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NEW YORK STATE AWARDED $2 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER SERVICES FOR REGIONS OF THE STATE MOST IMPACTED BY COVID-19

Funding will improve access to services in NYC, and Westchester, Orange and Rockland Counties, which account for 75% of COVID-19 Cases

New York State has been awarded $2 million in funding from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to improve accessibility of mental health and substance use disorder services for vulnerable residents in New York City, and Westchester, Rockland and Orange Counties. The four localities account for 75 percent of the state's COVID-19 infections.

The grant application was prepared by the Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) and will enhance services in two of the hardest hit regions of the State – New York City and the Lower Hudson Valley."

OMH Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan, said, “All New Yorkers have been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, but residents in NYC and the lower Hudson Valley have been particularly hard hit which can have a severe negative effect on emotional well-being. This award from SAMHSA will allow us to improve access to mental health and substance use disorder services for vulnerable people in those regions who have been disproportionately impacted.”

OASAS Commissioner Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez said, “New York State offers nation-leading services and resources for addiction, and amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to focus on guaranteeing that everyone is still able to access these critical, lifesaving supports. This funding will help to bolster these services and increase their availability in the hardest hit areas of New York, allowing people in these regions to continue receiving the help they need.”

OMH and OASAS will partner with two organizations, Coordinated Behavioral Health Care (CBC) which serves New York City and Coordinated Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) which serves the lower Hudson Valley region.

The two organizations represent networks of more than 100 experienced OMH-licensed and OASAS certified agencies that provide comprehensive, integrated and coordinated network of mental health and substance use disorder services.

The groups being targeted for support include vulnerable New Yorkers with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Healthcare workers who have been on the front line of the battle against COVID-19 will also be targeted for support.

The agencies will focus on three goals:
1) Providing brief crisis counseling and treatment using easily accessed telehealth services or in-person if needed while removing any financial barriers for receiving services;
2) Facilitating a person-centered approach for individuals to promote and support recovery while managing BH crisis in the community;
3) Improving transitions of care for people with serious BH conditions to shorten inpatient length of stay and stabilize people with serious conditions in community settings, thereby reducing emergency department and inpatient admissions and better connecting people who are transitioning from substance use disorder crisis and rehabilitation to community and recovery supports.

Help Is Available

New Yorkers who are feeling increased anxiety or are overwhelmed by the coronavirus emergency can call the COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline (1-844-863-9314) for free and confidential support. The Helpline, open 7 days a week from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm, is staffed by volunteers, including mental health professionals, who have received training in crisis counseling.

New Yorkers struggling with an addiction, or whose loved ones are struggling, can find help and hope by calling the state's toll-free, 24-hour, 7-day-a-week HOPE line at 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369) or by texting HOPENY (Short Code 467369).

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