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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dr. Mee-Lee invited to join Justice Programs Office as Senior Fellow

Carson City, Nevada – February 23, 2014 – David Mee-Lee, MD, Senior Vice President of The Change Companies®, has been invited by Caroline Cooper, JD, Director of the Justice Programs Office (JPO) of the School of Public Affairs at American University, to join the Senior Fellows program.

The JPO Senior Fellows are a group of senior practitioners in a variety of justice-system specialties who work with JPO faculty and staff on projects in direct support of state and local government agencies and foreign governments. The JPO invites leading practitioners to participate in the Senior Fellows program who add unique perspectives from their areas of expertise. Areas such as the judiciary, law enforcement, prosecution, court management, religious leadership and defense are currently represented in the Senior Fellows program. The addition of Dr. Mee-Lee will offer a new perspective to the group.

“Dr. Mee-Lee’s expertise in the field of psychiatry and addiction will provide an important complement to the perspectives of the other disciplines represented,” said Cooper. “We chose Dr. Mee-Lee because he provides the important perspective of the medical community on issues that the justice system must take increasing cognizance of – particularly relating to addiction and mental health, which affect a high proportion of individuals involved in the civil and criminal components of the justice system.”

A part of the medical perspective Dr. Mee-Lee brings surrounds the principles in *The ASAM Criteria*, a recently updated publication of The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). The criteria define a national set of standards for providing client-centered, outcome-informed care in the treatment of addiction, which many times includes individuals involved with the justice system.

“A large proportion of people referred for addiction treatment come from justice services,” said Dr. Mee-Lee, board-certified psychiatrist and Chief Editor of *The ASAM Criteria*. “It is critical that drug court personnel and justice professionals understand the very latest assessment and treatment criteria as to where participants are best treated.”

Cooper agrees that it is important for justice system officials working with those who suffer from substance use disorders to understand that those individuals are suffering from a chronic disease – not solely a behavioral issue.

“It is a disease which can be treated through scientifically developed screening, assessment and treatment planning strategies,” said Cooper. “In order to assess the degree of progress the individual is making in treatment, one needs to ensure that the appropriate diagnostic and treatment process have been or are being used.”

According to Dr. Mee-Lee, one key component of *The ASAM Criteria* is encouraging all who work within addiction treatment to be good stewards of resources, which promotes matching patients to appropriate levels of care and treatment, avoiding overtreatment or undertreatment.

“I believe judges welcome the insights and guidance Dr. Mee-Lee can provide to help them be better ‘consumers’ of treatment services for the individuals who come before them and be better able to work within their local communities to ensure that adequate, state-of-the-art services are being provided,” said Cooper.

The Change Companies® sees Dr. Mee-Lee’s involvement with JPO as an opportunity to lead important, cutting-edge discussions related to behavioral health in justice services.

“With Dr. Mee-Lee’s involvement in JPO, we look forward to advancing the conversation surrounding science-based approaches in behavioral health as it relates to the field of justice services,” said Mike Judnick, Vice President of Justice Services at The Change Companies®. “Adding Dr. Mee-Lee’s expertise to this conversation will benefit the justice system as a whole.”

Dr. Mee-Lee is a world-renowned addiction and mental health expert, a board-certified psychiatrist and is certified by the American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM). He has more than 30 years’ experience practicing and training on participant-centered, clinically driven care. He has long believed in empowering and engaging clients to be active participants in their own treatment. Dr. Mee-Lee has trained and consulted for hundreds of organizations, from small mental



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health centers to national behavioral healthcare companies and government agencies. He joined The Change Companies® in 2008.

The Change Companies® is a national publishing, consulting, coaching, training and multimedia company working with leading industry experts to develop effective, evidence-based materials that assist individuals in making positive life change.

Our products and services are used in the fields of criminal justice, prevention, treatment, impaired driving and healthcare. Our mission is to put the most effective tools, at the lowest possible cost, into the hands of the end user.

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