

Connection

The newsletter of Integrated Services

Winter 2010



Greetings

These are interesting and challenging times, to say the least. As always, our response to new challenges is to recommit to existing partnerships and to remain open to new collaborative opportunities. We are fortunate to be able to look forward to many new endeavors in the coming months.

Recently, much of our time has been spent exploring new horizons in affordable housing and employment. Many people and families with significant needs for therapeutic supports also are at risk for homelessness. This is certainly new territory for us and we have discovered a whole new world of committed professionals working on a different set of problems.

Stay warm this winter and keep the promise of spring alive in your heart.

Regards,



Kevin Gillespie
Executive Director

Stay Connected

The easiest way to communicate with any Integrated Services staff is to start with the Athens office. Please feel free to give us a call or email. We will put you in touch with the appropriate person.

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In this Issue

- Page 1: Greetings
- Page 2: Pathways
- Page 3: Integrated Services Expands Homeless Prevention Services in Hocking, Athens and Perry Counties

Pathways

by Chris Smitley, Associate Executive Director, Clinical & Rehabilitation Services

Integrated Services of Appalachian Ohio continues to forge ahead integrating services that better support consumers toward independence and self sufficiency. Our model of partnering with local community providers in employment, mental health, housing and social services continues to pay dividends for both communities and consumers. In my own recent work, I am involved with new ventures with Pathways, Sojourners and the Ross County Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RCCADV). A brief description of each follows.

Pathways is a collaborative venture with rehabilitation providers, Goodwill, Scioto Paint Valley Mental Health Center and Integrated Services under the leadership of the Paint Valley ADAMH Board and the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission. The Pathways goal is to extend and provide traditional vocational rehabilitation services in Ross, Pickaway, Vinton, Jackson and Fayette Counties. The Pathways program is intended to reach out and extend vocational rehabilitation services to underserved populations, such as veterans and severely mentally disabled consumers. Pathways will improve access and direct local linkages, while coordinating rehabilitation so that consumers may return to competitive employment.

Sojourners Care Network, as many Integrated Services providers may know, is a therapeutic foster care network that provides stability for many youth in out-of-home placement. What

one may not know is that Sojourners is very active in providing transitional housing and work readiness programming to at risk young adults. Many of these transitioning youth are disenfranchised from their local communities, their families of origin and are at extreme risk for homelessness, poverty and various problems with independent life. Many have ongoing mental health and AoD concerns that impede their self sufficiency. Integrated Services, through the leadership of licensed clinical providers, is able to provide timely assessment, intervention, consultation and guidance to the Youth Build and Transitional Living Programs. This collaborative partnership will improve access to rehabilitation and intervention services for identified participants in the Sojourners programs.

The Ross County Coalition Against Domestic Violence remains a committed partner to Integrated Services. Integrated Services has out stationed a licensed mental health provider to provide assessment, counseling and rehabilitation services to identified victims of violence. These consumers often suffer from PTSD, depression and may lack the capacity to sustain their own independence. Integrated Services and RCCADV have partnered recently to develop an enhanced team to better support and address the obstacles confronting victims of domestic violence who also present significant emotional and mental distress.

Integrated Services Expands Homeless Prevention Services in Hocking, Athens and Perry Counties

by Terri Gillespie, Program Director,
Perry, Hocking, Athens, Meigs Counties

Integrated Services was recently asked by Hocking, Athens and Perry County Community Action (HAPCAP) to lead the Homeless Prevention and Rapid –Re-housing Program (HPRP). The three county Community Action agency received the HPRP funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a result of the enactment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The funds that will be distributed over a three year period are meant to provide eligible applicants with financial assistance and services to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless or to help those who are experiencing homelessness to quickly re-gain housing stability. Ohio has distributed these funds to non-profit organizations and local governments, with approval by the local Continuum of Care (CoC) and County Commissioners in each designated service area.

Our designated service area (Athens, Hocking and Perry Counties) will focus these funds for homeless prevention, which includes financial assistance and services to prevent homelessness and divert persons from entering shelters. Financial assistance can be used for short term rental assistance, back rent that will maintain existing housing, housing relocation and stabilization services, including security or utility deposits or utility payments. Funds must be targeted to only those who *would be homeless if not for this assistance*.

A small amount of funds will be used for Rapid Re-Housing to provide start up costs to persons who are HUD homeless but have the ability to sustain housing

after receiving financial assistance and support.

Integrated Services will conduct the eligibility assessments and provide the supportive services to stabilize housing to approved households in the three-county region. The supportive services are designed to stabilize housing by addressing budgeting concerns, increase financial literacy, as well as identify barriers that challenge housing stability. Referrals will be accepted from partnering agencies from each county. Integrated Services has both hired new staff and has sub-contracted in order to fill positions created with these funds. In addition, a sub-contract with Southeast Ohio Legal Services will allow close collaboration with legal services to strengthen advocacy.

Housing is a basic need that most of us take for granted. We are working hard with HAPCAP and community partners throughout Appalachian Ohio to move toward a time when everyone has access to affordable housing. This exciting pilot in Hocking, Athens and Perry Counties is opening doors for new collaborative relationships to take on what might otherwise seem like an overwhelming problem.