



Punching A Hole In The Darkness

Today is “Doctors’ Day.” I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all of the physicians in the DMHAS healthcare system, state operated and private-non-profit, who have dedicated their lives to helping people with mental health and substance use disorders.

In the past decade, there has been a fundamental and profound change in the way mental health and substance use services are thought about and delivered within the DMHAS service system. Throughout our journey to become a “recovery oriented system of care,” the picture has changed so that the person in recovery—the patient—is in partnership with the physician. Yet, it is the physician, who has dedicated long years to study and practice, that brings the knowledge—the science of the body and brain—to the partnership to help people reach their fullest potential.

I like to equate the role of physicians within our healthcare system to a wonderful image that the great Scottish author, Robert Lewis Stevenson, created regarding lamplighters, whose daily task it was to light a gas flame in each lamppost at dusk in order to illuminate the streets of the town. Stevenson said that the lamplighter would “*punch a hole in the darkness.*” Punching a hole in the darkness. Isn’t this what our physicians do each and every day in order to help people on their path to better health?

We must never forget to acknowledge and express our great gratitude to the doctors who have chosen to make their life’s work helping others. Their challenges are formidable. Yet they relentlessly bring their knowledge and skills to help people to live their fullest potential. They truly do help to punch a hole in the darkness that is mental illness and substance use disorders.

To each of you physicians, I say THANK YOU, and happy Doctors’ Day!

I’d like to hear from you. Please send me your thoughts, your concerns, and your ideas at Thomas.kirk@po.state.ct.us.