

State of Iowa, Magellan Develop Comprehensive System to Expand Access to Behavioral Health Crisis Services

Improvements Address Mental Health Care for Urgent Needs in the State

AVON, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- For many Iowans experiencing a mental health crisis, the only place to turn for immediate support is a local emergency room or inpatient facility, particularly for those living in rural areas with limited access to mental health resources. To address this issue, the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) and Magellan Behavioral Care of Iowa recently took the lead to establish community-based crisis stabilization centers that provide specialized mental health support and reduce the need for costly inpatient admissions and emergency room visits.

These services can help with a variety of mental health crises, such as thoughts of suicide or self-harm, substance abuse and other non-medical emergencies. Furthermore, these community-based services will expedite mental health assessments so that individuals in crisis can get the help they need more quickly from facilities and staff who are best equipped to handle their specific needs.

Reducing Reliance on Inpatient Care

"Often in rural communities or after traditional business hours, individuals in crisis rely on their local emergency room or law enforcement when, in actuality, the situation truly demands a trained mental health counselor for expert assessment, intervention and connection with additional community resources," explained Joan M. Discher, general manager of Magellan Behavioral Care of Iowa. "Crisis stabilization is a more effective, less costly and less restrictive alternative for individuals whose mental health crises can be resolved through support and care coordination, rather than by intensive medical interventions."

To launch the project, DHS and Magellan have jointly contracted with Hillcrest Family Services, a non-profit provider of behavioral health services located in eastern Iowa. Hillcrest, in collaboration with its community partners, is assisting with establishing crisis stabilization services in the counties of Dubuque, Jackson, Washington, Howard, Allamakee, Winneshiek, Clayton and potentially more in the future.

Vast Array of Community-Based Services Offered

Hillcrest plans to transform its wellness center into a walk-in urgent care center that will operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. At Hillcrest, crisis counselors and peer support specialists—individuals who are recovering from mental illnesses themselves and are trained to help others with similar challenges—will be available to help those with mental health crises problem-solve, obtain help, and develop a recovery plan moving forward. Among the other services to be offered are a multi-county community hotline, as well as telehealth and mobile crisis services to more effectively reach individuals in rural areas.

"The vast majority of people in need of mental health crisis services are only able to access services in hospitals and other more costly, restrictive settings. When law enforcement is involved, inpatient care is often the only alternative," said Carolyn Pettit-Lange, coordinator of the Hillcrest Wellness Center. "This program provides people with another, and in many cases better, access point. It fills a gap in the current acute mental health care system that many in the behavioral health community have struggled with for years."

Investing in the Community

The crisis stabilization program is one of a number of projects established by Magellan Behavioral Care of Iowa, with the support and encouragement of the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), using community reinvestment funds. These funds are set aside annually to implement innovative projects that go beyond traditional behavioral health services to benefit Medicaid recipients throughout Iowa.

Since 1995, Magellan Behavioral Care of Iowa has contracted with the Iowa DHS and the Iowa Department of Public Health to manage the Iowa Plan for Behavioral Health, offering a broad range of mental health and substance abuse services to most Medicaid recipients in the state. For more about Magellan of Iowa, visit www.MagellanofIowa.com.

About Magellan Health Services: 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 31.5 million members in our behavioral health business, 18.5 million

members in our radiology benefits management segment, and 4.9 million members in our medical pharmacy management product. In addition, the specialty pharmaceutical segment serves 41 health plans and several pharmaceutical manufacturers and state Medicaid programs. The company's Medicaid Administration segment serves 25 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit www.MagellanHealth.com.

Photos/Multimedia Gallery Available: <http://www.businesswire.com/cgi-bin/mmg.cgi?eid=6751634&lang=en>

Magellan Health Services, Inc.

Media Contact:

Christine Barnhart, 410-953-2421

CPBarnhart@MagellanHealth.com

Source: Magellan Health Services, Inc.

News Provided by Acquire Media

<https://magellanhealth.mediaroom.com/2011-06-07-State-of-Iowa,-Magellan-Develop-Comprehensive-System-to-Expand-Access-to-Behavioral-Health-Crisis-Services>