

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2009-2010**

**Sisters of St. Joseph  
Health and Wellness Foundation**



## West Virginia's Expanded School Mental Health Initiative - Reducing Barriers to Learning

by Linda Anderson, MPH

- \* Children whose mental health problems are not addressed often fail in school
- \* 21% of 9-17 year olds have a mental illness and 11% are "significantly limited" because of their illness (Adolescent Health Working Group, 2007)
- \* 2 out of 3 young people with mental health problems are not getting the help that they need (Adolescent Health Working Group, 2007)
- \* When compared with other states, the percentage of students who missed 11 or more days of school is significantly higher for WV (9%) than the national average (5.2%) (National Survey of Children's Health, 2007)

Schools are logical settings for recognizing potential mental health disorders in students. However, the needs of students outweigh the resources of most schools. To meet these needs better, West Virginia schools are collaborating with community agencies, with help from the West Virginia Expanded School Mental Health (ESMH) Initiative.

The Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation provides vital support for this effort, including a grant to the School Health Technical Assistance Center of Marshall University's Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine. Specifically, the grant enables the Center to provide technical assistance to the West Virginia Department of Education and the West Virginia Bureau for Behavioral Health for planning, development, and quality improvement of mental health services in schools in West Virginia.

Established in 2006, the Initiative's mission is to develop and strengthen policies, practices, and services that promote learning and social-emotional well-being for all of WV's youth through a collaborative process that engages schools, families, and community based agencies. A steering team, composed of school and health representatives from both the state and local levels, meets regularly to guide the Initiative.

*The West Virginia ESMH Initiative is a joint effort of the West Virginia Department of Education and the Children's Division of the West Virginia Bureau for Behavioral Health. Expanded School Mental Health provides a framework in which schools and communities are able to collaborate. Thus they can develop a full continuum of mental health services for all students. These services emphasize prevention and promotion which reduce barriers to learning.*

The Marshall School Health Technical Assistance Center assists the ESMH Initiative through such activities as strategic meetings, development of school mental health resources and toolkits, an annual



School based mental health professionals and educators at a workshop on August 16-17.

conference, a new website, and webinars and workshops for school mental health and education personnel. Last August the Back to School workshop featured suicide prevention training and "Eliminating Barriers for Learning," a four-part curriculum developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

In 2009, the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care (NASBHC) selected West Virginia as the pilot site to participate in their School Mental Health Capacity Building Partnership. NASBHC's pilot training boosted West Virginia's efforts, which have gained momentum. The WV

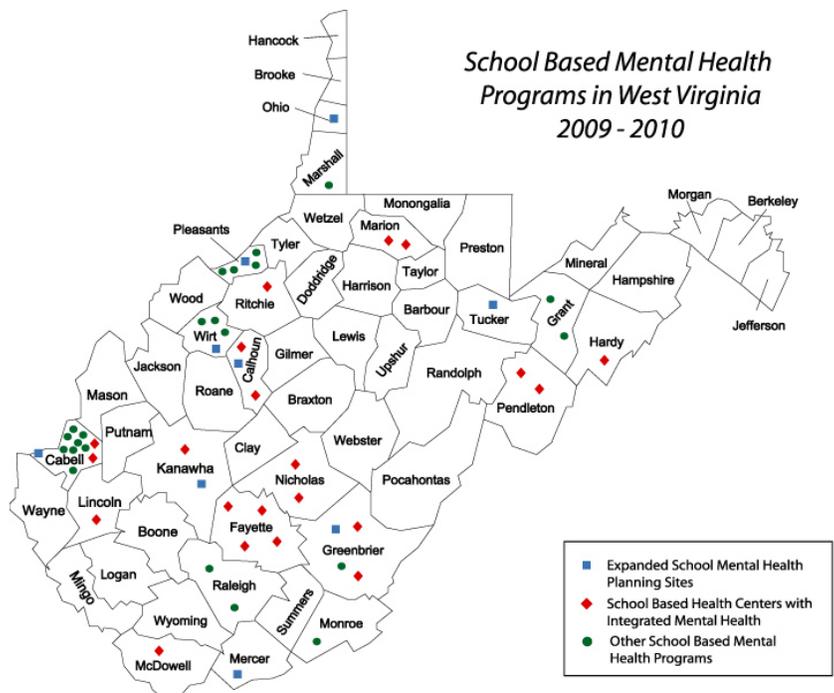
Bureau for Behavioral Health funded seven pilot sites to develop an expanded school mental health model. Another recent accomplishment was West Virginia's being among 11 states selected for funding under the new federal Safe and Supportive Schools programs. The work done by the ESMH Initiative was a factor in West Virginia's success for this major grant.

