



SOUTHEASTERN CENTER
For Mental Health, Developmental Disability and Substance Abuse Services

News Release

Service, Excellence, Compassion

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 7, 2011

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Merging mental health agencies selected for Medicaid Waiver expansion

Jacksonville/Wilmington, NC- On October 31, 2011 The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services notified Onslow-Carteret Behavioral Healthcare Services (OCBHS) and Southeastern Center for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (SEC) of their selection to jointly become a Medicaid 1915 (b) (c) Waiver site, effective January 1, 2013. This followed an extensive application process, site visit and staff and consumer interviews.

“We are delighted to have been selected as a Medicaid 1915 (b) (c) Waiver site. This is a goal we have been working toward over the past two years,” says SEC Area Director, Foster Norman.

On October 1, 2011 OCBHS and SEC submitted a joint application to become a Medicaid 1915 (b) (c) Waiver site following a merger of the two agencies. After successfully passing the desk review, a site visit was conducted on October 20, 2011 with representatives from Mercer Government Human Services Consulting, the NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services, the NC Division of Medical Assistance, consumers, and family members. Throughout the day staff, consumers, and family members from both OCBHS and SEC participated in group interviews detailing functions and internal processes of the new organization forming on July 1, 2012. Functions relating to customer service, quality management, care coordination, utilization management, and business management were the focus of the day.

“Having the opportunity to operate as a Medicaid Waiver Site will ensure the behavioral healthcare needs of our local communities are met. Being familiar with the unique needs of the citizens gives us the advantage and insight when determining best practices involving treatment for individuals” says Dr. Mark Besen, Chief Operating Officer of OCBHS.

Currently, a state-wide vendor authorizes Medicaid funded services for consumers of mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services. Becoming a Medicaid 1915 (b) (c) Waiver site will allow these authorizations to happen locally. This model has shown success in increasing access to services, improving quality of care, and has increased savings for both State and Medicaid dollars. As a Medicaid 1915

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(b) (c) Waiver site, annual funding will increase substantially from approximately \$39 million a year to a projected minimum of \$160 million.

“This means that the citizens of our area will continue to have a local entity that manages the behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability services for state funds and Medicaid,” states Norman. The Medicaid 1915 (b) (c) Waiver implementation date is scheduled for January 1, 2013.

There will be a six month gap between the merge of the two agencies on July 1, 2012 and the implementation of the Medicaid 1915 (b) (c) Waiver functions on January 1, 2013. During this time staff will be added to fully accommodate the functions that the new organization will perform upon implementation. About 70 positions will be added to the current 110, although a reduction in force is possible in some areas.

Leading up to the implementation, the NC Department of Health and Human Services will hold monthly Intradepartmental Monitoring Meetings to assist and monitor the implementation process. Approximately 120 days and 60 days prior to the identified start date, the organization will receive readiness reviews to provide technical assistance as part of the implementation process.

For more information on the merger of OCBHS and SEC, or the Medicaid 1915 (b) (c) Waiver, contact Rebecca Basden at 910-219-8007 or Kate Murphy at 910-332-6888.

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