

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local healthcare leaders partner to improve health, wellness and longevity of those challenged with mental illness

Maricopa Integrated Health Home Project seeks to reverse the health disparities that lead to significantly diminished lifespans for individuals with mental illness

PHOENIX (Aug. 2, 2011) Governor Jan Brewer and healthcare leaders in Maricopa County—aligned in their motivation to reverse unacceptable health disparities for individuals challenged with serious mental illness (SMI)—announced a partnership today to implement a groundbreaking healthcare initiative. The **Maricopa Integrated Health Home Project (IHH)** will employ unique interventions to integrate physical and mental health services in order to enhance the quality of life for one of our state’s most vulnerable populations.

The **IHH Project** will focus on an integrated, behavioral-health-led delivery of care for the more than 14,000 Title XIX-eligible recipients challenged with SMI in Maricopa County. The National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and the National Research Institute report that individuals challenged with serious mental illness **die 25 to 30 years younger** than their peers in the general population—and cite Arizona’s disparity at an even greater 32 years. This is largely because behavioral health issues are compounded by chronic physical conditions such as heart disease, chronic respiratory problems, diabetes and hypertension; as well as the reality of stigma that keeps many of these individuals from seeking care in a typical physical healthcare setting.

The **IHH Project** is a partnership among Magellan Health Services of Arizona, Maricopa Integrated Health System (MIHS), and central Arizona’s four adult SMI provider network organizations (PNOs): CHOICES Network, Partners in Recovery, People of Color Network and Southwest Network.

“There is an undeniable relationship between an individual’s behavioral health and physical well-being,” said Laura Nelson, M.D., deputy director of Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADHS/DBHS). “Symptoms associated with serious mental illness can result in significant barriers to receiving needed primary care services, resulting in worse health outcomes and higher long-term costs. We welcome and support this innovative new partnership in central Arizona.”

The concept of total health integration has drawn widespread national attention in recent years, but much of the recent focus has been on integration at the administrative funding level, which does not effectively impact outcomes for the individual. The physical health status of many individuals challenged with SMI has been left largely untreated—as the national health disparity data reveals—leading to costly chronic conditions, and poor outcomes and quality of

life. Exacerbating this is the reality of stigma. Primary care physicians are often uneasy about caring for this population due to the associated symptoms, and they frequently lack the additional time, or training, to address the multiple needs of people challenged with a serious mental illness.

“The health disparity statistics are startling and the time is now to leverage resources and expertise to reverse this trend,” said Betsey Bayless, CEO, Maricopa Integrated Health System. “Our leadership in community health positions us effectively to partner with Magellan and the behavioral healthcare community to address these disparities and begin to make a real, meaningful difference in the health of these individuals.”

Each individual participating in the **IHH Project** will have a person-centered, integrated behavioral health home. The IHH will address serious mental illness as well as health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, obesity and other physical health conditions. Seventy percent of those with SMI have at least one chronic physical condition in addition to their mental health challenge, and nearly one in three have three or more on top of their severe mental illness. All of the individuals engaged in the project will participate in wellness/prevention programs, receive support and training in self-management, have access to peer-support specialists and receive a range of interventions based upon their unique needs.

Magellan Health Services of Arizona, central Arizona’s Regional Behavioral Health Authority, is overseeing the assessment process, the first step in creating the integrated healthcare home. So far, the PNO partners have administered a health risk assessment to more than 2,000 individuals with SMI. Many of these individuals have already begun whole health interventions like exercising, modifying their diet and quitting smoking.

“Working collaboratively, the partners intend to blaze a new trail within the mental health system that will significantly and positively impact those who are challenged by serious mental illness,” said Richard Clarke, Ph.D., Magellan Health Services of Arizona’s CEO. “By integrating health and wellness to meet the needs of the whole person, we will not only increase their life longevity, but improve the quality of their lives and contribute to the success of their mental health recovery journey.”

