

Press Release

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Local Agency Awarded Grant To Help The Homeless

Montclair, N.J. — The Montclair-based Mental Health Association of Essex County (MHAEC) has been awarded a grant of more than half a million dollars by the New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services to provide outreach services to adults who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless and who are diagnosed with a mental illness. Formally known as the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), the program is scheduled to begin providing services throughout Essex County in October, 2016.

According to MHAEC Executive Director Bob Davison, “This award represents the single largest program expansion in more than ten years for our association.

“We expect that, when we are fully up and running, we will be able to provide outreach and ultimately actual services like housing, medication, and mental as well as physical health treatment to more than 500 homeless individuals throughout Essex County.

“These are some of our community’s most vulnerable citizens who currently are left with train stations, bus terminals, community parks and wooded areas, under bridges and in emergency shelters as the only places they can call their home,” Davison said.

Davison explained that one of the key factors in receiving the grant is that MHAEC understands many homeless persons may be wary of staff and fearful of re-hospitalization or being controlled in other ways.

“Because of this, our PATH staff will proceed slowly with engagement to build trust by first addressing basic needs identified by the each individual.

“As trust develops, PATH staff will gradually address physical and behavioral health needs following the lead of the individual,” Davison said

Included among the services which will be provided by the PATH program are individual case management; social, emotional and environmental support; occupational/vocational training; community mental health treatment for severe and persistent mental illness; alcohol and substance abuse counseling; and referrals for physical health treatment.

“Our homeless are a very fragile population who need a comprehensive network of support administered by compassionate, skilled professionals in a non-judgmental way that guides them along each of their unique paths to wellness and recovery.

“We at the Mental Health Association of Essex County appreciate the trust that the Division has shown in our ability to deliver results with the PATH program through the awarding of this grant, and we look forward to successfully working with our community’s homeless population,” Davison said.

Located at 33 South Fullerton Avenue in Montclair, the Mental Health Association of Essex County operates Prospect House, a rehabilitation center for individuals with mental illness; Integrated Case Management Services (ICMS) for those re-entering the community from state or county hospitals; Supported Employment Services (SES), which helps those with a history of mental illness to obtain and retain productive employment in the community; and the Center for Low Cost Psychotherapy (CLCP), which provides affordable psychiatric services for low income individuals and families. Through its Family Resource Center (FRC), the agency also conducts a wide-variety of family support services as well as prevention/intervention and ‘mental wellness’ programs.

In addition, the agency provides housing opportunities for individuals with mental illnesses returning to the community through its Supported Living Services (SLS) and a variety of jail diversion and law enforcement training programs through its Collaborative Justice Services (CJS) program. Recently, the agency also launched its Assisted Outpatient Treatment Services program (AOTS) which provides court ordered mental health treatment, intensive case management and assistance to a select group of mental health consumers who have been resistant to and have had difficulty engaging in outpatient treatment

To learn more about the Mental Health Association of Essex County and the programs and services it provides, residents can call (973) 509-9777 for free, confidential information and referral services.

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