

The S.T.E.P. Clinic

*For more information or to schedule
an intake, please call:
508-373-7835
Communityhealthlink.org*



Community Healthlink, a member of UMass Memorial Health Care, is a multi-service, private, nonprofit organization committed to promoting, maintaining and restoring the well-being and mental health of individuals and families in Central Massachusetts. Community Healthlink is proud to be the clinical partner of the University of Massachusetts Medical School.



Screening and Treatment of Early Psychosis Clinic



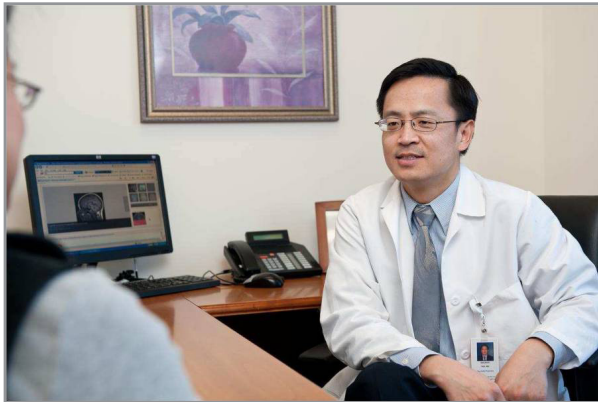
*The S.T.E.P. Clinic provides
individuals and their families
with education, support and the
highest quality medical care*



Mission

Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders are life-long illnesses. Patients face a triple-jeopardy of devastating mental illness, co-occurring medical disorders and high rates of substance abuse.

Research has shown that intensive, integrated treatment early in the course of psychotic disorders leads to improved long-term outcomes. The purpose of Community Healthlink's STEP Clinic is to provide both patients and families with education, support and the highest-quality medical care during the crucial early phase of this disease.



Target Population

Individuals between the ages of 18 and 40 who are experiencing early phase psychotic symptoms or who have just been put on psychotic prodrome, which are early signs that a psychotic illness might be about to happen.

Services

The STEP Clinic provides:

- 1. Psychopharmacology**
Our physicians will optimize medications using the most up-to-date clinical evidence. We can also refer you to research studies for new medications that are being investigated.
- 2. Psychotherapy**
Our therapists use a form of talk therapy designed to help people who deal with unusual things like strange voices or feeling scared about things more than others.
- 3. Family Therapy and Education**
We feel that keeping the whole family informed and supported is an important aspect of recovery.
- 4. Physical Health Monitoring and Wellness**
It is important to keep track of things like blood pressure, weight, blood sugar, cholesterol and other important health indicators. We can also help with referrals to other medical providers in the community.
- 5. Substance Abuse Screening and Treatments**
Almost half of individuals with a psychotic disorder will develop a substance abuse problem in his/her life, and up to 90% use tobacco. Screening, motivational interviewing and medication will be administered by staff to help prevent and reduce substance abuse.

Specialized Staff

Xiaoduo Fan, MD, MPH, MSc (Director)

Dr. Fan is an internationally renowned clinician and researcher specializing in psychotic disorders. Dr. Fan's clinical expertise includes early identification and intervention for first episode psychosis, innovative strategies for refractory symptoms of schizophrenia, medical comorbidity and real life functioning recovery. In addition, Dr. Fan is interested in cultural aspects of mental illness.

Amy Harrington, MD (Medical Director)

Dr. Harrington's interests include co-occurring psychosis and substance, as well as community mental health. As a board-certified specialist in Addiction Psychiatry she provides screening and intervention for substance abuse, including cigarette smoking among patients in the clinic.

Debika Paul, PhD

Dr. Paul is a licensed clinical psychologist who offers therapy and psychosocial treatments for young adults experiencing psychosis, and their families. Her interests include treatment of major mental illness and community mental health.

Irene Coletsos, MD

Dr. Coletsos has a background in integrated physical and mental health care. In addition to serving patients in the out-patient clinic at CHL, she also provides psychiatric consultation to patients in a primary care clinic. Dr. Coletsos has had prior experience in early psychosis treatment before joining CHL.