



Grant to Improve Health Care for Disabled

October 10 2012 10:20 AM

In the last week of September, [WellSpring Resources](#) (WR) was awarded a \$1.6 million, four year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as part of the Primary and Behavioral Health Care Integration (PBHCI) Program. The program aims to provide communities with improved access to primary care services, improved early detection and treatment of serious illnesses, and better overall health by partnering with publicly funded behavioral health organizations like WellSpring Resources.

“This is an opportunity to be at the leading edge of health care reform,” says WellSpring CEO Karen Sopronyi-Tompkins. “We welcome the opportunity to make a significant difference in people’s lives through this grant.”

The PBHCI project will provide both behavioral health and primary care services for people experiencing serious mental illness (SMI) at a single location, through a partnership with Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation (SIHF). A serious mental illness (SMI) is defined as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bi-polar disorder, and major depression that affect an individual’s ability to live independently. Adults with SMI die on average 25 years earlier than the mainstream population, and experience higher rates of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, obesity, substance abuse, emergency room use, and hospitalization.

Through collaboration with SIHF, the program will meet the primary and behavioral healthcare needs and goals of consumers. The goal is to achieve improved physical and mental wellness, an improved health care experience for the consumer, and less use of emergency rooms and hospitals. Providing [behavioral health and primary care services](#) in one convenient location will also reduce the likelihood of a break in treatment for individuals experiencing SMI.

The grant will create five full-time equivalent positions, including nursing, case management, and peer coaches. Trained peer coaches will work with consumers to provide motivation and inspiration to their peers. They will also conduct classes on nutrition, wellness, stress management, and problem solving.

Founded in 1959, WellSpring Resources provides behavioral health services to residents of Madison, Jersey, and Calhoun counties in Illinois. With offices in [Alton](#) and [Jerseyville](#) WellSpring's compassionate professionals work with children, adults and families to inspire hope and personal growth. Last year, more than 3,700 people sought to change their lives for the better through WellSpring's services. Visit www.wellspringresources.co for more information.

Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation is a community-based, Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) network that was founded in 1985. The network features nearly 40 health centers located in seven counties in Southern Illinois. SIHF employs more than 1,500 people, including over 140 medical providers as well as a controlled affiliate hospital in Centreville, Illinois. As an FQHC, Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation serves predominately low income or medically underserved populations throughout southern Illinois.

SAMHSA is a public health agency within the US Department of Health and Human Services. Its mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.