



Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network

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Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network, in Partnership with Oregon Health & Science University, Receives \$2 Million Grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to Join New National Program for Preventing Psychotic Illness in Youth

Salem, Oregon

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) today announced that Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network (MVBCN), partnering with Oregon Health & Science University, has been selected to participate in a pioneering national initiative to reduce the terrible toll of psychotic illnesses on young people and their families through early detection and intervention. The *Early Detection and Intervention for the Prevention of Psychosis Program* (EDIPPP) will provide MVBCN up to \$2 million over four years to be part of a national effectiveness study aimed at averting the onset of serious mental illness among young people showing early symptoms of psychosis.

MVBCN was one of only four sites selected from a small number of organizations across the country that are qualified to do this type of work. MVBCN's Early Assessment and Support Team (EAST) has more than six years of experience demonstrating the value of early detection and intervention among young people with early symptoms of psychosis, and will implement the local EDIPPP program.

"I'm delighted that Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network has been selected to participate in EDIPPP," said MVBCN Executive Manager Jim Russell. "Through this new national program, we can expand resources such as community education, vocational supports, and occupational therapy. We are also excited about connecting with the research community to help demonstrate the effectiveness of this innovative approach to preventing psychotic illness."

EDIPPP builds on the promising work of the Portland Identification and Early Referral Services (PIER) in Cumberland County, Maine. By providing community education, early identification, individualized treatment, and intensive supports following the most current evidence-based approaches, PIER has made a dramatic, positive impact on young people referred for early symptoms of psychosis.

The goal of EDIPPP is to demonstrate the impact of making these services more broadly available. EDIPPP has convened an oversight committee of national experts to work with all four program sites.

"Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network is now a partner in an exciting endeavor to protect young people from the tremendous anguish and devastation of psychotic illness," said Jane Isaacs Lowe, Ph.D., senior program officer at RWJF. "In selecting MVBCN to participate in this program, we

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were particularly impressed by the high level of community involvement for the project. That will be a key element to the project's success.”

EAST currently serves 100 young people in Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook and Yamhill counties, and accepts referrals from anyone in the community. The program will reach out to teachers, social workers, doctors, students, parents, clergy, and others who interact regularly with young people and educate them on how to identify possible early signs of psychotic illness so that they can get help quickly. The program works with young people ages 12 to 25 who show early symptoms of psychotic illness before those symptoms become severe and disabling.

“Young people often tell us that they’ve had symptoms a long time before getting help,” said EAST Program Coordinator Tamara Sale. “By waiting, many of these bright young people suffer significant consequences, like school failure, drug use, and hospitalization. We hope to avoid trauma and help young people stay in control of their lives. By being part of a national effectiveness study, we can also help pave the way for other communities to do the same.”

“Oregon Health & Science University is pleased to work with Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network on this important project,” said Bentson McFarland, M.D., Ph.D., professor of psychiatry, public health and preventive medicine at OHSU. “Research and program evaluation are key components of the University’s mission to improve Oregonians' health and health care. The University looks forward to the EDIPP project as a natural extension of its longstanding partnership with Oregon’s public sector behavioral health agencies.”

Approximately 2 to 3 percent of youth and young adults develop schizophrenia or a severe, psychotic mood disorder, with most cases developing after age 12. Psychotic illness is crippling: 75 percent of people who have schizophrenia go on to develop a disability and only a small percentage are gainfully employed. An estimated 12 to 15 percent of people who suffer from psychosis commit suicide.

“Psychotic illness destroys lives, but we hope to save many of those lives through prevention,” said EDIPP National Program Office Director William R. McFarlane, M.D. “Through this program, the entire community will play an active role helping vulnerable young people stay healthy and lead productive lives.”

Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network is an intergovernmental managed mental health care organization serving Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook and Yamhill counties in Oregon. EAST is the only early intervention program for psychosis in Oregon, and one of only a few such programs in the United States.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with diverse groups of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 30 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime.

