

Mental Health Advocacy Coalition Urges Appointment of Paolo del Vecchio to Top Federal Behavioral Health Post

The National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery (NCMHR) strongly urges appointment of Paolo del Vecchio, MSW, to top federal behavioral health post

WASHINGTON DC, UNITED STATES, January 4, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery ([NCMHR](#))—a coalition of statewide and regional peer-run advocacy organizations whose members have lived experience of a mental health condition—strongly urges that the Biden Administration appoint [Paolo del Vecchio, MSW](#), a distinguished mental health advocate and former director of the Center for Mental Health Services in the Obama Administration, as Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Mental Health and Substance Use.

“In these difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States needs a behavioral health leader who can inspire hope and promote recovery on an individual and community-wide basis,” said NCMHR president Daniel B. Fisher, MD, PhD. “Paolo del Vecchio, who has dedicated his life and his career to these goals, can mount a unified national initiative to address the behavioral health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, whose impacts will be painful and long-lasting. This initiative will not only develop a comprehensive strategy to promote a public health and person-centered approach to deliver accessible, community-based, high-quality, holistic, trauma-informed, culturally competent care, but will also expand the peer support and self-help capacities of our communities.

“Mr. del Vecchio understands that, with the right supports and with their rights protected, people can overcome their mental health and substance use challenges to live full, healthy, and productive lives in the community. He also recognizes that, due to the pandemic, clinical services and supports could be overwhelmed by the behavioral health needs of the entire community. To meet this greater need, Mr. del Vecchio’s vision is one of healing and hope in which many peer supporters are trained in crisis support, many peer-run crisis respites are funded, and entire communities learn to provide mutual support to ease the fears and anxiety all share.”

Dr. Fisher—who himself has lived experience, and who served on the President’s [New Freedom Commission on Mental Health](#)—cited Mr. del Vecchio’s outstanding 30-year career as a leader in public behavioral health services and administration at the municipal and federal levels. “He has experience in all realms of behavioral health, as an administrator, a provider, a family member,

and a person with lived experience of his own mental health recovery. In fact, his appointment would be a landmark in demonstrating that recovery is real.

“However,” Dr. Fisher noted, “it is not primarily because of Mr. del Vecchio’s firsthand experience with mental health recovery that the NCMHR is urging his appointment to this important position. It is because of his impressive career and exceptional skills and expertise, which are what the position requires.”

The NCMHR comprises member organizations in 27 states and the District of Columbia, and proudly joined 14 other disability rights groups run by persons with disabilities as a founding member of the National Disability Leadership Alliance.

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