

## HEALTH CARE OF THE FUTURE

# Broad approach helps Avondale mom face physical, mental illness

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Receiving comprehensive, integrated health services has done wonders for El Mirage mom Raenetta Burnom.

With her strong, bubbly personality, you probably wouldn't be able to tell Burnom suffers from depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. She has a smile that lights up the room, and she isn't afraid to advocate for herself or her children.

She is one of the 21,000 individuals in Maricopa County who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness, and one of the 14,000 among those who are on Medicaid.

Burnom grew up dealing with depression, but it wasn't until about six years ago that she decided to seek help for it.

"I came from a praying family," she said. "They always told me to pray through it."

Later, when she became an adult and had children, she kept her illness a secret because she was afraid Child Protective Services might deem her an unfit mother and take her kids away.

Six years ago, she had what she calls a "nervous breakdown" – she couldn't eat or sleep for two weeks and kept thinking of ways to kill herself. She fought the urge because, as a Christian, suicide was not an option.

She also had hallucinations of dead family members.

"The dead came to me a lot. I knew they were gone; I knew I was caught between reality and what wasn't real," she said. "I knew I needed help."

She sought out and qualified for state care through Magellan Health Services of Arizona, which is managing the care of seri-



PROVIDED BY MAGELLAN HEALTH SERVICES

*Raenetta Burnom has lost 90 pounds and gotten her diabetes and schizophrenia under control through the integrative health care program offered by Magellan Health Services, which manages treatment of Arizonans with serious mental illnesses.*

Whether it's for work or play, we understand that you want to get back to your life sooner. The CORE

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## HEALTH CARE OF THE FUTURE

ously mentally ill residents under a temporary Regional Behavioral Health Authority contract with the Arizona Department of Health Services. (See box below.)

Since Magellan took over her care, Burnom not only has received the treatment she needs for her mental illnesses, but also is getting her diabetes under control.

Integrating behavioral health and primary care services for the seriously mentally ill population is crucial, said Dr. Shareh Ghani, chief medical officer

of Magellan.

“Individuals with serious mental illness die early compared to ... individuals who do not have mental illness,” he said.

People with serious mental illness die more than 30 years younger than those without. In addition, 40 to 60 percent of those with schizophrenia are overweight, while 15 percent have diabetes.

Magellan has eight clinics that integrate primary and behavioral care services to meet the complete health care needs of this population. Behavioral and physical health care providers work as a team to offer services and avoid drug interactions from medications prescribed by several doctors. Electronic health records also are linked, giving each provider a more complete picture of the patient.

“It’s not just simple co-location,” Ghani said.

While her older kids are grown and on their own now, Burnom, 49, still is raising her 12-year-old twins. Her daughter makes the principal’s list regularly, but her son – who has been diagnosed with autism – isn’t doing so well at school. It’s a constant battle, but she goes to great lengths to advocate on his behalf.

She’s grateful for all the care and guidance she’s received through the Magellan clinics. Without their help, she said, “I would have been suffering alone.”

### ► BY THE NUMBERS

#### INDIVIDUALS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS:

**75%**

The percentage of people with serious mental illness who smoke

**30 years**

Individuals with serious mental illness die 30 years younger than those without

**40–60%**

The percentage of those with schizophrenia who are overweight

**15%**

The percentage of those with schizophrenia who have diabetes

**78%**

The percentage of those with serious mental illness who are unemployed

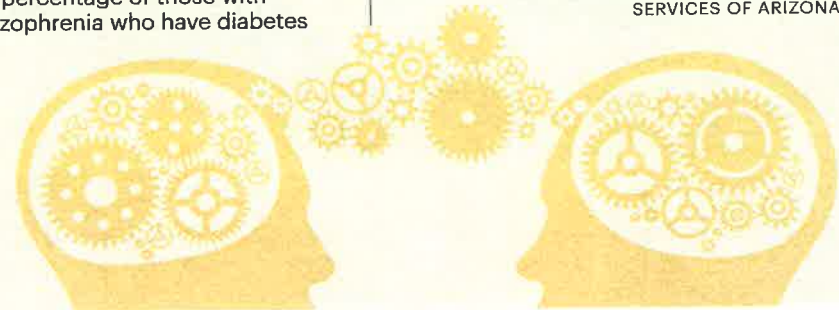
**6x**

Those with serious mental illness are six times more likely as the general population to die by suicide

**12 million**

The number of annual visits to the emergency room nationwide by people with mental health or substance use disorders

SOURCE: MAGELLAN HEALTH SERVICES OF ARIZONA



### ► CONTRACT DISPUTE

Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care won its bid to take over the state Regional Behavioral Health Authority contract from Magellan this year. But because Magellan disputed the award, the process is being reviewed by an administrative law judge.

Magellan is continuing in its role under the previous contract until the judge makes her recommendations to the Arizona Department of Administration this month.

Once those recommendations are issued, the state will examine the result and evidence and determine which provider will get the new contract, said Will Humble, director of the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Health Care for Our Future