In October, the national Center for School Mental Health honored West Virginia's efforts at its annual conference, "School Mental Health and Promoting Positive School Culture," in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Juanita Evans Memorial Award for Contributions in School Mental Health (given annually to an individual or group who has significantly influenced the advancement of school mental health policy, research and/or practice) was presented to Linda Anderson, Coordinator at the West Virginia School Health Technical Assistance Center.

One West Virginia student illustrates the personal impact of expanded school mental health: "Carrie" received therapy for at least two years at her high school for depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem which led to poor grades and excessive absences. Before beginning school-based services, she would often become so upset she was concerned that she would either cry in class or become angry, so she missed many school days. Once in therapy, Carrie was good at keeping her appointments and, although she was seen frequently at first, over time she began to learn and implement techniques to improve her overall mood. Eventually, she was able to stop prescription medication, and her sessions slowly decreased as well. During her senior year, Carrie made the honor roll each grading period, rarely missed school, received positive feedback from her teachers, and experienced improvement in her self-esteem. She also learned alternative ways to address a problem with overeating, which helped her both physically and emotionally. She now plans to attend college. Carrie graduated in May, and says, "If therapy had not been offered in the school, I probably would not be here now - not just graduating - I may have harmed myself seriously."

For more information about West Virginia's Expanded School Mental Health Initiative visit:

[www.schoolmentalhealthwv.org](http://www.schoolmentalhealthwv.org)



## West Virginia Expanded School Mental Health Initiative

### VISION

Every student in West Virginia will benefit from a school environment that supports social and emotional well-being to achieve his/her full potential.

### MISSION

To develop and strengthen policies, practices and services that promote learning and social-emotional well-being for all of West Virginia's youth through a collaborative process that engages schools, families, and community based agencies.



## West Virginia Child Advocacy Network

by Emily Chittenden-Laird

1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused by their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The statistics can be staggering, especially when you translate these numbers to the reality in your neighborhood, your church, your child's soccer team, even your family. And when these numbers aren't just on a page but actual child victims, the stories can be haunting. But one should not feel powerless; things are improving for child victims of abuse. It is likely that some people in your local community have made it their life's work to combat the problem of child abuse in a Child Advocacy Center.

Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) provide justice and healing to children who are either suspected or confirmed victims of child abuse, primarily child sexual abuse. Using a national model, CACs are dedicated to a coordinated team approach by professionals pursuing the truth in child abuse investigations. By bringing together professionals from local law enforcement, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Child Protective Services, victim advocacy agencies, and the medical and mental health professions, CACs provide a safe neutral environment for the evaluation of child abuse, coordination of services for victims and families, and child abuse prevention through community education and outreach.

How does a Child Advocacy Center work? In counties with a CAC, children who are suspected victims of child abuse are taken to a child-friendly center where a trained interviewer questions the child about the abuse while other members of the investigative team observe via closed circuit television. The team then uses this information to begin a coordinated investigation and begin treatment, moving a child toward hope and healing.

When CACs started in West Virginia in the late 1990s, individual program directors realized they needed each other in order for their programs to succeed. What was once an informal networking group evolved into the state's membership organization for CACs, the West Virginia Child Advocacy Network (WVCAN). WVCAN promotes the CAC model and best practices in child abuse investigation and intervention. As in the early days, it is evident that CACs can better face local problems when working together. WVCAN provides education and training, technical assistance, legislative representation, and collaboration with other stakeholders to address the problems that face our CACs.

One example of such an effort is the WVCAN Mental Health Initiative. As an essential program component, each locally-based CAC must ensure that children who have experienced abuse receive a therapeutic intervention that is *trauma-focused* and *evidence-based*. Research has shown that children can show significant improvement and reduction in post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms if they are connected with this type of trauma treatment. However, access to appropriate mental health services can be very difficult, especially in rural or resource-poor West Virginia counties. This is why WVCAN has worked to bring a national trainer to West Virginia to offer a training package that introduces therapists to an evidence-based treatment model and provides them the ongoing



support necessary to implement the model. And because we know many professionals work with children during this difficult time in their lives, we have made it a priority to ensure every professional that works with a child who has experienced trauma, from law enforcement to prosecutors, from attorneys to judges, is aware of trauma's effect on children. The Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation has graciously provided partial funding for this initiative.

