



March 3, 2017 – Press Release

Contact:

Michael A. Rabkin, Communications Director

michael.rabkin@passporthealthplan.com

(502) 213-8944



Passport Health Plan to collaborate with other Safety Net Health Plans to help lower risk for Substance Use Disorders among Youth

Louisville, Ky. – Passport Health Plan is one of seven Safety Net Health Plans from around the country that have committed to a joint three-year learning project that will help increase the identification of youth who are at risk for substance use disorders.

The project, led by the Center for Health Care Strategies in partnership with the Association for Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP), will make extensive use of the SBIRT model, which stands for Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment. SBIRT is an evidence-based approach for identifying patients who are at risk for abuse of alcohol and other drugs, and it is intended to identify not only patients who have substance use disorders but also those who are at high risk for developing such a disorder and reducing their level of risk.

The collaborative, made possible by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, consists of seven health plans, each of which will pilot an SBIRT training project aimed at raising the awareness of substance use disorders among youth, and fortify these providers' abilities to screen, intervene, and refer to treatment as needed.

The project that Passport has developed for the effort involves expanding the number of adolescents screened annually for substance use disorder, since many teens begin experimenting with substances during adolescence. Passport will develop regional trainings for providers to teach them how to implement SBIRT, and will also develop webinars for providers to complete training in their home communities, complete with continuing education for providers who participate in the training. Passport will also work with our providers to break down any barriers to coordinating care for our members who endorse positive symptoms.

“Passport recognizes that substance use disorders are a huge public health crisis in the Commonwealth,” said Elizabeth W. McKune, Ed.D., Director of Behavioral Health for Passport Health Plan. “We are working closely with our providers and the Kentucky Department of Medicaid Services to increase the number of adolescents screened for potential problems with substances and teach them where they can go should they begin having problems with substances in the future.”

As Passport and the other health plans develop their pilot projects, they will regularly share their progress with fellow collaborative participants in an effort to speed development of effective SBIRT programs. Upon

(more)

completion of its work, the Collaborative will develop a toolkit for public use that will examine best practices and challenges in establishing effective SBIRT programs aimed at youth.

“SBIRT is aimed at identifying people who are at risk and catching them before they develop a dependency—and making treatment referrals for people who need it,” said ACAP CEO Margaret A. Murray. “Many primary care providers are overwhelmed with demands on their time and may be unaware of some of the tools that SBIRT provides, especially those that can help head off substance use issues at the pass. The tools available here can make a lasting, positive difference in the lives of adolescents and young adults.”

###

About Passport Health Plan

[Passport Health Plan](http://passporthealthplan.com) is a provider-sponsored, non-profit, community-based health plan administering Medicaid benefits to nearly 300,000 Kentuckians. Named the top Medicaid plan in Kentucky by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for 2015-16 and 2016-17, Passport has been contracted with the Commonwealth of Kentucky to administer Medicaid benefits since 1997. For more information, please visit passporthealthplan.com or call toll-free (800) 578-0603. Passport also operates a Medicare Advantage program, called “Passport Advantage,” for residents of Jefferson, Bullitt, Hardin, and Nelson counties who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare. For more information, go online to passportadvantage.com or call toll-free (844) 859-6152.

About The Association for Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP)

ACAP represents 56 nonprofit Safety Net Health Plans in 26 states, which collectively serve more than 16 million people enrolled in Medicaid, Medicare, Marketplaces, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and other health programs. For more information, visit communityplans.net.

About The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS)

CHCS is a nonprofit policy center dedicated to improving the health of low-income Americans, especially for individuals with complex, high-cost needs. CHCS works with state and federal agencies, health plans, providers, and consumer groups to advance innovative and cost-effective models for organizing, financing, and delivering health care services. For more information, visit chcs.org.