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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **South Carolina Receives \$2.8 Million to Improve Children's Mental Health**

*Grant funds new system of care to improve behavioral health services for children and youth*

**Columbia, S.C.** – The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) was awarded a four-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement the Palmetto Coordinated System of Care (PCSC). This statewide collaborative implements innovative best practices in care for children and youth with behavioral health needs in South Carolina.

Led by state agencies, family service-organizations and parents of children and youth with behavioral health needs, the PCSC champions the national best practice "wraparound" care planning approach where a broad array of services are coordinated across agencies with integrated care planning and management. PCSC is designed to eliminate barriers to services, increase affordability and cost-effectiveness of services and involve families and local providers in decision making for service planning.

"This system of care grant is an important step forward for the thousands of families in South Carolina who have children with behavioral health needs. Often parents struggle alone in fear and desperation as they search for services and providers who very often are not available or accessible to them," said Sherry Larson, a family representative on the PCSC Leadership Team, with first-hand experience navigating the current system. "Having a coordinated, evidence-based system for children and youth is the most effective way to meet the needs and will be a tremendous help for families."

PCSC recognizes that when children living with serious behavioral challenges receive family-driven, youth-guided and coordinated care and community-based services, they have a greater likelihood of achieving healthy and functional lives as successful, responsible and productive citizens.

"SCDHHS is excited to be a partner with our sister agencies in implementing the PCSC," said Tony Keck, director of SCDHHS. "The fundamental changes in our approach to service delivery will result in improved outcomes for children and young adults with behavioral health needs in South Carolina as a broader array of services become available, best practices are established and funding is better organized. This grant is a further example of how South Carolina's investments in children are receiving national attention."

Combined with the state's match, South Carolina now has \$4 million over four years to support the PCSC. This funding will be used to develop infrastructure and build capacity for family-serving nonprofit organizations, implement evidence-based behavioral health practices and increase the capability for providers to support community-based services. The grant also provides the state the opportunity to access technical assistance to support implementation of the system of care.

"The SAMSHA grant will allow the Department of Mental Health to work with other child serving agencies in SC to continue moving forward to provide children suffering from serious and emotional disorders, and their families, with quality cost effective services," said John Magill, state director for the Department of Mental Health.

This cannot be done alone. The Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS), Continuum of Care, Governor's Office (COC), Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN), Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Social Services (DSS), SCDHHS and three family members are leading this statewide initiative. These family members and organizations are all collaborating to improve the health of children who have serious behavioral health challenges, reduce per capita costs and better the patient experience.

The PCSC will begin implementation in phases this fiscal year and is expected to be fully operational by July of 2016.

#### **About the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**

*The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services provides health care benefits to more than one million South Carolinians. Its mission is to purchase the most health for our citizens in need at the least possible cost to the taxpayer.*

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