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Governor Christie Announces Expansion of Behavioral Health Homes

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Healthcare Model integrates Physical, Mental Health and Addiction Services For Those Who Need It Most

Trenton, NJ – Reaffirming the Administration’s commitment to helping people with addiction disorders with access to treatment and recovery services, Governor Chris Christie today announced the expansion of the behavioral health home model, a healthcare hub, that treats physical health, mental health and addiction disorders with an integrated approach. Governor Christie made the announcement during his visit to Catholic Charities in Trenton, one of three behavioral health homes in Mercer County. Currently, there are four behavioral health homes statewide and seven new agencies advancing towards certification.

“After speaking with people here today, I’m more convinced than ever that our multi-program, multi-service approach to treating addiction disorders is fundamentally changing the landscape of how we get people treatment for the better,” said Governor Christie. “We’re reaching people who need help in every way we can – in hospitals, through the court system, in prisons, through a hotline referral model and through mental health services. There’s no singular solution because there’s no singular type of person affected. We’ve pulled out all the stops and the outcomes are clear: our programs are helping people seek and sustain recovery from addiction.”

A Behavioral Health Home is an outpatient service with a continuing standard of care that allows participants to have all of their health care needs identified, addressed, and treated in a coordinated way. The same team of clinicians and practitioners either deliver, or coordinate the delivery of, all the necessary medical, behavioral, and social supports required for the individual, acknowledging the impact each area has on the others. It is a whole-person care delivery model.

Up to 75 percent of people with a serious mental illness also have an addiction – a co-occurring disorder - according to various studies cited by The Co-Occurring Center for Excellence at the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Governor saw first-hand today that the Behavioral Health Home model helps address both disorders, along with any physical health issues, and reclaim their lives.

Catholic Charities of Trenton is a longtime leading and integral partner with the state’s Department of Human Services’ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services in providing a variety of programs to stem homelessness, provide supportive housing and to help people access treatment for mental health and addiction disorders.

The Behavioral Health Home model was launched in 2014 as part of the state’s Comprehensive Medicaid Waiver plan, with one location in Bergen County and three in Mercer County. Recently, seven more locations each were awarded startup funds to develop policy and staffing patterns necessary to apply for certification and approval to operate a Behavioral Health Home. They include: Cape Counseling, Meridian, Jewish Family Services, CPC Behavioral Healthcare, Easter Seals NJ, Helping Hand Behavioral Health and Atlanticare.

In addition to yielding better recovery outcomes, Behavioral Health Homes are designed to decrease the unnecessary use of high-cost emergency services and to decrease overall healthcare costs. For their medical care, consumers at Catholic Charities’ Behavioral Health Home are treated on location at Catholic Charities by the medical staff from Henry J. Austin Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center in Trenton.

To ensure that New Jersey residents with behavioral health needs can access high-quality treatment, in his Fiscal Year 2017 budget, Governor Christie is making an historic financial commitment to raise reimbursement rates and increase

access to substance use and mental health treatment. This is the first significant behavioral health rate increase in more than a decade and will allow the State to provide more competitive reimbursement rates for services and providers and extend access to care for behavioral health needs.

The \$127 million investment into increasing reimbursement to providers through enhanced rates is comprised of \$53 million for mental health services and \$74 million towards substance use services and represents the largest increase overall to this community in over a decade and will help improve critical services and provide more treatment capacity for those who need it most.

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