



PRESS RELEASE

FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HealthChoices Program Ensures Access to Behavioral Health Treatment

November 14, 2018 – Chambersburg, PA – One in five individuals experience mental health issues during their lifetime and one in ten individuals experience issues with substance use. Access to effective treatment and behavioral health supports helps to increase an individual’s mental and physical wellbeing while reducing costs to the public. Recognizing this, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners proclaimed the importance of Pennsylvania’s Behavioral HealthChoices Medicaid Program, as well as the significance of county government’s role, in ensuring behavioral health treatment quality and access in our local community.

Franklin County has 32,958 individuals receiving health coverage through Behavioral HealthChoices, Pennsylvania’s Medicaid Managed Care.

“Programs offered through HealthChoices are not successful by accident,” said Commissioner Chairman Dave Keller. “There is wisdom in involving county government to help make decisions locally,” he added.

Under Franklin County’s management, more residents are being served for less money. Currently 22% of the county’s Medicaid population is receives a service paid by the Behavioral HealthChoices program, up from 14% in 2007. The per member cost of Medicaid behavioral health treatment in the community went from \$82.58 per month in 2007/2008 to \$70.19 per month in 2017/2018 since the formation of Tuscarora Managed Care Alliance (TMCA) and involvement with the HealthChoices program.

The HealthChoices Behavioral Health program was first implemented in southeast Pennsylvania in 1997 and has helped to make mental health and drug and alcohol services available to over 2 million Pennsylvanians. A decade later, the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (OMHSAS) achieved its mission to create a unified behavioral health system in all 67 counties to ensure access to recovery-oriented services and supports for individuals served by the program. In 2007, Franklin and Fulton Counties partnered together to form Tuscarora Managed Care Alliance to execute the obligations of the PA Department of Human Services—the Medicaid Behavioral HealthChoices Program for the two county area.

Melissa Reisinger, Executive Director of TMCA, presented an overview of the HealthChoices program to the board. Representatives from PerformCare, the Mental Health Association of Franklin and Fulton Counties, Noah’s and Gracie’s House, PA Counseling Services and others as well as community members were present in support of the proclamation. Providers at the meeting were thankful for the opportunity to work with TMCA and the county, and discussed the benefits of being able to offer services to “meet people where they are.”

For additional information on Franklin County visit www.franklincountypa.gov.



The following is a list of evidenced-based or promising-practices services added since 2007: Juvenile Sex Offender Counselor Certification Program; Specialized Trauma Treatment Programs including Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Trauma Affect Regulation; Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET) ; Substance Abuse Medication Assisted Treatments; Applied Behavioral Analysis and Peer Support.

The Behavioral HealthChoices program is funded through state and federal monies. While managed locally, the program does not require any county general fund dollars.

For more information on HealthChoices program, please visit <http://www.healthchoices.pa.gov>.

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