

Woodlands providing social worker | The Dowagiac News

By Dowagiac News

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CASSOPOLIS — Woodlands Behavioral Healthcare Network and Cassopolis Family Clinic are pleased to announce a new collaboration between their agencies.

Woodlands will provide the services of a social worker for onsite counseling services at the Clinic.

Tonya Cosey, MSW, began providing services July 8.

“It’s a win-win-win situation,” says Mary Middleton, executive director, Cassopolis Family Clinic.

“For patients who may come to the clinic experiencing mental health needs, we now have the capacity to offer counseling as a complement to their medical care. Patients win by having accessible and affordable counseling services, doctors win by having a social worker as part of the healthcare team, and the community wins because people in need of services are receiving care.”

“It’s a concept we’ve talked about and developed over time,” says Kathy Emans, executive director, Woodlands Behavior Healthcare Network. “We’ve talked about bringing together the strengths of both agencies to serve the community. Funds for behavioral health care have been significantly reduced, leaving not only Woodlands, but many community mental health agencies struggling to meet the need of uninsured patients. We are required by the mental health code to provide emergent mental health services as well as services to those with serious mental health disorders or developmental disabilities. Access to treatment for individuals with a lesser degree of need has been reduced dramatically over the past several years due to general fund reductions, which has created problems for people who need services but can’t afford to pay for their care. We feel this collaboration makes sense for many reasons. We’re not duplicating services, but drawing on the strengths of our staff while maximizing our limited financial resources.”

“We’ve started this program on a part-time basis for established clinic patients. As the demand for services grows, we’ll re-evaluate the number of hours for the social worker. Presently she works two days per week,” says Middleton.

Dr. Stephen Miller, medical director at Cassopolis Family Clinic, encouraged the collaboration. “We have many patients who can benefit from behavioral health counseling, and having a social worker onsite makes access so much easier. We introduce Tonya as part of our health care team, and encourage patients to follow up with her as needed. Having her here improves communication and can make treatment plans more effective. Many patients need more than just physical health care. Statistics show that nearly 25 percent of patients who seek medical care really would be better served by a behavioral health professional. We’re dedicated to using this team approach in the best interest of our patients.”

For more information, please call 445-3874.