



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Workforce Issues in Behavioral Health

Hiring Challenges continue for healthcare like behavioral health

(Dixon, IL)

A common theme during the COVID-19 pandemic right up to the present day has been staffing shortages. We might first think of hospitality, food service, and retail positions being unfilled right now, but most industries are having the same challenges. Behavioral healthcare has not escaped this situation.

In fact, it is estimated that the U.S. will need to hire 2.3 million new health care workers by 2025. An aging population, a rise in chronic diseases and increased behavioral health conditions contribute to the need to strategically plan for a workforce that can meet the demands of today and tomorrow.

“We are facing unprecedented workforce challenges,” says Patrick Phelan, Sinnissippi Centers President/CEO. While we are meeting needs right now, we find ourselves at a crossroads of finally having more financial resources to expand our services but now we don’t have the staffing to fill all the areas that we need to,” adds Phelan.

“May is Mental Health Awareness Month,” adds Phelan, “it’s a wonderful thing that we have seen an increased awareness of the need for mental wellness and the need for behavioral healthcare treatment, that is a huge success,” says Phelan. “But that also means we are seeing an increasing demand for our services as well, so it’s crucial to try and build up our workforce to meet that demand as soon as we can,” adds Phelan.

Sinnissippi Centers served over 7,000 clients in the previous 12-month period, a number that was under 6000 a couple years ago and around 5,000 a few years prior to that.

“Sinnissippi Centers has already seen some incredible growth in the last few years, with an increase in our total employee count that is more than 50%. However, the demand is increasing at a level that far surpasses the supply of applicants,” says Phelan. “A lack of psychiatrists and master’s level clinicians has been a growing reality for us for some time. The new reality is that we are facing increased competition for employees at all levels,” adds Phelan. “Many industries are implementing dramatic salary increases, and we have attempted to keep pace.”

“We are also trying to address the needs of our clients through the implementation of different levels of care,” says Phelan, “which often involve much smaller caseloads. We are also doing a great deal of outreach work, especially in the schools, and this has put a strain on our resources to meet that need.

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“We hope that part of the answer for us will be the desire, especially among those new to the field, to have careers that are meaningful and provide a sense of fulfillment, which this type of work definitely does,” adds Phelan.

“Our board and leadership team has been taking several steps to try and improve our efforts at getting qualified candidates including compensation enhancements and other continuing work on our inclusive environment and culture to ensure a rewarding work experience,” adds Phelan.

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