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Kansas Awarded Pediatric Mental Health Grant

TOPEKA – The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is excited to announce that Kansas is one of three applicants to be awarded a Pediatric Mental Health Care Access grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). This grant, in partnership with the Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita departments of pediatrics and psychiatry & behavioral sciences and the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research will establish a statewide infrastructure to meet the behavioral health needs of Kansas youth ages birth to 21 years.

“This opportunity positions Kansas to take a unified approach to the delivery of behavioral health services,” said KDHE Secretary Lee Norman. “We’re planning to establish stronger supports for the workforce by increasing access to patient-centered mental health training and establishing a tele-mentoring learning community using the case-based Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) platform. We are dedicated to implementing an approach to ensure children and youth have access to the right services at the right time and place, regardless of where they live.”

The Kansas project, referred to as KSKidsMAP to Mental Wellness (KSKidsMAP), will increase primary care providers’ capacity to screen, diagnose and treat children and adolescents with uncomplicated mental illness, (such as anxiety, depression and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder). It will also support primary care providers in treatment of children and adolescents with behavioral health conditions through development of a centralized access point, a phone/email support line (Warm Line), providing access to consultation with the expert team or referral. KSKidsMAP will also improve access through telehealth technologies, modalities and care models for treatment and referral, especially for those in rural and under-served areas.

“In Kansas, more than 60 percent of youth experiencing symptoms of depression aren’t treated, and nearly one in four youth experience symptoms of depression,” said Andy Brown, Commissioner of Behavioral Health Services for KDADS. “Youth need access to care in the communities in which they live and play in order for them to have the best chance of recovery. KSKidsMAP will help improve young lives in rural areas.”

This four-year grant will bring in nearly \$1.8 million to Kansas. Oversight will be provided by KDHE’s Bureau of Family Health, which manages the state’s Title V Maternal and Child Health Program. The program will utilize established tools, enhance existing provider networks to ensure effective service delivery, and collaborate with partners to leverage resources to support project activities. Additionally, coordination and evaluation of the project

will be conducted in partnership with the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (KU-CPPR) to ensure accountability through quality improvement and performance monitoring.

“We know that thousands of children and teens in Wichita and across our state experience depression, anxiety and other psychiatric conditions. Many suffer without help or even recognition. Our primary care colleagues meet these young people every day in their clinics. Working with KDHE through this grant means that we can provide our colleagues with the resources they need to do this work effectively and well and help children and families live happier, more fulfilling lives,” said Rachel Brown, MBBS, Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita.

The project period is anticipated to begin July 1. Grant writing support for the application was provided in part by KU-CPPR and the Kansas Health Foundation.

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