



Contact: Wendy Enderson
Director of Marketing and Communications
Phone: 301-840-3208
Email: endersonw@fs-inc.org

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Family Services' Behavioral Health Services Awarded \$200,000 to Launch New Electronic Medical Record System

(Gaithersburg, MD) - Family Services Inc. (FSI) is pleased to announce receipt of a \$200,000 grant from the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for Health Information Technology. This grant will allow FSI to implement an electronic medical record in its behavioral health programs.

Both FSI and Threshold Services Inc. are partnering with a primary care health organization, Community Clinic Inc. (CCI), to integrate primary care services with behavioral health services for clients with serious mental illnesses. This partnership, called the Health Integration Project (HIP), is also supported through SAMHSA funding.

"I am thrilled with this grant as it is so important to the future of care for people in the community," said Thom Harr, Executive Director of FSI. "This puts us at the forefront of a national movement to use automation to improve care, curb costs, and provide a safer environment for patients."

Currently, FSI uses several independent databases and paper files to manage client records, billing and scheduling, which can sometimes result in a duplication of effort. The electronic management record system will allow FSI to share and access critical information with other providers, ensure information remains secure, ensure compliance with state and national standards and regulations, and ultimately provide patients' with the safest and highest-quality care.

"The electronic medical record funding from SAMHSA is going to allow our organizations to significantly improve client care," stated Jennifer Crawford, HIP Project Director and Director of FSI's Community Based Clinical Services. "For the first time, consenting clients will be able to have doctors who work in different organizations, electronically and confidentially share treatment information. This will help to ensure that clients are getting the best treatment possible."

What is HIP?

This project is at the forefront of health integration of primary care and mental health services to improve the health of seriously mentally ill adults who also have chronic physical illnesses and who are not closely monitored by a primary care physician. The project aims to reduce the risk of premature mortality and morbidity through frequent health screenings, data tracking, health education, and coordination of care between psychiatric and primary care services. The focus is to improve access to health care services for underserved communities, improve the quality of health care in community clinics, support healthy eating-active living initiatives, and provide communities with assistance during hard economic times.

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