“On behalf of my provider colleagues—Ron Smith with CHOICES; Tomás León with People of Color Network; and Amy Henning with Southwest Network—our commitment to this effort is personal. We see firsthand the impact of untreated or unmanaged physical health conditions on the overall health of the people we care for and support in their recovery,” said Christy Dye, CEO, Partners in Recovery, one of the central Arizona PNOs participating in the partnership. “It’s long past time to change this situation, and we feel our partnership will do just that.”

About the partners:

Magellan Health Services of Arizona



As the Regional Behavioral Health Authority for Central Arizona, Magellan Health Services of Arizona serves as a critical point of connection to the more than 82,000 individuals who have experienced life challenges as a result of mental illness and substance abuse. Magellan gives these individuals voice and choice to realize their desired outcomes and supports them with caring, unrivaled customer service that is sensitive to the diversity of our communities. For more information, visit www.MagellanofAZ.com or call Magellan of Arizona at (800) 564-5465, TTY (800) 424-9831. Information is available in English and Spanish.

Maricopa Integrated Health System



Maricopa Integrated Health System (MIHS) is the health care safety net for citizens of Maricopa County. The health system serves people of many races and nationalities who come from diverse cultures and speak several different languages. Many of the patients face major challenges, such as lack of health insurance, complex medical problems, and difficult socioeconomic situations. Caring for these patients demands special knowledge and sensitivity. MIHS is committed to giving culturally appropriate, sensitive medical care and helping our patients live healthier lives. MIHS provides care for all who enter its doors. Annually, MIHS has nearly 20,000 inpatient admissions and 300,000 outpatient visits. For more information, visit www.mihs.org.

CHOICES Network



CHOICES Network of Arizona serves over 7,000 Maricopa County residents with serious mental illness. Case management and psychiatric medical care are provided at six neighborhood clinics where local residents are helped to successfully manage their illness, achieve recovery, and live fruitful lives. The focus of care is on healthy lifestyles, emotional well-being, employment and meaningful community activity. CHOICES is a provider network organization and part of the Maricopa County behavioral health service system under Magellan of Arizona, the Regional Behavioral Health Authority. Collaborating with Magellan and partnering with other providers enable CHOICES to connect recipients with a network of local community resources. For more information, visit www.choicesnetwork.org.

Partners in Recovery



Partners in Recovery (PIR) is a non-profit agency delivering case management, psychiatric and psycho-social rehabilitation services for adults with severe mental health and co-occurring substance abuse conditions. We operate four outpatient recovery campuses serving more than 4,200 adults and their family members in Mesa, Phoenix, Peoria and Wickenburg. PIR is a champion of peer support, self-sufficiency through employment, wellness and service participant voice and involvement. We believe that the best service outcomes are achieved through quality clinical practices, strong relationships with the people we serve and harnessing the wisdom of

individuals with their own lived experience of psychiatric and substance abuse challenges. For more information, visit www.partnersinrecovery.us.com.

People of Color Network



People of Color Network (PCN) is a non-profit provider network organization providing behavioral health services designed to promote service delivery through collaboration, culturally responsive services and family involvement for children, youth and adults in Maricopa County. As a network of quality community-based organizations, our focus is reaching out to serve diverse communities. Our behavioral health partners seek to reach more people with unique cultures in a respectful manner with higher order prevention and intervention programs. PCN provides services for adults with a serious mental illness diagnosis at three clinics and for children with intense case management requirements. For more information, visit www.pocn.com.

Southwest Network



Southwest Network is a non-profit organization that provides behavioral health services to children, adults and families throughout Maricopa County, Arizona. Focusing on the strengths of the individual, Southwest Network partners with agencies in the community to develop service plans that offer hope, encourage responsibility, provide education, and support goals for recovery and self-sufficiency. These community partnerships and their own commitment to success are helping people throughout the county lead lives of value. For more information, visit www.southwestnetwork.org.

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