



“Southeast Health Group Expands Scope of Services”

La Junta, CO—January 7, 2013—Southeast Health Group

CEO Becky Otteman announced today that Southeast Health Group will provide a full range of physical health services beginning in February 2013. Kali Mae Mendoza-Werner, PA, and Rochelle Peil, Medical Assistant will be joining the Southeast Health Group team this month.

Kali Mae Mendoza-Werner earned her Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree from the University of Nebraska-Omaha in 2003, and has served rural Coloradoans at the Plains Medical Center in Limon, the Arkansas Valley Family Practice in La Junta and, most recently, at Valley Wide Health Systems. She is certified by the National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants and is skilled in providing a full-scope of preventive, acute and chronic health care.

Rochelle Peil received her training as a Medical Assistant at Otero Junior College in La Junta. She has worked in a variety of clinics in the Arkansas Valley, including the Crowley County Correctional Facility in Olney Springs. Most recently, Rochelle assisted Kali Mae at Valley Wide Health Systems.

“We have a lot of work to do on our building to get ready for this big, new venture,” said Otteman, whose team is currently modifying the facility at 711 Barnes in La Junta. SHG is expanding the lobby area to make it easier for people in wheelchairs to access the building, and also creating a medical wing. “It’s time for us to close the loop and become a true ‘medical home’ by offering full primary care services to the clients we serve.”

Otteman referred to the physical health care prevention, screening and treatment Southeast Health Group would soon be offering to those individuals living with severe and persistent mental illnesses and addictions. This particular cohort dies, on average, 20 years sooner than their same age peers. The

main reason for this disparity is the adverse side effect of psychoactive medications causing obesity, diabetes, and other chronic health problems that often go untreated. This cohort of individuals with multiple chronic conditions, including mental health and substance use disorders, make up 25% of the current expense to Medicaid. The changes Southeast Health Group is making in its program will address the physical health needs of this population, lengthen their lives, and drive down the cost of health care.

Since 2006, Southeast Health Group has been integrating mental health and addictions counselors at the local federally-qualified health clinics, hospitals, school-based clinics, nursing homes and drug court. SHG recently hired six Health Navigators to assist patients with multiple chronic health conditions to access the right care at the right time. “We have had to remain flexible and responsive to the swift changes happening in the healthcare industry,” said Otteman. “The 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has definitely affected us at the local level. We can’t continue doing ‘business as usual’ if we want to maintain the high quality of services our communities have come to expect.”

Chief Operating Officer, JC Carrica said, “In the coming year, you will see our name change to ‘Southeast Health Group’ to reflect the breadth and depth of our work here in southeastern Colorado. It is exciting to know that in just the past five years we have added the treatment of substance use disorders, domestic violence offender services, healthy sexuality treatment, anger management, and a community-based skills program to our service menu. By adding physical health care, we can now say that we simply provide ‘health care.’”

Southeast Health Group is the umbrella organization encompassing the services provided by three separate subsidiaries; the mental and physical health services provided by Southeast Mental Health Services, the addictions and substance use disorder services provided by Partnership for Progress, and the private pay counseling and wellness services provided by Wellness Works.

Southeast Health Group, formerly known as “Southeastern Colorado Family Guidance and Mental Health Center, Inc.” is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation originally formed in 1957. Becky Otteman is the third CEO, following Bob Whaley and founder, Bill Chastain. SHG purchased Singlepoint Services in 2006 and renamed it Partnership for Progress. In 2010, SHG developed Wellness Works, and created the umbrella organization Southeast Behavioral Health Group (doing business as Southeast Health Group). Southeast Health Group employs 83 citizens across southeastern Colorado.

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