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Grant helps Wells House with integrated treatment project

Tamela Baker   Jul 19, 2018

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Wells House Executive Director Charlie Mooneyhan, left, is all smiles as he accepts a grant from Maryland Community Health Resources Commission Vice Chairman Elizabeth Chung on Thursday. The money will be used for an integrated health services project for Wells House clients.

By Tamela Baker

Wells House in Hagerstown was awarded a $103,615 state grant this week for a new health initiative that includes hiring a part-time nurse practitioner to help care for residents.

It will help Wells House fill in gaps now that the county health department no longer provides ambulatory outpatient clinical services for mental health or substance abuse treatment, said Christina Trenton, chief operating officer for Wells House.

The idea is to help address all of a client's health care issues, she said.

During a brief ceremony Thursday with members of the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission, Wells House resident Keven B. said having someone on staff to help with health care beyond recovery was "huge for somebody like me."

He came to Wells House after treatment, he said, and started to experience new health problems. "I learned through hospitalization that I have diabetes," he said.

All of the medications he was taking for his treatment had to be changed. "I had to start over," he said.

The Wells House project targets patients in early recovery from substance use disorders. Many patients also have physical health problems.

Wells House Executive Director Charlie Mooneyhan predicted the medical care and preventive services the nurse practitioner provides likely will save money, as these patients would otherwise be going to hospital emergency departments for care.

Wells House provides services to about 375 people a year. The new project is intended to help identify patients with risk factors before illness develops and increase preventative care and health screenings.

This is the first grant awarded to the Wells House from the Community Health Resources Commission. "This is seed money," commission Vice Chairman Elizabeth Chung told the staff. "We will look out for you."

Trenton said the project is in the planning stages, but Wells House hopes to have a nurse practitioner on board by Oct. 1.

In the meantime, she said, Wells House is looking for partnerships and renovating space to accommodate it. "Health care in general has a lot of moving parts," she said, and recovery makes needs more complex.

Wells House currently serves about 118 patients, she said, although not all are residential. The organization has a little more than 100 beds.

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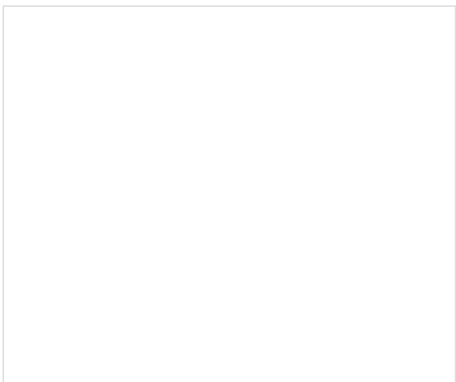**Manuka Feed**

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