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Advocates, Inc. awarded \$1.2 million federal grant to meet mental health needs of area's elderly

Will create Elder Community Care program

FRAMINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, November 4, 2008 ... William J. Taylor, president and CEO, reported today that Advocates, Inc. of Framingham has been awarded a three-year, \$1.2 million federal grant for a program to provide expanded prevention, screening and treatment services for older adults dealing with issues such as depression, anxiety and substance abuse.

The new Elder Community Care (ECC) program will improve access to mental health and substance abuse services for older adults living in 14 communities in Metrowest Boston, said Taylor.

The award was announced this week by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a public health agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. The agency is responsible for improving the accountability, capacity and effectiveness of the nation's substance abuse prevention, addictions treatment, and mental health services delivery system.

The Advocates award was one of 10 grants totaling over \$12 million over three years made through the Older Adults Targeted Capacity Expansion Grant Program to help communities meet the special mental health needs of older adults. It was the only grant awarded in New England.

Other awards went to similar projects planned for older adults in California, Florida, Chicago, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. The awards are funded up to \$415,400 per year in total costs for up to three years. Continuation awards are subject to the availability of funds and the progress achieved by the awardees.

Advocates will work in collaboration with Bay Path Elder Services, Samaritans, Boston College, and Advocates for Human Potential in establishing the Elder

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Community Care program, which will work within the current infrastructure to increase access and remove barriers to care, and to provide evidence-based treatment to elders who are not currently connected to behavioral health assessment and treatment services. Services and programs will be tailored for seniors who are at risk for, or are experiencing, mental health and/or substance abuse problems.

The ECC team will include members of the target population in the staffing of a variety of activities and through membership in a Program Advisory Committee, which will review plans and progress in the program implementation and evaluation.

According to Taylor, this is Advocates' first SAMHSA grant.

"This highly competitive award brings new federal money to the Metrowest area and allows us to provide support for older adults with diverse mental health needs that are traditionally under-reported, under-recognized, and under-treated," said Taylor.

Headquartered in Framingham, Advocates, Inc. is among the 20 largest human service organizations in Massachusetts. With a staff of nearly 850, Advocates is a leading provider of outpatient mental health and substance abuse services; intensive home-based intervention for individuals and families; community education; job training and support; housing and benefits; advocacy services; brain injury services; elder services; and community justice programs. Advocates provides residential, vocational, respite and psychiatric emergency services at sites throughout Eastern Massachusetts.

More information is available at www.advocatesinc.org.

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