



THCC PARTNERS TO PROVIDE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

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PHOTOS PROVIDED

Thousands of patients at The HealthCare Connection (THCC) do not have easy access to behavioral health services, and many of them have illnesses and stresses that make them prone to depression and other mental illnesses.

Recently awarded a two-year \$500,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for a behavioral health integration project and operating under the belief that “everyone deserves quality health-care”, The HealthCare Connection, which provides a medical home to uninsured, underserved and low-income families in northern Hamilton County, will be able to expand THCC services to a vulnerable population.

THCC, partnering with Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCB) and Talbert House, will add behavioral health services at practice sites that currently do not have on-site services, making services more accessible to thousands of current adolescent and adult patients, and helping THCC meet the expected increase in demand in coming years.

“We have collaborated with both



The HealthCare Connection is comprised of three health centers, which includes the Lincoln Heights Health Center (pictured); two school-based health centers; and four primary care/ behavioral integrated care co-locations.
(Photo | The HealthCare Connection)

of these organizations for several years,” says Dolores Lindsay, CEO of THCC, Ohio’s first community health center. “Their expertise and experience in behavioral health will be invaluable to this work.”

“We have long recognized the importance and need for integrating on-site behavioral health and primary care services, particularly serving those patients with serious mental illness, including depression.” says Jeff O’Neil, president & CEO of Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services, the most comprehensive mental health pro-

vider in Southwest Ohio serving people with mental illness and related barriers.

Studies have shown that patients treated for diabetes are at a much higher risk for developing depression than the general population.

Nearly two-thirds of THCC’s adult patients have a chronic illness that puts them at increased risk for depression. THCC has more than 1,300 diabetic patients, and the numbers continue to grow.

In addition, studies have also shown that single women who

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THCC PARTNERS TO PROVIDE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (CONT'D)



Leaders of the organizations partnering to provide behavioral health services to the community: (left—right) Delores Lindsay, CEO of The HealthCare Connection; Jeff O'Neil, president and CEO of Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services; Neil Tilow, CEO of Talbert House.

(Photos provided)

don't have enough food to feed their families are more prone to depression. In the areas served by THCC, there are five communities where more than 50 percent of the residents live at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. THCC hopes to better serve these populations at their practice sites.

Another important part of the project is the beginning of routine screening for substance abuse, starting in adolescence.

“Studies have shown that there is a high level of depression and substance use in the Greater Cincinnati area,” says Neil Tilow, president and CEO of Talbert House, a community-wide non-

profit network of services on a mission to improve social behavior and enhance personal recovery and growth. “We will be working with The HealthCare Connection to help them directly serve the patients most in need of these services.”

“There has been a marked increase in substance abuse, particularly heroin addiction, throughout Greater Cincinnati, and it has reached epidemic proportions in some of the areas we serve,” says David Arveladze, M.D., Chief Medical Officer of THCC. “These services can be part of the solution to controlling substance abuse in northern Cincinnati.”

Founded in 1967 and then operating from a four room apartment

with volunteer doctors and dentists, THCC is always working to expand access to quality, affordable primary and preventive care. In 2014, THCC provided a health care safety net to over 18,000 patients outside the city of Cincinnati with an annual budget in excess of \$8 million.

Now 48 years later, THCC's service network consists of three community health centers, two school-based health centers, and four primary care/behavioral integrated care collocations.

To learn more about THCC, call 513-483-3081 or visit www.healthcare-connection.org.

Gail Myers contributed to this article.

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