



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Innovation Ahead in Behavioral Health

Sinnissippi Centers' Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic project has been funded

(Dixon, IL)

On July 7, 2021, Illinois Governor JB Pritzker signed legislation to pilot an innovative and comprehensive model for behavioral health care providers. The legislation lays the groundwork to craft a new model for behavioral healthcare services in Illinois in the future.

While Illinois is in the beginning stages of this effort, the Excellence in Mental Health Act passed by Congress in 2014 improved access to mental health services and among other provisions, provides funding through federal grants to behavioral health providers.

Sinnissippi Centers recently was awarded funds under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's FY 2021 Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Expansion Grant program.

"For people with serious mental illness, the CCBHC model more closely integrates primary care with behavioral health," says Patrick Phelan, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO. "By addressing primary care needs, we are able to identify physical issues sooner and help them link to our medical providers and get treatment," adds Phelan. Under the CCBHC model providers are allowed to use funding to provide care to individuals who do not have any health care coverage.

"Sinnissippi Centers' CCHBC project will provide enhanced services to adults, children and families with a serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, substance use disorder and/or those with co-occurring disorders," says Phelan. "The project will provide enhanced and increased psychiatric services, peer support, crisis intervention, care coordination, evidence-based treatments, and intensive team-based interventions to rural communities in Northwest Illinois."

"The signing of the state legislation and the award of federal grant funds positions Sinnissippi Centers in an ideal place to be on the cutting edge of this new model of service provision for behavioral health," adds Phelan. "The legislation provides a framework to begin planning this new model, and the funding provides the vital support needed to build it."

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The Excellence in Mental Health Act established federal guidelines that defines Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs). CCBHCs provide comprehensive outpatient mental health care to any individuals who need the services, regardless of income. The services CCBHCs must provide for those with mental health and addiction needs include:

- Access to emergency care 24/7
- Instant risk assessment and screening
- Treatment planning
- Case management
- Family and peer support
- Specialized care for veterans and active-duty military
- Prompt, easy access to care

The initial act was passed as a two-year pilot program, taking place in a handful of states who developed a comprehensive plan for supporting mental health. Illinois was not among the handful of states to implement the pilot program.

As part of our CCBHC project, Sinnissippi Will be hiring several more positions in order to support this model, including several nursing positions. Jennifer Thomason, Senior Director of Outpatient Services, has been named the Project Manager. Thomason joined Sinnissippi Centers in 2007 and has served as a clinician, manager of residential services, and Director of Adult Services. She has a B.A. in Psychology and a Master's in Human Development Counseling from the University of Illinois, as well as an MBA in Healthcare Administration from Southern Indiana University.

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