Your community partner for responsive, effective and affordable behavioral health care

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Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center Implements Primary Care Services

Rochester, Minn. – Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center recently launched a primary care clinic to enhance treatment options available to clients. Clinic staff will provide basic primary care services and collaborate with internal and external providers to develop integrated treatment plans that address each person's multi-faceted needs.

"The integration of primary and behavioral care services is a critical strategy to improving health outcomes for people with a serious mental illness," said Dave Cook, chief executive officer. "Hundreds of these individuals will benefit each year from an approach that coordinates their medical, mental and, if necessary, chemical health care."

Cook added that many of these individuals have not successfully accessed primary and other medical care for years.

The concept for an integrated model of care began in late 2011 when Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center collaborated with Olmsted Medical Center, Mayo Clinic and Olmsted County to determine if a need existed at the local level. This workgroup was expanded to include representatives from the Minnesota Dept. of Human Services, the Minnesota Dept. of Health, Olmsted County Public Health and other local agencies. Zumbro Valley received funding for the clinic through an appropriation by the Minnesota legislature in mid-2013.

The focus for the primary care clinic is to integrate medical and behavioral health services for the region's underserved populations.

"Mental illness and substance abuse frequently complicates care for people with chronic medical conditions," said Cook. "For instance, Medicaid costs for individuals with a chronic physical disease and a mental illness are 75% higher than for people without a mental illness. Integration of these services has proven to both improve health outcomes and reduce costs for these patients."

The primary care clinic is designed to treat and help coordinate care for the organization's clients with co-morbid conditions. While at the clinic, individuals receive a comprehensive examination and basic primary care services. Clients whose conditions require intensive medical care are referred to specialists at Mayo Clinic or Olmsted Medical Center.

The clinic is staffed by a nurse practitioner and registered nurse, who work closely with other Zumbro Valley providers in a team-based setting. Cases are discussed on a weekly basis to ensure clients' treatment plans incorporate all key medical, mental health and, if necessary, chemical health information. The registered nurse coordinates with external providers for clients referred for specialty care.

"This team-based model of care provides the enhanced collaboration between medical and behavioral health providers necessary to improve health outcomes," said Cook. "We're working with Wilder Research to measure the clinical and financial impact this model has with the underserved populations in our region."

The clinic is open Mondays from 1 pm to 5 pm, Tuesdays from 8 am to 4 pm and Thursdays from 8 am to 4 pm.

About Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center
Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center enhances the quality of life for residents in southeastern Minnesota by serving as a community resource for the understanding and treatment of behavioral health and substance use disorders. The organization collaborates with government agencies, schools, non-profit groups and others to provide programs dedicated to improving the mental health of adults, adolescents and children. Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center is a private, non-profit organization serving Olmsted and Fillmore counties. For more information, visit our Web site at www.zumbromhc.org or call 507-289-2089.

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