



Excellence in Mental Health Act to Hit Home

April 30 2014 8:56 AM

On April 1, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Excellence in Mental Health Act. The new law promises improved access to community mental health services and better quality of care for those with mental health conditions. Karen Sopronyi-Tompkins, Chief Executive Officer for local behavioral health center WellSpring Resources, said the changes created by this new law will hit home in the Riverbend area.



“We are excited that these changes are being made at a national level,” Sopronyi-Tompkins said. “The law will make significant improvements for people with mental health conditions, who tend to be part of an underserved and vulnerable population. I am not saying that people with mental health conditions are weak—many of our consumers are among the strongest, bravest people I know—but I am saying that there is a lack a resources to help them succeed.”

Sopronyi-Tompkins said that the Alton area and many of its surrounding communities are considered to be a mental health professional shortage area according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration. This creates a problem for the estimated 421,000 adults and 142,000 children who live with serious mental health conditions in Illinois (NAMI, 2010).

“Without treatment, people with mental health conditions are at an increased risk for unemployment, incarceration, homelessness, and physical health problems,” Sopronyi-Tompkins said. “These problems affect all of us, and that is why it is important that we provide support for mental health services at all levels—from the White House to our local courthouse. Accessible mental health services help keep our community and its residents healthy and productive.”

The new law will invest \$900 million in mental health demonstration projects in eight states to improve the reach and quality of mental health services. The law will also establish a certification program to define what constitutes a mental health center, ensuring uniformity in the delivery of services.

For more information about WellSpring Resources and the mental health services it provides, call (618) 462-2331 for the Alton office or (618) 639-2010 for the Jerseyville office.

Founded in 1959, WellSpring Resources is a total mental wellness resource serving Madison, Greene, Jersey, and Calhoun counties. With offices in Alton and Jerseyville WellSpring's compassionate professionals work with children, adults and families to inspire hope and personal growth. Last year, over 6,000 people sought to change their lives for the better through WellSpring's mental health and substance abuse services. Visit www.wellspringresources.com for more information.

The services Mental Health Court Case Management, Senior Services, Outpatient, Adult Community Support and Child/Adolescent Community Support and provider WellSpring Resources is funded by the Madison County Mental Health Board.

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