



NETWORK TO HELP PERSONS WHO ARE HOMELESS, IN RECOVERY
Federal grant funding totals \$2.4 million

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24, 2019

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Having secure, stable housing is essential to building a life. Enjoying good health and living up to one's potential can be very difficult without a safe, affordable place to live. People with mental health issues and/or substance use disorders are especially at risk of being housing insecure or becoming homeless. The Office of National Drug Control Policy estimates that 30 percent of people experiencing chronic homelessness have a serious mental illness, and about two-thirds have a primary substance use disorder or other chronic health condition.

Chestnut Health Systems will establish a Wellness Outreach Network (WON) to reduce homelessness and negative outcomes for people who are in recovery from various mental health issues. The network is possible with grant funding from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration totaling \$2.4 million over five years.

Focus Population

WON will serve homeless individuals, youth and families experiencing serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, or co-occurring disorders such as co-existing mental health and substance use disorders. The program will be able to serve 50 people each year of the five year project or a total of 250 people over five years. The area to be served is greater St. Louis/southwestern Illinois.

Services Provided

WON will address housing, primary healthcare, wellness education, employment services, therapy, peer support/outreach, and support for those involved with the criminal justice system. The network will be a team-based, community approach to connect with participants as they navigate between home, hospitals, courts, jails, and/or involvement with law enforcement.

This integrated approach means people served by the network will have at their disposal whatever is needed to resolve their mental health issues or co-occurring disorders. People qualified to receive services will be able to access them at multiple points along the way.

Process Improvement

Chestnut will form an advisory board to guide and improve WON processes. Entities likely to be represented include organizations that have signed commitment letters for the project, county probation offices, law enforcement, domestic violence advocates, shelters, and other agencies serving the focus population. Those eligible for services will also be asked to serve on the board to share their experiences of homelessness, housing instability, and barriers they faced while seeking treatment.

About Chestnut Health Systems

Chestnut Health Systems is a non-profit organization that has cared since 1973 for persons needing behavioral health services. Chestnut provides substance use disorder treatment, mental health counseling, primary health care, credit counseling, and housing and supportive services. It is a leader in substance use-related research. More at www.chestnut.org.

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