

Centerstone Receives CBHA Grant To Expand Care Access For Children

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ST. LOUIS - Centerstone, a nonprofit health system specializing in mental health and substance use disorder treatments, was recently awarded a \$106,000 grant from the Community Behavioral Healthcare Association (CBHA) of Illinois to expand supervised and skillful care access for children.

The grant, over the course of two years, will fund clinical supervision and a stipend for eight, second year master's degree level interns.

“This grant will help improve our staff's ability to address the needs and challenges that are experienced by youth. With a youth-specific training focus, providers will have access to tools and resources that will ultimately help address the service entry bottleneck, support the development of clinicians new to the field, and enhance the training of up-and-coming clinical professionals,” said Jenna Farmer-Brackett, Centerstone clinical manager.

“Centerstone has long been a center for learning and development of behavioral health clinicians. During the pandemic, the requests for services dramatically increased while the available providers stayed the same or decreased,” said Chris Liljedahl, Centerstone coordinator for internship and clinical licensure supervision.

The grant will also fund enhanced supervision for two early career clinicians to improve the clinical skills of staff and enhance the quality of services to you and families seeking services.

“Community providers across Illinois are experiencing record high staff vacancies, intensified by the COVID pandemic, which have created ballooning waitlists and dramatically decreased access to children’s mental health services,” said CBHA CEO Blanca Campos. “Additionally, behavioral health interns and new graduates are less prepared than ever to meet the complex needs of youth and families receiving services and require more intensive training and supervision, so our grant program aims to create a workforce pipeline model to provide a concrete approach to training a 21st Century children’s behavioral health workforce.”

Centerstone was one of six Illinois community children’s mental health providers to receive the CBHA grant. All awardees will participate in an independent evaluation and two learning community sessions each year to determine the extent to which the grant resources have an impact on the training culture of the organizations.

“Many students in behavioral health disciplines, particularly those from low-income families, are unable to afford to fulfill the 1,000 unpaid hours to complete an internship thus decreasing the diversity and availability of the workforce,” said Campos. “There is an inherent inequity in the current internship process, so the awardees of the CBHA training grant will include an equity component to assure that qualified interns may also be drawn from low-income families and communities of color.”

For more information, contact Liljedahl at Chris.Liljedahl@Centerstone.org.

About Centerstone

Centerstone is a nonprofit health system providing mental health and substance use disorder treatments. Services are available nationally through the operation of outpatient clinics, residential programs, the use of telehealth and an inpatient hospital. Centerstone also features specialized programs for the military community, therapeutic foster care, children’s services and employee assistance programs. Centerstone’s Research Institute provides guidance through research and technology, leveraging the best practices for use in all our communities. Centerstone’s Foundation secures philanthropic resources to support the work and mission of delivering care that changes people’s lives.