Is child abuse a significant problem for West Virginia? Yes, but WVCAN believes that by working together we can continue to ensure that children are receiving the high-quality services they deserve. A child in Welch should have access to the same services as a child in Philadelphia. These are our children, our neighbors, our families.



Presentation to the Women's Caucus at the Legislature on children's issues (WVCAN and other allies of children).



# Jefferson Health and Wellness Center

by William Snider

The Jefferson Health and Wellness Center is located on the school campus at Jefferson Elementary Center in Parkersburg, West Virginia. The center has become so utilized that, in addition to our full-time Family Nurse Practitioner, we have added a physician at least one day a week. With a door for the community and a private entrance for students just steps outside of the main school building, health care services are now available to so many students and family members that might not have received services because of cost or transportation issues. We are providing quality affordable health care to a population that really needs attention. Every month we continue to add 75 to 100 new patients. The newly renovated building now allows us to offer a full array of services to the students and community around Jefferson Elementary Center.

## **Available Services**

- BCCSP: The Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program is available for uninsured women who meet our age and income criteria
- Health Checks: Early Periodic Screenings for children with a medical card - these are yearly physicals
- CHIP: Children's Health Insurance Program - Insurance coverage for those who meet income guidelines but do not qualify for Medicaid up to age 19
- Patient Assistance: Prescription assistance
- Asthma Van - a collaboration with CCMH
- Drug Screenings
- Vision and Hearing Screenings
- Health Education
- Certified Diabetes Educator on Staff
- Comprehensive Physical Examinations (including work physical, CDL physicals, etc.)
- Long Term Care of Chronic Illness
- Behavioral Health
- Emergency Services
- Immunizations
- X-rays
- Acute Care
- Referrals
- Lab Services
- Allergy Injections
- Sports Physicals



## **Board of Directors of the SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation**

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# Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation

## Approved Grants FY 2009-2010



Since its creation in 2001, the Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation has awarded approximately \$7 million in grants. In fiscal year 2009-2010, the Foundation approved \$768,857.16 for grant funding for the following selected projects.

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**Marshall University Research Corporation** (\$87,951.00) supports the Technical Assistance Unit to provide effective service to those school-based health centers which have initiated mental health services

**Rainelle Medical Center** (\$8,154.56) supports and strengthens the mental health capacity at the Rainelle Medical Center's School-Based Health Center

**Pendleton Community Care** (\$42,868.75) supports a school-based **mental health counselor** position

**New River Health Association** (\$36,630.00) supports a school-based **mental health educator** position in Summersville, WV

**Lincoln Primary Care Center** (\$47,500.00) supports a school-based **mental health counselor** position

**New River Health Association** (\$28,595.00) supports a school-based **mental health educator** position

**Ritchie Primary Care Association** (\$38,000.00) supports a school-based **mental health counselor** position

**Cabin Creek Health Center** (\$41,000.00) Supports integrated mental health services in school-based health centers served by Cabin Creek Health Systems

**Rainelle Medical Center** (\$46,383.75) supports a school-based **mental health counselor** position

**WV Primary Care Association** (\$80,000.00) supports the position of Executive Director of the West Virginia School-Based Health Assembly

**E. A. Hawse Health Center** (\$52,000.00) supports mental health services through therapist and social worker positions in the East Hardy School Complex

**Pendleton Community Care** (\$45,125.00) supports a school-based **mental health educator** position

**West Virginia Catholic Foundation** (\$144,649.10) supports school-based health services for Wheeling Catholic Elementary School and St. Paul Elementary School (in Weirton)

**Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center** (\$10,000.00) funds support the continued development of the Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center

**Camden on Gauley Medical Center** (\$60,000.00) supports school-based health services at Webster County High School



# **Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation**

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The children of West Virginia have resources available to assist them in living to their fullest potential.

## **MISSION**

The Foundation will make optimal use of its resources in order to promote and support collaboration and partnership among various local, state and national groups working to address the wholistic health of children in West Virginia.



For more information about the foundation, contact co-directors:  
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