



NEWS RELEASE

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MAHEC Awarded \$4M to Address Region's Mental Health and Substance Use Needs

SAMHSA Grant Establishes First Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic in WNC

Asheville, NC (May 20, 2020)— The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has awarded the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) a two-year \$4 million grant to provide vital services for people with serious mental illness and substance use disorders across 18 counties in Western North Carolina.

Funded in part through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, this grant will enable MAHEC to provide trauma-informed, comprehensive behavioral health services for individuals and families, regardless of their ability to pay, as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC). The CCBHC model expands services currently provided at MAHEC's Center for Psychiatry and Mental Wellness in Asheville.

Over the next two years, MAHEC estimates it will serve more than 2,500 adults and children with serious mental illness, emotional disturbance, opioid and substance use disorders, and mild to moderate mental health conditions. As the first CCBHC in Western North Carolina, MAHEC's behavioral health safety net will significantly expand access to mental health and addictions treatment.

"Our region has higher rates of depression, addiction, overdose, and suicide than state and national averages," explains MAHEC CEO Jeff Heck, MD. "This grant will enhance our ability to address critical behavioral health needs with a proven approach for delivering comprehensive care."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges for those who were already vulnerable," Heck adds. "This funding ensures we can serve those who need our support now more than ever."

The goal of the CCBHC model is to increase access to comprehensive mental health and substance use treatment. Services include same-day behavioral healthcare, mobile crisis services, treatment with medication for opioid use disorder, primary care health screenings, community-based treatment, case management and care coordination with community partners that serve veterans, children, and those involved with the justice system.

For more information on MAHEC's behavioral health and other services, please visit mahec.net/wellness.

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Mountain Area Health Education Center was established in 1974 and is a leader in healthcare, education, and innovation. Located in Asheville, MAHEC serves a 16-county region in Western North Carolina and is one of nine [Area Health Education Centers](#) in North Carolina. MAHEC's mission is to recruit, train and retain the workforce needed to create a healthy North Carolina with a focus on primary care in rural communities and those with less access to resources. MAHEC's Biltmore campus is also home to [UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC](#), an academic health center in partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill that includes programs from the UNC School of Medicine, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, and UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy.

Mountain Area Health Education Center

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