



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GRANT BOOSTS FAYETTE'S SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County's Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services is increasing its tools to tackle suicide prevention head-on, thanks to a \$25,000 grant.

One of the largest providers of mental health treatment and support in Western Pennsylvania, Chestnut Ridge (CRCSI) offers over 20 specific and specialized programs and modalities to help individuals address problem behaviors, improve coping and functioning skills and develop positive approaches to life.

With new, "Open Access" and "Just in Time" scheduling, CRCSI has streamlined its outpatient services, including individual and group therapy, evaluation and treatment by medical staff and more.

Additionally, its Crisis Intervention Services are a critical component of Fayette County's healthcare and social support network.

The latest grant, awarded by the Staunton Farm Foundation, will be used for CRCSI's Quality of Care - Outcome Measures Transformation Initiative, according to Bethany Connors, Director of Crisis Services.

The development and implementation of three new quality of care initiatives will enable the agency to provide evidence-based practices, "which will be evaluated and enhanced upon using proven tools to measure outcomes," according to Connors' grant request.

One of those initiatives is the National Zero Suicide Initiative, which allows for a dedicated line for partnership with National Suicide Prevention Lifeline calls. Another is the addition of the "DLA-20," as an agency-wide assessment tool, putting CRCSI on the cutting edge of reliable measuring and reporting, making treatment more effective and recovery-specific.

According to the grant, patients with mental health and substance use disorders treated in routine care experience worse outcomes than patients enrolled in clinical trials that have demonstrated the effectiveness of evidence-based treatments. This large gap between routine outcomes and optimal outcomes exists across a wide range of patient populations and treatment settings, including primary care and specialty behavioral health.

With these new programs, CRCSI will be able to continuously monitor and improve suicide prevention efforts and successes.

"Managing a system of care to achieve the goal of zero suicides requires organizations to evaluate performance rigorously and use adverse events as opportunities to improve their capacity to save lives," the grant states.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline reported 263 non-veteran calls between Jan. 1 and June 30, 2018, in Fayette County. Those calls are currently being answered by counselors at the national level, who do not know the local services or CRCSI staff.

While the lifeline provides training and rigorous standards of care, the individual crisis centers who are part of their network can offer callers local crisis counseling and referrals which can be more effective in getting people into services they need.

Moving forward, calls to the lifeline will be routed to the closest center based on area code, with the aim of connecting callers to counselors in their own state who know their local resources.

“By becoming a member of the Lifeline, CRCSI will be able to access a network of 150 lifeline providers who are accredited, provided with training, and disseminate best practices in the field,” the grant states. Implementation of the Zero Suicide initiative will take about 18 months, according to the grant toolkit. The total cost of the project, which includes matching funds, is \$41,853.

With a 55-year history, Chestnut Ridge provides services to more than 8,000 Fayette County residents annually, at its multiple locations.

“With all the good things happening in Fayette County, it is important for Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services to continue to provide quality care and treatment for our residents,” according to CEO Mike Quinn.

For more information about the grant and Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services, call 724-437-0729 or visit www.crcsi.org. Chestnut Ridge’s crisis intervention specialists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling the crisis line at 724-437-1003.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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