



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Teletherapy services provide support to those in need

Sinnissippi Centers Offers Teletherapy services at KSB and CGH outpatient clinic sites

(Dixon, IL)

One in five adults in the United States has a mental health condition, yet only 44% of American adults with a mental illness receive treatment (www.mentalhealthamerica.net "The State of Mental Health in America", 2018). There are many variables that contribute to one's inability or unwillingness to access necessary treatment including lack of transportation to appointments, stigma related to receiving services, discomfort with traveling to a site where services are offered for mental illness, lack of funding to pay for services, and insufficient resources to meet the needs of those requiring services.

Through a grant with the Department of Human Services and through collaborative efforts with KSB and CGH hospital systems, Sinnissippi is able to offer Teletherapy services at select primary care clinics at KSB and CGH outpatient sites. Teletherapy sessions are very similar to in-office mental health therapy with one exception: instead of sitting in the same room, the client and therapist interact via live videoconferencing through a secure network connection. The client arrives at their primary care office location, and a staff person there helps them connect with a Sinnissippi Master's level therapist via videoconferencing equipment available on site.

Those sites currently offering Teletherapy services include CGH Clinics in Morrison, Rock Falls, and Prophetstown, and KSB Clinic in Amboy. The primary focus is to provide Teletherapy services at KSB and CHG clinics in towns where Sinnissippi does not have an outpatient clinic in order to improve follow through with services. The plan is to expand to other local clinics and to hire an additional staff person as volume and need increases.

According to Patrick Phelan, Sinnissippi Centers' President and CEO, "Our overall aim with this grant is to ensure that barriers to accessing needed mental health services, such as transportation and stigma, are not preventing people from getting the help that they need. Whereas many services offered through telehealth are the result of a lack of available resources, our focus here is to break down barriers from the client's perspective in order to offer therapy through the comfort and convenience of their primary care office. The grant funding gives us the flexibility to provide this very cutting edge services at no cost to the service recipients."

Those in need of services can self-identify or request Teletherapy services through their primary care physician or nursing staff. They may also be identified through very important annual screening tools that identify symptoms of depression or anxiety that might otherwise be missed. And, finally, the medical staff at the clinic may identify that a particular client is struggling with life circumstances, is teary-eyed during appointments, or is in need of additional support beyond what can be offered in the medical visit, for example. Services can be provided to those

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struggling with life-long mental illness or those struggling with a significant life event, such as post-partum depression, divorce, or loss of a loved one. In addition, if a need for psychiatric medication is identified throughout the therapy services, Telepsychiatry services can be offered to that client as well to address those medication needs.

When asked about effectiveness of services offered via Teletherapy, Phelan responded, “There are a variety of studies that show that not only does Teletherapy remove barriers to accessing services, particularly in rural areas, but it also results in a decrease in hospitalizations and has been shown to be as effective as in-person therapy in many cases.”

For more information about Teletherapy services, call Sinnissippi toll-free at 1-800-242-7642 or speak with your primary care physician at one of the identified KSB or CGH clinic sites referenced above.

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