



*Mental Health Council
of Arkansas*

In May of 2020, three Community Mental Health Centers in Arkansas: Mid-South Health Systems (MSHS), Ouachita Behavioral Health and Wellness (OBHAW), and Western Arkansas Counseling and Guidance Center (WACGC) were awarded Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Expansion Grants through SAMHSA.

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) are designed to provide a comprehensive range of mental health and substance use disorder treatment and recovery support services to vulnerable individuals. The Excellence in Mental Health Act demonstration (Section 223 demonstration) established a federal definition, criteria and provided for the selection of eight initial states to be recognized as CCBHC Demonstration States. Subsequent legislation has enabled the designation of two additional CCBHC Demonstration States and funding is available for additional state demonstration projects. CCBHC Demonstration is a new Medicaid provider type and considered the Gold Standard of Care for Behavioral Healthcare. Additionally, funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has allowed over two hundred fifty providers operating in thirty-three states across the Country to become CCBHCs, including three Arkansas Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs). A growing number of states are moving to implement the CCBHC service model via a state plan amendment or Medicaid waiver. Hailed by the National Council on Behavioral Health as “the future of behavioral health,” CCBHCs have dramatically increased access to mental health and addiction treatment, expanded states’ capacity to address the opioid crisis and established innovative partnerships with law enforcement and hospitals to improve care, increase access to essential behavioral health and substance abuse services, reduce recidivism and prevent hospital readmissions. Preliminary data obtained from current CCBHC sites demonstrates significant cost savings and improved consumer and population outcomes. CCBHC services are available to any individual in need of care, including people with serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, long-term chronic addiction, mild or moderate mental illness and substance use disorders, and complex health profiles. CCBHCs provide care to individuals regardless of their place of residence or ability to pay. This includes those who are underserved, have low incomes, are insured, uninsured, or on Medicaid, and those who are active duty military or veterans. The comprehensive array of services offered by CCBHCs are designed to increase access, stabilize people in crisis, and provide treatment essential for those with the most serious and complex mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The goal of the CCBHC is whole person recovery and integrated care with emphasis on coordinating services within the community to provide for mental/ behavioral health and physical health treatment. As such, CCBHCs provide nine types of essential services, with an emphasis on the provision of substance use and mental health care, 24-hour crisis care, evidence-based practices, and consumer care coordination. Moreover, additional services are incorporated to ensure an approach to health care that emphasizes recovery, wellness, trauma-informed care, and physical-behavioral health integration.

Since May, the three Arkansas Community Mental Health Centers awarded funding through the CCBHC Expansion Grant began their work to meet the certification requirements of the CCBHC model of care. All three centers conducted a Needs Assessment to determine priority



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populations and healthcare service needs in their areas and submitted an official Attestation to SAMHSA assessing their current level of meeting CCBHC Certification.

Mid-South Health Systems (MSHS) will expand services in Craighead, Mississippi and Crittenden counties to improve access to and delivery of an expanded array of services such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Targeted Case Management, and Integrated Primary and Behavioral Healthcare. Additionally, CCBHC funding is allowing MSHS to enhance its workforce through the addition of Care Coordinators, Peer Recovery Specialists and Family Support Staff, and by training staff in a variety of Evidence-Based and Promising Practices. Through the implementation of the CCBHC Expansion project, MSHS expects to increase access to and improve the quality of community mental and substance use disorder treatment services and improve the behavioral and physical health of Arkansas residents by offering a person and family centered, trauma-informed, recovery-oriented approach to community-based care designed to serve the whole person. Through implementation of the CCBHC Project, MSHS will serve an additional 370 consumers over the 2 year grant period.

Ouachita Behavioral Health and Wellness (OBHAW) will increase consumer's access to care in Clark, Garland, Hot Spring, Montgomery and Pike Counties by expanding person and family centered services and combining physical and behavioral health in a single integrated care setting. OBHAW has committed to serving an additional 1,035 consumers over the 2 year grant period with a focus on the underserved populations residing in rural Arkansas. Consumers with chronic health conditions will improve self-management of co-occurring conditions and will have increased access to community supports. The full array of services made possible by the grant include around-the-clock crisis intervention services for people with serious mental illness or substance use disorders; Assertive Community Treatment or ACT, a community-based program that offers treatment, rehabilitation, and support services using a person-centered recovery-based team approach; Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorders; services for children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbance; services for co-occurring mental and substance disorders; and physical health care. To date, OBHAW has filled all 20 new positions made possible by the CCBHC grant funding. Consumers officially began receiving services September 1 and are already seeing the benefits of the whole person model of care with documented successes being realized as a result of Care Coordination and ACT services.

Western Arkansas Counseling and Guidance (WACGC) has worked diligently toward meeting criteria for CCBHC certification since being awarded the grant. Expansion and augmentation criteria are intended to extend quality and improve value based outcomes of the behavioral health care system. WACGC has broken ground on an existing building to make renovations to more efficiently provide for true integrated health care and enhanced care coordination. National data from other CCBHC's yield improvement in population health indicators and helping persons to better navigate health decisions resulting in cost savings for the state. The CCBHC expansion will improve upon access to care, provide for more specific targeted case management and



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Assertive Community Treatment; meeting persons in the community and access via a no wrong door philosophy. Programs will serve consumers in 6 counties; Crawford, Franklin, Polk, Logan, Sebastian, and Scott; with a focus on persons either at-risk or justice involved for both youth and adults as well as mobile treatment in rural areas. WACGC has added to our workforce in order to meet the grant submission goals of fulfilling unmet needs within our communities. WACGC has been working with evaluators with the University of Arkansas to incorporate data collection to help in data driven decision making. WACGC has trained approximately 150 staff members in administering mental health assessments to provide for the collection, reporting and use of data that ensures the use of evidenced based practices for treatment and whole person recovery outcomes.

Fiscal Year 2020 funding for the CCBHC Grantees was made available through annually appropriated Federal funding and additional emergency COVID funding through the CARES Act. Arkansans in 14 counties across the state will now have access to the Gold Standard in the provision of Integrated Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse Services provided through Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics.

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