

Family Service Bureau

FSB Clinical Director Chosen for State Independent Peer Review



Benjamin-John Gonzalez became the clinical director of Family Service Bureau in January.
Photo courtesy of Benjamin-John Gonzalez.

Family Service Bureau welcomed Benjamin-John Gonzalez as its clinical director at the start of 2019. In that role, he is responsible for the oversight of clinical operations under the executive director.

“I pretty much set the clinical standards for the department based on our agency policies and regulations, laws and ethics,” he said.

Gonzalez explained that there are three main goals: ensuring safety for clients, staff, volunteers and guests; ensuring the services rendered to clients are safe; and as a training center, making sure staff members pursuing their licenses have the competencies to become independent practitioners.

“Ben has been with us since January and brings in his ideas for integrated behavioral health services for NCC’s population. Along with a strong foundation of regulations and laws, he strives to enhance existing programs to provide more comprehensive services,” said New Community Director of Health and Human Services Arti Kakkar. “It’s great to have someone with so much energy and passion for this work on our team.”

Gonzalez had heard about New Community’s reputation before coming to work at FSB. He saw a job posting for the clinical director position and decided to apply.

“I love nonprofits. I have heart and a passion for helping nonprofits,” he said. “Especially right now with the opioid epidemic.”

In addition to his work at FSB, Gonzalez has a consulting company that he formed in 2017 that helps start-up agencies become licensed and accredited. It also helps companies take remedial action and provides consultations regarding mergers and acquisitions.

In June, Gonzalez was selected to conduct the Independent Peer Review for the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The Independent Peer Review is necessary for New Jersey to be eligible to receive federal funding called block grants. The peer review Gonzalez was chosen for is done by an addiction specialist in the field also working in a licensed facility.

Gonzalez submitted a request for proposal (RFP) for the role. He said it is very competitive because it is open to the whole state. This isn’t his first time being selected. He has done six Independent Peer Reviews since 2007.

“I was humbled and honored to be selected again,” Gonzalez said. “I’m excited about it.”

The review itself is a two to three day process where Gonzalez will visit the assigned site and evaluate the care from screening to discharge. He said he focuses on the facility’s strengths and also on areas where there could be some improvement. He communicates his recommendations to the leadership at the facility.

“We pass the knowledge in order to enhance and maintain a certain standard of quality care where the clients and target population we serve are better served,” Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez didn’t originally set out to enter the field of mental health and addiction. He attended medical school, but left after he fell in love to get married. Later, when he was deciding what direction he wanted his career to go, his wife at the time was working in pediatrics at a hospital.

“She showed me the newborns who were born from mothers of addiction. They were born with birth defects and I thought that that was my calling,” Gonzalez said. “I felt that I could help prevent this from happening. And that seemed to be where my passion started. And it hasn’t stopped since.”

Gonzalez has lived in Westampton, N.J. since 2001. Though he has a long commute, he said it’s worth it to help the clients and make a difference.

“I believe New Community’s values and its mission aligns with my own personal values,” Gonzalez said. “I see the opportunities that we could create here, the partnerships that we already have and the things we could do moving forward.”