FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

OJA Hires Chief Psychologist

OKLAHOMA CITY (SEPT. 16, 2019) — A licensed child clinical psychologist has been hired as chief psychologist for the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA).

Dr. Paul Shawler is an active researcher and a strong advocate for data-driven policy and family-centered services. His primary research focus includes dissemination and implementation of evidence-based treatments, policy impact on treatment trajectory for youth, and early intervention and diversion alternatives. His clinical interests have led to research in early childhood intervention, prevention of child abuse and neglect, and prevention and intervention programs designed to improve healthy relationships and reduce problematic sexual behavior in children and adolescents.

Shawler, of Oklahoma City, will continue to serve as an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) Health Sciences Center at the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. He also serves as a clinical psychologist for the Oklahoma Army National Guard.

He received a gubernatorial appointment in 2017 to serve on the State Advisory Group for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which works to identify the root causes of juvenile crime, solicit intervention and prevention strategies and advise the governor and Legislature concerning delinquency prevention and juvenile justice matters. This appointment recognized his expertise in child maltreatment, serving youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and his work in policy initiatives for delivering evidence-based mental services to youth.

“It is an exciting time to be in the field of juvenile justice,” Shawler said. “With the recent passage of the federal Juvenile Justice Reform Act, a platform is set for important changes to the care of young people. The reauthorization highlights the importance of child and family mental health and the role of a psychologist in the prevention, response and intervention for youth at all levels of involvement in the legal system.”

Shawler began his new duties Sept. 3. His duties as chief psychologist include performing administrative and professional work planning, directing, coordinating and integrating the psychological and related services for OJA-operated institutions. He will foster strong community partnerships for psychological assessment and treatment as well as provide...
ongoing training and consultation to courts, detention centers, and other treatment centers serving youth throughout the state. He also will participate in the development of education programs and staff development models to increase productivity and performance, and will assist OJA facilities in developing relationships for psychological services with psychiatrists, medical providers, and other consultants.

“Dr. Shawler has a tremendous amount of expertise in serving young people who have had traumatic experiences,” said OJA Executive Director Steven Buck. “He will help us better understand the young people in our care and to develop specific treatment strategies to help them complete their requirements and productively return to our communities.”

Shawler said he is looking forward to working under the Core-4 strategy emphasized by Buck to embrace the need for youth to have meaningful relationships, a strong educational foundation, multiple opportunities in professional development, and treatment and interventions that meet their unique needs.

“My background in trauma-informed care, evidence-based treatment, and clinical assessment will allow me to critically evaluate and articulate areas that will support youth,” he said. “The Core-4 pillars also exist for young people’s families as well as the hundreds of employees who work at OJA. I look forward to capitalizing on the vision and incorporating practices to reinforce our young people and their supporters so that all can meet their goals.”

After earning his doctorate and master’s degrees in clinical psychology from Oklahoma State University, Shawler went on to complete his predoctoral internship and postdoctoral fellowship at the OU Health Sciences Center’s Center on Child Abuse and Neglect.

He grew up in Hurricane, West Virginia, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from West Virginia University. He has served in the Army National Guard since 2006, and was recently promoted to the rank of major. He currently is attached to C Company, 700 Brigade Support Battalion with the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Norman.

###
Dr. Paul Shawler

For additional information, contact:
Michael McNutt/OJA Communications Director
(405) 530-2860   (405) 249-6072
michael.mcnutt@oja.ok.gov
Paula Christiansen/ OJA Public Information Officer
(405) 530-2814
paula.christiansen@oja.ok.gov

Stay Connected with [[ACCOUNT_NAME]]: