Center’s behavioral health services expanding

Behavioral health services have always been a part of what the Center for Family Health offers patients — and now those services are expanding.

The Center recognizes that medical, dental and behavioral health statuses are connected and impact one another, said Sara Benedetto, Vice President & COO. That’s why the Center embraces an integrated model of care that includes seven therapists who work with patients at the Downtown Facility and the four school health centers.

Increasing available services began in April when the Center partnered with Wayne State University to access Telepsychiatry. A Center doctor refers a patient to an in-house therapist who meets with the patient for assessment and review. A video visit with a psychiatrist then is scheduled with the patient and the Center therapist.

The psychiatrist can diagnose, determine if the patient has a mental illness, prescribe appropriate medication and meet via video at the Center with the patient as often as needed. Patients were leery of the video appointments at first, but now they love them, Benedetto said.

An added bonus is that physicians can call the psychiatrist any time for a consult.

A part-time psychologist has been hired and is expected to begin seeing patients in early February. This will be a great addition because a psychologist can provide ADHD, cognitive and other behavioral tests to better assess patients’ needs, she said.

“Behavior can be caused by a number of factors and effective assessment helps to get to the root cause.”

Sara Benedetto, CFH Vice President & COO

The psychologist will work with parents and children, and be a resource for staff.

The Center for Family Health is an independent, federally qualified health center that never turns patients away because of inability to pay. It provides comprehensive, quality medical care, dental services and behavioral-health assistance to more than 29,500 patients at its main location in Jackson, a dental center, four school health centers, and a satellite clinic at LifeWays.
MEET CENTER STAFF MIKE LITTLEJOHN

- Mike Littlejohn is a Jackson native who joined the U.S. Army after graduating from Jackson High School. He served his country for six years, including duty in the first Gulf War.
- After returning from the service, Mike worked for 13 years in a factory. When he was laid off, Mike decided he was not going back and began pursuing a new career in the health field.
- He went to Jackson Community College for two years and attended Ross Medical Education Center to earn his certificate as a certified medical assistant. He was hired by the Center for Family Health in 2013 to work at its school health centers.
- Assigned to the Parkside Health Center, Mike works with Physician Assistant Shawn Heiler. His duties include both medical and procedural tasks that help keep the office running smoothly.

“I love it. The main thing I enjoy is the help you can give a patient.”

Did you know?

THESE HEALTH FACTS

Anyone can receive medical care at the Center for Family Health? That includes people with commercial health insurance, Medicaid or Medicare coverage, or no health-care coverage.

The Center for Family Health’s Walk-In Clinic is open every day.

Recent studies show that laughter lowers blood pressure; works out several muscle groups; reduces stress hormones (such as cortisol and adrenaline); increases the response of tumor- and disease-killing cells; defends against respiratory infections (even reducing the frequency of colds); increases memory and learning; and improves alertness, creativity and memory.

Eating burgers and fries frequently increases the risk of heart disease.

Walking daily for 30 minutes is very good for the heart.

News in Brief

Lead-poisoning testing available for children

The Center for Family Health is partnering with the city in testing homes. The first step is to get your child tested.

Unfortunately, 8.7 percent of children tested in the city of Jackson have elevated lead levels in their blood.

If you live in a home built before 1978, your home may have lead-based paint. Ninety percent of Jackson homes were constructed before 1978; lead-based paint was known for its durability and was commonly used on house exteriors and interior windowsills. At that time, its hazards were unknown.

The dust from deteriorating lead paint is the “most widespread and dangerous high-dose source of lead exposure for children,” according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The dust settles on children’s toys and other items that toddlers put into their mouths.

The city of Jackson has received a $2.9 million federal grant to safely remove lead-based paint from city residences with children under 6 years old. Income guidelines apply.

The first step is to get your children tested for lead in their blood.

The Center for Family Health is partnering with the city to provide free testing for children. It is available at the Center’s Downtown Facility at 505 N. Jackson St., and the Center’s school health centers at Northeast Elementary, Jackson High, Parkside and Northwest’s Kidder Middle School.

The Center will refer families to the city for free lead paint inspection and assessment of their homes.

Children with lead poisoning experience a lower IQ, decreased ability to pay attention, and underperform in school.

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