NEW SAMSHA FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY BASED MENTAL HEALTH

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U.S. Policy and Regulatory Alert

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As we emerge from the COVID health emergency, there is widespread agreement that Americans are suffering from inadequate access to mental health care.[1] To shore up community mental health systems, on 23 March 2023, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced a new round of federal funding, including a grant program for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs). The application is available here.

The anticipated funding will be US$61.8 Million available to 62 grantees. This is a four-year grant program with funding of up to US$1 Million per year per grantee.[2]

Time is short, as grant applications are due by 22 May 2023. This grant opportunity is only open to existing state-certified CCBHCs or CCBHCs that have successfully met all certification criteria under a prior SAMHSA expansion award, but as discussed below, there is an opportunity for non-CCBHCs to benefit from this funding.

The grant application requires community-focused planning, and existing CCBHCs can provide services though subrecipients or through referrals to applicant partner agencies (referred to as “Designated Collaborating Organizations” (DCOs)). Unlike CCBHCs, DCOs can be for-profit entities, thus allowing CCBHCs to partner with community DCOs at a time when there is widespread agreement that access to mental health care is a pressing need. These DCOs must be licensed and have at least two years of experience (as of the due date of the application) in providing relevant services. The grant application guidelines provide that this experience must also include relevant experience over the last two years and that “[a] license from an individual clinician will not be accepted instead of a provider organization's license.”[3]

K&L Gates' Health Care and FDA practice lawyers regularly advise entities providing mental health care services on a variety of legal issues.

FOOTNOTES

[1] “Our country faces an unprecedented mental health crisis among people of all ages. Two out of five adults report symptoms of anxiety or depression. And, Black and Brown communities are disproportionately undertreated – even as their burden of mental illness has continued to rise. Even before the pandemic, rates of depression and anxiety were inching higher. But the grief, trauma, and physical isolation of the last two years have driven Americans to a breaking point.” FACT SHEET: President Biden to Announce Strategy to Address Our National Mental Health Crisis, As Part of Unity Agenda in his First State of the Union, THE WHITE HOUSE (Mar. 1, 2022),

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https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/01/fact-sheet-president-biden-to-announce-strategy-to-address-our-national-mental-health-crisis-as-part-of-unity-agenda-in-his-first-state-of-the-union/ (Links to internal sources omitted.).

[2] *See Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Improvement and Advancement Grant*, SAMHSA (Mar. 23, 2023), https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-23-016.

[3] *See* DEP'T OF HEALTH & HUM. SERVS., SUBSTANCE ABUSE & MENTAL HEALTH SERVS. ADMIN., FY 2023 CERTIFIED COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINIC IMPROVEMENT AND ADVANCEMENT GRANT 23, https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/grants/pdf/fy-2023-ccbhc-ia-nofo.pdf (last visited Mar. 28, 2023).

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