

KDHE Receives Funding to Address Maternal Behavioral Health

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has received a new Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) five-year grant focused on maternal behavioral health through expansion of services, including telehealth. The more than \$600,000 annual grant—Safeguarding Two Lives: Expanding Early Identification & Access to Perinatal Mental Health and Substance Abuse Screening, Treatment and Referral—will support the Kansas Connecting Communities (KCC) program.

“We are proud and excited to receive this very competitive grant,” said KDHE Secretary Jeff Andersen. “The fact that only six other states were funded for this demonstrates the effectiveness of KDHE’s vision, work, progress and proposed plan to support Kansas mothers and families.”

KCC is a collaborative effort between KDHE Title V Maternal and Child Health, the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services and several key state and local partners to improve the mental health and well-being of pregnant and postpartum women through increased screening, referral, treatment and recovery support services. KCC will increase statewide access (with a regional approach) to screening, assessment and treatment for maternal depression and substance use disorders.

For the initial pilot program, KCC will be implemented in 10 southeast Kansas counties, utilizing a phased approach to launch across the state. The project has five overarching goals developed around increasing capacity and improving mental and behavioral health screening and services for pregnant and postpartum women in our state. Goals include: developing and disseminating training and toolkits; utilizing telehealth and/or community resources; developing service coordination across providers; provide behavioral health and substance use services; and align state and local partnerships.

The more than \$3 million, five-year grant for the project runs from 2018 to 2023.

Key partners include local health departments, community mental health centers with support from the Association of Community Mental Health Centers, Central Kansas Foundation, Heartland Telehealth, Project ECHO, University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) program, and Wichita State University Community Engagement Institute. A comprehensive process and outcome evaluation conducted by the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research will ensure accountability through quality improvement and

performance monitoring throughout this five-year project.

The Health Resources and Services Administration is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated or medically vulnerable.