



Foundation



Mental Health America of Indiana Receives \$900,000 Grant from Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation During “Mental Health Matters Day” at the Indiana State Fair

INDIANAPOLIS – Mental Health America of Indiana (MHA) announced today a 3-year, \$900,000 grant from Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation during “Mental Health Matters Day” at the Indiana State Fair. Representatives from Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation presented the grant alongside Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch and Douglas Huntsinger, Executive Director for Drug Prevention, Treatment, & Enforcement for the State of Indiana and Chairman of the Indiana Commission to Combat Substance Use Disorder, to MHA’s Indiana Recovery Network for their Regional Recovery Hub – Emergency Department Program.

“With bi-partisan efforts in the general assembly and collaboration with the private sector, Indiana has made great strides in providing Hoosiers battling mental illness or addiction issues with the appropriate help they need,” said Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, Indiana’s Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. “Today’s generous commitment from the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation is representative of the collaboration we are seeing, especially in emergency and crisis situations.”

“Emergency departments are a critical intervention point for individuals with substance use disorders and mental health needs, and peer support services are a necessary component of recovery,” Huntsinger said. “With strong collaboration between our Regional Recovery Hubs and hospitals, peer recovery coaches will provide another layer of support for our most vulnerable Hoosiers, working to identify their needs and walk alongside them to ensure a successful recovery.”

The grant funding will allow MHA to expand peer support in emergency departments across the state serving as a critical access point to those with substance use disorders and/or mental illness. Peer support will improve access to treatment, resources and recovery for impacted individuals, with a focus on medically underserved communities.

“The Indiana Recovery Network, a program of Mental Health America of Indiana, is pleased to partner with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation to enhance peer recovery support services in rural Indiana Counties,” said Heather Rodriguez, MHA Vice President of Recovery and Advocacy Programs, Director of Indiana Recovery Network. “This program will create partnerships between Regional Recovery Hubs and hospitals to connect patients with certified peer recovery professionals upon discharge who will walk alongside individuals as they begin their recovery journey. Not only will individuals be provided with direct peer support services and recovery focused groups, but peers will assist them with resource navigation which can be an additional challenge for someone suffering from substance use and/or mental health concerns. Peers serve as a link to additional needs such as treatment, housing, employment, whatever that person needs to find sustainability in their recovery and overall health and wellness utilizing a strengths-based approach.”

Defined as a mental disorder, substance use disorder affects a person's brain and behavior, leading to the inability to control the use of substances such as legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, and medications. Individuals who are using the emergency department for treatment of conditions related to substance use disorder and/or mental illness are more likely to initiate recovery services and access community resources if they are engaged proactively at the point of the emergency care. Individuals who continue chaotic substance use, have instability in housing, are unemployed, food insecure, or affected by other social drivers of health, are less likely to access care options. According to a published study by Annals of Emergency Medicine and the National Institute of Health, 60% of individuals who had fatal overdoses over a four-year period had been discharged from an emergency department within the prior year. This grant funding from Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Foundation will provide immediate connection through peer services with emergency departments by delivering direct services and/or referrals to increase access to treatment options.

"Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation continues to work with our local community partners across Indiana, including MHAI and the Indiana Recovery Network (IRN), to provide meaningful solutions to achieve better health for all individuals," said Dr. Kimberly Mayrose, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Indiana's Behavioral Health Medicaid Medical Director. "Addressing the array of care and service options from prevention and screening to early intervention and treatment for mental health and substance use disorders leads to higher quality of care and advancement of health equity. Our collaboration with MHAI and IRN will drive specific, measurable outcomes that will ultimately strengthen our communities through crisis response and intervention, community resources and referrals, as well as recovery supports."

"Mental Health Matters Day" at the Indiana State Fair was created to advance the Indiana Mental Health Roundtable's mission to raise awareness for mental health by reducing stigma, strengthening the mental health delivery system, and improving access and affordability. The "Mental Health Matters Day" exhibit included several local organizations including Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield that offered mental health resources, education, services and supports for those that attended.

This grant is part of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation's [commitment of up to \\$30 million](#) to make significant progress in addressing the mental health and well-being in communities across the country with an emphasis on substance use disorders.

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