

NEWS RELEASE



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Jefferson County Comprehensive Services to Use \$25,000 Verizon Foundation Investment to Launch Broadband Rural Health Care Initiative in Southern Illinois

***Program Will Bring Much-Needed Psychiatric Care Services Through a
Telemedicine Application***

MT. VERNON, Ill. – A recent \$25,000 investment in Jefferson County Comprehensive Services (JCCS) from the Verizon Foundation will have a significant impact on the way health care is delivered to people in rural southern Illinois.

The Mt. Vernon-based agency will launch a new telemedicine application that will allow JCCS to provide psychiatric outpatient care that had been previously unavailable and to offer more services to more clients in Jefferson and Hamilton counties. The agency will use the grant for the equipment and broadband technology needed to make the program work.

“This program will allow us to provide consistent care to the people who need it the most,” said Dr. Lori Schmider, director of mental health services at JCCS. “Without the support

from Verizon for the equipment and setup, we would not be able to do this. We are grateful for Verizon's help in the pursuit of our dreams.”

JCCS provides services that foster improved quality of life for persons with mental health concerns, disabilities, aging needs, addictions and functional limitations. Unfortunately, with the retirement of the only two psychiatrists in the region, the agency has been unable to provide steady care for its clients.

The agency had made arrangements to have a psychiatrist travel 300 miles to the area to provide counseling two Saturdays a month, but that was less than an ideal solution, according to Schmider.

To deal with the problem, JCCS approached Verizon to help support a model that would use broadband technology to deliver psychiatric services to persons in southern Illinois who need help the most.

“Verizon is excited to have this opportunity to partner with JCCS,” said Philip Wood, vice president of public affairs for Verizon in Illinois. “Dr. Schmider and JCCS are perfect examples of how the use of broadband and technology can make a real difference in the region to improve people's lives.”

Dr. Schmider developed a model with a peer in Chicago to use a telemedicine application to bring much-needed psychiatric services to the region. She estimates that, through this program, JCCS will be able to provide psychiatric evaluation and ongoing care for 75 to 80 additional patients per month, doubling the number of patients that could be cared for last year. In addition, the program will expand the number of days services will be available to better match patients' needs.

“We have real people with serious medical needs that can be addressed through this program,” said Schmider. “It helps us fill a gap and makes it easier for us to collaborate with others in the profession to provide the best care we can.”

The program also offers another valuable benefit, according to Dr. Schmider. The program showcases southern Illinois as a region that is progressive and creative, and change that is attractive for more medical professionals and resources.

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, supports the advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its signature program, Thinkfinity.org, and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. In 2007, the foundation invested more than \$67.4 million in grants to nonprofit agencies in the United States and abroad. The foundation also matched the charitable donations of Verizon employees and retirees, resulting in \$25.1 million in combined contributions. Through Verizon Volunteers, one of the nation’s largest employee volunteer programs, Verizon employees and retirees have volunteered more than 3 million hours of community service since Verizon’s inception in 2000.

For more information on the foundation, visit www.verizon.com/foundation.