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News Release

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Joint Venture Collaboration Will Increase Behavioral Health and Chemical Dependency Treatment Services

Edgewood, KY—St. Elizabeth Healthcare, SUN Behavioral Health and NorthKey Community Care have joined forces to develop a community-wide solution to the lack of access to inpatient behavioral health and chemical dependency resources for children, adolescents and adults in Northern Kentucky.

The partnership will result in a new 197-bed, free-standing and comprehensive specialty hospital designed to improve the behavioral health environment in the community. St. Elizabeth plans to transfer 140 of its behavioral health and chemical dependency beds to the new facility. NorthKey Community Care plans to transfer its behavioral health beds to increase overall bed capacity to the new hospital when completed. The hospital will be jointly owned by St. Elizabeth Healthcare and SUN Behavioral Health. The preferred location is in Kenton County. Various approval processes are under way but take time.

“We all believe and have consistently said that a comprehensive solution to behavioral health issues involves substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, law enforcement, family support, community support and education,” said Garren Colvin, St. Elizabeth Interim President and Chief Executive Officer. “All of the organizations involved want to be part of the solution, and this collaboration is an important piece of the puzzle.”

The joint venture complements other recently announced initiatives that will add to the overall services available in Northern Kentucky, including St. Elizabeth’s partnership with Hazelden/Betty Ford, the integration of behavioral health counseling services into St. Elizabeth Physicians primary care practices, and the behavioral health/chemical dependency screening programs implemented in physician practices and maternal fetal offices.

“The community is currently underserved, especially for adolescents,” said Steve Page, President and CEO of SUN. “This collaboration expands and improves integrated inpatient behavioral healthcare services available in Northern Kentucky. The new hospital will showcase our mission to increase access and bring a full continuum of high quality services to those suffering from mental illnesses and chemical dependency in the entire community.”

The new facility will enhance the environment of care for patients, providers and families. A behavioral health emergency department will provide specialized assessment and treatment to patients and families in times of crisis. Specialized inpatient wings will group patients into personalized programs to provide for the unique requirements of patients according to their ages and behavioral health needs. These programs will create an ideal environment for group therapies and individualized care.

In addition, this partnership provides an opportunity to develop:

- Comprehensive behavioral health services based on proven best practice models.
- Increased access and education for the community.
- Improved coordination of existing services and resources in the community to extend the continuum of care for patients focusing on each organization’s strengths and capabilities.
- Improved safety for behavioral health patients in the specialty hospital emergency department.
- Serene and therapeutic environment designed specifically for patient population needs.

- A full array of services with tailored treatment options and comprehensive inpatient and outpatient care.
- A more appropriate portal of admission for behavioral health patients in crisis than what currently exists.
- The ability to attract additional behavioral health and chemical dependency providers.

“The Northern Kentucky MH-MR Regional Board is extremely pleased to be a part of a plan that is sure to greatly benefit our community for years to come,” said Dr. Owen Nichols, President and CEO of NorthKey. “This type of endeavor reflects the long held tradition of Northern Kentucky bringing resources together to meet the needs of the community in a progressive and efficient manner. Our community is faced with many behavioral healthcare challenges at this time and the heroin epidemic has brought this to the forefront of our collective awareness, but chemical dependency is just one element of our broader community needs, which must be addressed in a collaborative fashion. This cooperative plan by SUN, St. Elizabeth, and NorthKey is a wonderful step in the right direction to ensure that we meet a wide range of our community behavioral healthcare needs.”

Northern Kentucky has been on the forefront of community collaboration to bring together resources to meet the needs of the community.

“An increase in treatment beds will allow us to keep our children in our community for behavioral health and chemical dependency treatment,” said John LaCount, Pediatric Physician at St. Elizabeth Physicians. “It is important to have family nearby to complete recovery. This will benefit families and patients.”

There is also an economic aspect. There will be approximately 400 total jobs of which approximately 270 are new jobs. This will generate additional payroll tax revenue for the city of Covington.

SUN Behavioral Health

SUN Behavioral Health operates freestanding psychiatric hospitals where a substantial unmet need for acute services exist. We work closely with medical and surgical hospitals, physicians and behavioral health care providers as well as local schools and community organizations to ensure that our hospitals provide our patients and their families with a seamless continuum of care that meets the highest standards of personalized treatment. For more information, visit www.sunbehavioral.com.

NorthKey Community Care

The Northern Kentucky MH-MR Regional Board (dba NorthKey Community Care), is the statutorily designated regional planning authority for behavioral healthcare services in Northern Kentucky. NorthKey is a private not for profit Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) providing mental health, substance abuse, and intellectual and developmental disabilities services to children, adolescents, and adults in the Northern Kentucky Region. NorthKey has been in continuous operation since 1966. NorthKey operates and maintains 17 outpatient offices in the eight Northern Kentucky counties (Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen, and Pendleton). For more information, visit www.northkey.org.

St. Elizabeth Healthcare

St. Elizabeth Healthcare operates six major facilities throughout Northern Kentucky and more than 100 primary care and specialty office locations in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio. St. Elizabeth is sponsored by the Diocese of Covington and is a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network. St. Elizabeth is a mission-based organization committed to improving the health of the communities it serves, providing more than \$121 million in uncompensated care and benefit to the community in 2013. For more information, visit www.stelizabeth.com.

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