



Family Services, Inc.

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For Immediate Release

Family Services Awarded \$1.9 Million SAMHSA Grant to Expand Primary Care to Individuals with Behavioral Health Disorders

GAITHERSBURG, Maryland (October 4, 2010) – Family Services, Inc. (FSI) has been awarded a \$1.9 million, four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to integrate primary care and behavioral health services for individuals with mental health and substance abuse disorders. FSI, in partnership with Community Clinic, Inc. (a FQHC-federally qualified health center), Threshold Services, and Montgomery County Health and Human Services, will add primary care to mental health services offered at FSI’s Outpatient Mental Health Center located in Gaithersburg, Maryland, and at Threshold Services’ outpatient clinics in Rockville and Silver Spring, Maryland.

“These awards represent a long-overdue investment in the health of some of our most vulnerable populations,” said Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services. “The long-established split between “mental” and “physical” health is not justified in research and should not be perpetuated in health care. These grants are part of an unprecedented push by the Affordable Care Act to help prevent and reduce chronic disease and promote wellness by treating behavioral health needs with equality to other health conditions.”

Since its establishment in 1908, Family Services has held a significant position in the Montgomery County community, offering an array of comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation services for people with mental health and substance abuse disorders. Individuals with mental illness and substance abuse disorders often have chronic physical conditions including high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. Many of these health conditions are preventable through routine health and primary care screenings, monitoring, treatment, and care management. By integrating primary healthcare and mental health services, coordinating care between providers and providing health education we hope to substantially improve the health status of the clients we serve.

"This is an exciting opportunity to provide our clients with critically needed services," said Thom Harr, Executive Director of Family Services, Inc. "I believe that Primary Care Integration with Behavioral Health will be common throughout the country in the next few years. Family Services has been at the forefront of program and service innovation throughout its history and I am pleased that we are involved in the early stages of integration. It addresses the needs of a person in a logical way and overcomes barriers that keep people from having the best health status possible."

In April 2006, it was reported that adults with serious mental illness (SMI) die 25 years younger than other people. This means that a man with SMI is likely to die by age 53, compared with other men of the same age (who can be expected to live until age 78). This report, generated by Ronald W. Manderscheid, Ph.D and Craig Colton, Ph.D examined the cause of death among people living with SMI and found that about 15-20 years of the disparity can be attributed to diseases such as heart and circulatory disorders and other long-term diseases. These diseases can be controlled or prevented with quality healthcare that emphasize early detection, good eating habits, no smoking, exercise, etc. (*Manderscheid, R.W., "Saving Lives and Restoring Hope" Behavioral Healthcare, September 2006*)

Jennifer Crawford, Director of Family Services' Outpatient Mental Health Clinic, said she was stunned by this study. "This article was a wake-up call for both behavioral health and primary care providers to urgently find ways to increase access to coordinated care for our clients and to work to prevent early deaths," said Crawford.

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