

Las Vegas' Healthy Minds and DFS Pilot Program Helps Children and Saves Tax Payers Money

Las Vegas, NV – Over the past nine months, Healthy Minds, Southern Nevada's premier mental health provider, has worked in coordination with Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS) to carry out an exciting new program that could help foster children and taxpayers alike. The “Therapeutic Foster Care Pilot Program” set out to determine what impact integrating a more holistic mental health approach would have on the outcomes of foster children and their families.

Unlike conventional mental health treatment for foster children which tends to be over reliant on psychotropic medications, the Healthy Minds' pilot treatment program consisted of clinical and behavioral health services, including mental health evaluation, individual therapy, family counseling, and medication management by board certified child and adolescent psychiatrists. There was also supportive education and training for foster and birth parents. Finally, there were weekly clinical staff meetings with clinicians, caseworkers, foster parents and birth parents.

The hope was that by providing more robust and balanced mental health care, the county would be able to achieve better outcomes for children in the foster care system while also reducing the cost of the Medicaid-funded services which currently cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars every year.

A total of 29 children (9 males, 20 females) ranging in age from 4 to 16 years old were assigned to the project by DFS. Children were selected because they were classified as “challenging youth”, meaning that many of them had been living at the Department of Family Services facility for months because no other providers were willing to take placement of them.

After nine months, DFS and Healthy Minds are pleased to publicly announce the results from the pilot program:

- 40% reduction in psychotropic medication,
- 90% reduction in hospitalization,
- 90% reduction in placement disruptions,
- 15% increase in successful case closure.

Despite the exceptional results resulting from this initial pilot program, it's too early to determine when or if this program, or similar programs, will be scaled to other counties around the state. What is certain is that the lives of the “challenging youth” who were fortunate enough to participate in this program will be forever changed for the better, and taxpayers saved money in the process.

For more information about Healthy Minds or to schedule an interview, please visit www.healthymindslv.com or contact:

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