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Robeson Health Care Corporation Wins Whole Person Care 2019 Innovation Award

Pinehurst, NC (December 5, 2019). Robeson Health Care Corporation (RHCC) was recognized by the i2i Center for Integrative Health for their efforts and success in implementing a whole person system of care within their rural Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) setting. This endeavor complements RHCC's existing service array, which includes a substance abuse prevention program, outpatient and residential behavioral health services, and primary care.

The whole person care system was developed by RHCC eight years ago. The goal was to establish a comprehensive continuum of care within the FQHC. The first step was evaluating the FQHC resources and service gaps and identifying areas where internal connections existed and where they were absent. Based on this evaluation, RHCC leadership decided to co-locate behavioral health clinicians in primary health centers and build upon their existing behavioral health programming.

The Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Model was adopted in the health centers, but it was quickly modified to include mental health-specific screenings in order to meet the needs of the health center population as well as the community at large. The program currently employs four full-time behavioral health clinicians. There are six additional clinicians available as needed, along with a psychiatric nurse practitioner, 20 medical providers, nursing staff, case managers, Peer Support Specialists, and other paraprofessionals.

RHCC's integrated system of care model seeks to meet each individual's whole person needs by eliminating barriers to care as well as addressing social determinants of health. RHCC

accomplishes this objective by providing services that are not typically offered in primary care settings. These services include: transportation, on-site pharmacies, case management, nutritional assistance, on-site dental care, on-site psychiatric services including medication management, on-site medication-assisted treatment, behavioral health assessment and counseling, access to residential and gender-specific substance use disorder treatment, Ryan White HIV/STD Program, Healthy Start/Baby Love Program and Substance Abuse Prevention Program.

RHCC has also seen positive outcomes for both the individuals they serve and the employees who serve them. Some of those include: increased access to care because of an in-house transportation service; better access to medication and better medication compliance because of the in-house pharmacies; increased behavioral health services referrals because of new patients receiving behavioral health screenings and existing patients receiving an annual screening; improved integration of behavioral health clinicians into the primary care setting; greater appreciation of behavioral health clinicians' expertise; and improved communication between staff and better understanding of internal RHCC resources. RHCC has successfully broken down the silos that have existed from operating separate medical and behavioral services. They've done this by having behavioral health leadership at the executive level within the corporation; having behavioral health leadership present in the health centers; and having RHCC leadership present at behavioral health locations and at meetings concerning behavioral health and integrated care concepts.

“Whole person systems are not always easy to implement into existing healthcare systems, but they are necessary to best meet the needs of those being served. RHCC has implemented a multi-pronged approach to their whole person care program. We commend them for taking the important step of incorporating behavioral health leaders at the executive level, as well as addressing a number of Social Determinant of Health needs. We are excited to recognize their accomplishments” said i2i Executive Director Mary Hooper.

About i2i Center for Integrative Health

The mission of the i2i Center is to foster collaborative and evidence-based initiatives for improving the quality and efficacy of the behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance use care and support services systems within a comprehensive system of whole person care. The i2i Center accomplishes its mission by convening stakeholders, strategizing solutions, and activating change.