memorial Hospital's Emergency Department was named the 2011 "Outstanding Behavioral Healthcare Professional of the Year" by the Genesis Group and the Medical Societies of Oneida, Herkimer and Madison Counties. She was one of 11 healthcare professionals honored at a luncheon May 10th at Hart's Hill Inn.

"Bridget is a tremendous asset to our organization and our patients in the Emergency Department," said Loretta A. Myers, R.N., B.S., director of Critical Care Services. "She has been instrumental in transforming not only our psychiatric service model here at the hospital, but also that of the entire county."

In the Emergency Department, Bridget is a resource and advocate for patients and their families. She helps them access services in the community to ensure that they get the help that they need. For example, when children need inpatient psychiatric care, it's Bridget that identifies a facility "Bridget's numerous performance improvement initiatives for 2010, resulted in a 73% reduction in the time our pediatric patients wait in the Emergency Department for admission to an acute psychiatric facility," Myers said. "For these children and parents, this is a time of high stress and need. Speeding up the process helps to reduce that anxiety and get them into treatment sooner. Her efforts to strengthen relationships with community resources and the Oneida County Department of Mental Health have also dramatically reduced the recidivism rates."

Bridget earned her bachelor's degree from Utica College in 2006 in psychology-child life with a concentration in child development. She also graduated from the University at Albany School of Social Welfare with a master of social work degree in 2009.

Bridget completed her final internship at Rome Memorial Hospital in 2009 and joined its staff as the first Emergency Department-based social worker in the tri-county area. From the time of her hire, she has been actively involved in the Oneida County Emergency Psychiatric Services



AWARD WINNER - Rome Memorial Hospital President/Chief Executive Officer Basil Ariglio presented the Outstanding Behavioral Healthcare Professional of the Year award to Bridget VanLieshout at the May 10th luncheon.

System (EPSS) committee and its sub-committees. Though her work on these committees, she co-developed protocols and forms that have greatly improved the services provided to youth experiencing a psychiatric crisis, as well as the relationships between the emergency department and community providers. She piloted these forms out of Rome's Emergency Department for the Oneida County Department of Mental Health. They are now the standard for all three hospitals in the county.

"Bridget has also exceeded expectations with her commitment to staff education and development," Myers noted. She has developed and facilitated several educational sessions, care planning sessions and liaison workgroups for the hospital's staff and various community providers.

"I am surrounded by dedicated people. I have the best job in the world," Bridget said, when she accepted her award. She enjoys her day-to-day role as patient advocate and has also found the system-level performance improvement initiatives gratifying. "It's rewarding to see the system work so people with mental illness receive the services that they deserve."

Bridget uses her professional knowledge to serve the community as a volunteer for the American Red Cross Disaster Preparedness and for the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. She is also a member of the National Association of Social Workers.

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