



NEWS RELEASE

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Highland Rivers Health names Nizamuddin Khaja, MD, Chief Medical Officer

Longtime medical director will now lead agency's psychiatric staff

DALTON, Georgia – January 20, 2016 – Highland Rivers Health today announced that Nizamuddin Khaja, MD, a board certified psychiatrist and medical director of the agency's residential treatment unit in Cedartown for the past seven years, has been named chief medical officer. In this role, Khaja will oversee the agency's medical staff of nearly two dozen psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners, while also managing Highland Rivers' three crisis stabilization units, intensive outpatient, women's outreach, assertive community treatment and developmental disabilities programs.

Along with Dr. Khaja's promotion, Highland Rivers has named Franscica MgBodile, MD, as associate medical director for outpatient services. A trained child psychiatrist, Dr. MgBodile will oversee all outpatient and residential services with a focus on child and adolescent services – an area of particular importance for psychiatric treatment because up to half of all lifetime mental health disorders begin during the teenage years.

“Although we might refer to mental illness and addiction as behavioral health issues, the fact is they are medical problems – so successful treatment not only requires counseling but clinical and medical management,” said Melanie Dallas, LPC, CEO of Highland Rivers Health. “In a healthcare market facing a shortage of psychiatrists, our consumers are very fortunate to have access to a highly qualified medical staff led by a caring physician like Dr. Khaja.”

A native of Hyderabad, India, Khaja graduated from Siddharatha Medical College at Nagarjuna University in India, and completed four years of post-graduate training in general psychiatry at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, where he was chief resident. He was assistant professor of psychiatry at Quillen College of Medicine and chief of inpatient psychiatry at Mountain Home Veterans administration hospital, both in Johnson City. He is currently clinical associate professor with the Medical College of Georgia department of psychiatry. Board certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology since 2000, Khaja joined Highland Rivers in 2008.

“I have always had a passion for raising awareness of mental health issues and working to erase the stigma associated with mental illness,” said Khaja. “I am very proud to practice at Highland Rivers and be part of a team that works daily to build stronger individuals, families and communities.”

Despite increasing demand for psychiatrists throughout Georgia and the nation, Highland Rivers continues to employ a medical staff of nearly two dozen psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners. With a focus on meeting each consumer’s unique needs, the agency’s psychiatrists include specialists in addiction, child and adolescent, adult, family, trauma, PTSD and geriatric psychiatry, among others.

About Highland Rivers Health

Highland Rivers Health provides comprehensive treatment and support services for adults, children and families affected by mental health disorders, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and addictive diseases. One of the state’s largest public safety net providers, Highland Rivers operates 28 treatment facilities across a 4,400-square mile area of Northwest Georgia that includes Bartow, Cherokee, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, and Whitfield counties, and serves nearly 16,000 consumers annually. Highland Rivers is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and is a Core Provider for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. For more information, visit www.highlandrivershealth.com.

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