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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Approves Plan for Mental Health Partners to Merge with Two Other Community Behavioral Health Entities to Operate a Medicaid Waiver Program

Hickory, NC - The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) announced the approval of Mental Health Partners, Crossroads Behavioral Healthcare and Pathways to begin operating under the State's 1915 (b)/(c) Medicaid Waiver program beginning in January 2013. Pathways submitted the application on behalf of themselves and their partner agencies, Crossroads Behavioral Healthcare and Mental Health Partners. The goals of the State's transition to this waiver program are to: improve access to public mental health, substance abuse, and developmentally disability services; ensure that the services are managed and delivered within a quality management framework; and to give consumers and families more options to shape the system through their choices of services and providers.

Of the seven requests for applications submitted, including the joint application by Pathways, Crossroads and Mental Health Partners, only three passed the

rigorous desk review and site review processes. “Our Boards of Directors, County Commissions, and staffs provided the leadership and support as well as the hard work necessary to make the acceptance of our application a reality,” said Rhett Melton, Area Director for Pathways.

The new service area reaches from the Virginia border in Surry County to the South Carolina border in Gaston and Cleveland counties. Serving eight counties (Burke, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Surry, and Yadkin) and a population in excess of 900,000, the new organization will offer an array of advantages for citizens of the new catchment area. “For a number of years we have advocated for local control of services including utilization review and management. We now have the opportunity to prove on a regional basis that we can serve consumers more effectively and efficiently who need mental health, developmental disability, and substance abuse services,” added John Hardy, Area Director for Mental Health Partners.

David Swann, Area Director of Crossroads, added, “We have the challenges and opportunities to mold three strong Local Management Entities (LMEs) into a merged organization that can serve the behavioral health needs for a large portion (15+ percent) of North Carolina’s population for a long time. As our staffs came together to submit a successful application in a relatively short period of time, we are confident that the citizenry will benefit from those talents and tenacity in forming this new behavioral healthcare agency.”

“We fully understand the challenges before us to merge three agencies into one much larger entity,” continued Melton. “While the huge tasks of governance, human resources, operations and information technology may seem daunting, we will remain focused on the human reasons for the effort and are confident in our ability to succeed in these endeavors,” concluded Melton.

The three LMEs plan to merge into one yet-to-be-named Managed Care Organization by July 1, 2012.

For more details about North Carolina's transition to the 1915 (b)/(c) Medicaid Waiver, please visit <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas/waiver/>

For more information about Mental Health Partners, visit www.mentalhealthpartners.org or call 828-327-2595. To receive periodic email announcements and information from Mental Health Partners, send your email address to information@mentalhealthpartners.org.

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