



NEWS RELEASE

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System of Care conference to explore new paradigm of youth mental health and substance abuse treatment, April 14 at Cartersville Civic Center

Bartow Juvenile Court Judge Jamie Averitt to deliver keynote presentation

DALTON, Georgia – April 8, 2016 – Highland Rivers Health and Lookout Mountain Community Services will host an educational conference, Introduction to System of Care, Thursday, April 14, at the Cartersville Civic Center, 435 W. Main St., in Cartersville. The one-day conference will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a keynote presentation by The Honorable Jamie Grantham Averitt, Associate Judge, Bartow County Juvenile Court, and last until 5:00 p.m.

“We recognized some time ago that you can’t help youth recover from mental illness or substance abuse in isolation – that there are often issues involving the family that need to be addressed,” said Melanie Dallas, LPC, CEO of Highland Rivers Health. “System of Care is a way of delivering treatment services that is family-centered and links the family to other services in the community to ensure every family member is getting the help he or she needs to be healthy.”

Developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the System of Care philosophy encourages collaboration across agencies and families to ensure the availability of a broad array of community-based services and supports for children and their families that address emotional, social, educational and physical needs. Treatment services organized around the System of Care framework are family-driven and youth-guided, community-based, and culturally competent.

“The families of many children with mental illness are not getting all the services they need, or they are going from one agency to the next on an almost ad hoc basis,” said Tom Ford, Ph.D., CEO of Lookout Mountain Community Services. “The System of Care framework enhances coordination between community service providers so that youth and families can be ‘plugged in’ to all the services they need from a single point of entry. It is much more efficient and provides much better outcomes for both youth and their families.”

In addition to the keynote presentation by Judge Averitt, the educational conference will feature sessions on the background and key principles of Systems of Care, as well as a panel discussion of providers that work with youth and families. There is no cost to attend the event and registrations are still being accepted online at: <http://goo.gl/forms/9Hy1a6oQqY>.

Funding for the System of Care conference has been provided by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and lunch for participants is being sponsored by Amerigroup.

About Highland Rivers Health

Highland Rivers Health provides comprehensive treatment and support services for adults, children and families affected by mental health disorders, intellectual developmental disabilities, and addictive disease. 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 Tier 1 safety net Core Provider for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. For more information, visit www.highlandrivershealth.com.

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