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Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center Receives Dual Diagnosis Enhanced Recognition from State

Rochester, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Human Services has named Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center's Recovery Partners as a Dual Diagnosis Enhanced (DDE) program for the treatment of behavioral health disorders. This program is the only one in the state to receive the enhanced classification.

"We appreciate this recognition from the Department of Human Services," said Pat Carlson, executive director. "Over the past year, staff has received training and spent considerable energy to improve the level of care for our clients. The state's recognition is a tribute to the excellent care provided by our employees."

The project was implemented in mid-2007 as part of the federal Co-Occurring State Incentive Grant (COSIG) designed to improve treatment for people with at least one mental health disorder and a chemical dependency issue. Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center was one of 18 providers in Minnesota that initially qualified for funding and one of just four that received funding for 2010.

"One of the state's goals for the project was to partner with mental health and substance abuse agencies to develop Minnesota's evidence-based co-occurring disorders services," said Cynthia Godin, COSIG project director. "This project offers Minnesota the unique opportunity to focus on how services for people with mental health and chemical dependency disorders are delivered across the state."

Godin added that the steps taken by Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center toward improving treatment outcomes for people with co-occurring disorders will be used as an example for ongoing systems development across the state.

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The funds have been used to expand training and technical assistance to providers on the most effective strategies for treating co-occurring disorders. This allows staff to be better able to recognize symptoms and provide the comprehensive treatment required for this population.

The training has allowed Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center to develop and implement a number of enhancements to its treatment procedures. This includes using an integrated approach, with psychiatry staff, chemical health counselors and therapists meeting to combine their individual expertise in a group to develop customized treatment plans for each client. People also have access to peer support groups that meet on a weekly basis to discuss how to respond to crisis situations, triggers for drug use and the effects of drug use for people with mental health disorders.

“Studies show that mental health and chemical dependency issues often go hand-in-hand,” said Judy Eichman, chemical health services director for Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center. “We are now using evidence-based practices to treat the unique characteristics of people with these co-occurring disorders. The additional training and tools have been invaluable for offering seamless treatment to clients, instead of the philosophy of treating mental health and chemical dependency issues separately that is common with many providers.”

Eichman said these disorders impact people from all walks of life. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, as many as 6 in 10 people with substance abuse issues also have at least one other mental disorder. Research increasingly supports the benefit of studying and treating co-occurring disorders together, with both medication and behavioral therapies.

“The recognition as a dual diagnosis enhanced facility is just the first step in our efforts to provide innovative, evidence-based mental health and chemical dependency treatment services to Rochester and southeast Minnesota,” said Eichman. “Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center is exploring opportunities to expand its work with families and support networks through additional education and other resources for clients with a dual diagnosis.”

About Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center

Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center enhances the quality of life for residents in southeastern Minnesota by serving as a community resource for the understanding and treatment of behavioral health and substance use disorders. The organization collaborates with government agencies, schools, non-profit groups and others to provide programs dedicated to improving the mental health of adults, adolescents and children. Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center is a private, non-profit organization serving Olmsted and Fillmore counties. For more information, visit our Web site at www.zumbromhc.org or call 507-289-2089.

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