

Magellan Joins with Appalachian Consulting Group to Reduce Premature Deaths of People with Mental Illnesses

Expands Use of Whole Health through Peer Specialists

AVON, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- [Magellan Health Services, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: MGLN), an industry leader in behavioral health care management, and [Appalachian Consulting Group](#) (ACG) have joined forces to train peer specialists to provide Peer Support Whole Health (PSWH) services. PSWH, an evidence-based behavioral health practice that is growing in use across the country, focuses on improving the overall physical and mental health of individuals with mental illnesses to help them achieve their health and wellness goals.

"Studies have shown that people with serious mental illness served by the public mental health system have a life expectancy that is on average, 25 years shorter than the general population," said Tom Lane, CRPS, national director, consumer and recovery services for Magellan's public sector team. "This is due, in large part, to the impact of avoidable and treatable medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. We believe that, by addressing the health needs of a 'whole person,' through the use of peers we can increase the longevity of those we serve and help them live longer, healthier and productive lives."

Peer specialists play critical role in PSWH training

A critical component of PSWH is the involvement of peer specialists—individuals who are recovering from mental illnesses themselves who are trained and certified to help others with mental health challenges move forward with their own recovery. During PSWH training, peer specialists are taught key strategies for peer-based interventions designed to support individuals in changing lifestyle behaviors to promote overall health and wellness.

"PSWH creates an exciting new role for peer specialists who have historically been primarily focused on mental health, because it promotes self-directed resiliency and whole health improvement," said Larry Fricks, director of ACG, who was instrumental in the development of the PSWH concept in close collaboration with the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network. "Magellan's work to expand this transformational approach to mental health throughout the country is testament to its commitment to improving the lives of individuals served by the public mental health system."

"Peer specialists can empathize with individuals and establish a strong bond that increases the likelihood an individual will succeed in his or her recovery. Now, as a result of the PSWH training, peer specialists are ideally positioned to also help an individual reach his or her total health and wellness goals," Lane explained.

Magellan to expand PSWH training

Magellan, which was among the first companies in the behavioral health field to recognize the pivotal role of peer specialists in supporting individuals with mental illness, plans to conduct PSWH training for all of its public sector contracts and is developing groundbreaking ways to measure its impact on overall health outcomes.

The PSWH training was developed through the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) Technology Transfer Initiative (TTI) grant, awarded to Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

About Magellan: Headquartered in Avon, Conn., Magellan Health Services, Inc., is a leading specialty health care management organization with expertise in managing behavioral health, radiology and specialty pharmaceuticals, as well as public sector pharmacy benefits programs. Magellan delivers innovative solutions to improve quality outcomes and optimize the cost of care for those we serve. Magellan's customers include health plans, employers and government agencies, serving approximately 58 million people nationwide in our behavioral and radiology benefits lines, more than 40 payors in our specialty pharmaceutical benefits segment, and 25 states and the District of Columbia in our Medicaid Administration segment. For more information, visit www.MagellanHealth.com.

About Appalachian: The Appalachian Consulting Group (ACG) and its training of a peer specialist workforce nationwide evolved from Georgia's Division of Mental Health pioneering Medicaid-billable peer support services in 1999 in partnership with the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network. ACG is a training and consulting corporation that has trained peer specialists in 20 states and provided technical assistance to six states around setting up Medicaid billable peer support services. In 2009, ACG created a curriculum for Peer Support Whole Health in Georgia with funding from a federal transformation grant and that training has now been introduced in seven states.

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