



RESEARCHERS SHARE IN \$155 MILLION IN FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING

Project aims to reduce opioid use relapse in criminal justice settings

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 5, 2019

CONTACT: Lori Laughlin
Director of Marketing and Communications
(309) 820-3814 . lnlaughlin@chestnut.org

BLOOMINGTON – People in the U.S. who are involved in the criminal justice system are affected by opioid use disorder (OUD) at much higher rates than is the country's general population. They face numerous barriers to getting into – and staying in – treatment after their release from jail. Barriers include lack of social support, health concerns in addition to OUD, lack of economic resources, and pervasive exposure to drugs in their living environments. When they return to the community, their risk of relapse is high.

These factors highlight the importance of effective addiction treatment for people living with OUD as they leave criminal justice settings. It is critical that those persons are linked to community-based Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and that they get support for ongoing treatment and recovery to lower the risk of relapse.

Lighthouse Institute, a division of Bloomington-based Chestnut Health Systems, is one of ten research centers in the U.S. selected to share in \$155 million in grant funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to research quality addiction treatment in criminal justice settings.

Chestnut's share of the grant funding is \$9.3 million.

Building From a Successful Model

Lighthouse researchers will test an adapted version of an evidence-based intervention, Recovery Management Checkups (RMC). Developed by Lighthouse, RMC provides quarterly check-ups by a linkage manager, helps those recently released from jail to stay in treatment, and re-links them with treatment as necessary. This study will test RMC that adapts to individual needs to step in earlier to prevent relapse or to initiate OUD treatment as needed rather than at quarterly intervals.

The experiment will involve 750 male and female offenders randomly assigned to one of three groups when they are released from jail:

- Re-entry into the community as usual
- The original RMC (quarterly checkups with a linkage manager regardless of need for treatment)
- A checkup schedule tailored to the participant's need for OUD treatment

The study will compare the rates at which participants are linked to and stay in treatment. It will also compare public health and safety outcomes among the three groups.

"This study provides an opportunity to test an intervention that is client-centered and increasingly responsive to the needs of the individual," said Christy Scott, Ph.D., Director of Research and Development, Lighthouse Institute. "We expect that the study findings will help our justice, judicial, and treatment partners to target their resources to those most in need. In the end, this research should improve the overall effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of OUD intervention."

Addressing Other Aspects of Treatment

Each year, there are 10.6 million admissions to and releases from jails in the U.S., making them an optimal setting to improve transitions from one aspect of OUD treatment to another. Research funded by the grant will address gaps in OUD treatment and related services in jails, drug courts, problem-solving courts, policing and diversion, community re-entry after incarceration, and probation and parole. Specific examples include:

- Research on the effectiveness and adoption of new medications for OUD
- Evaluating new state mandates around medication services and drug courts
- Determining how to implement opioid-related services at the community, state, and national levels

Funded Institutions

Together, the ten research centers funded by NIDA will form JCOIN – the Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network. Other grantees include the following:

- Yale University
- Texas Christian University
- Brown University
- University of Chicago
- University of Kentucky
- New York University School of Medicine
- New York State Psychiatric Institute
- Friends Research Institute, Inc.
- Baystate Medical Center

JCOIN is part of the NIH HEAL (Helping to End Addiction Long-term) Initiative, an aggressive, trans-agency effort to speed scientific solutions to stem the national opioid public health crisis. Launched in April 2018, the NIH HEAL Initiative is focused on improving prevention and treatment strategies for opioid misuse and addiction and enhancing pain management.

Lighthouse Institute, a division of Chestnut Health Systems, Inc., was established in 1986. Its mission is to help practitioners improve the quality of their services through research, training, and publishing. Serving health and human service organizations through offices in Chicago, Bloomington, and Maryville, Illinois, Institute staff conduct applied research, program evaluation, training, and consultation.

Chestnut Health Systems is a non-profit organization that has cared since 1973 for persons needing behavioral health services. Chestnut provides substance use disorder treatment, mental health counseling, primary health care, credit counseling, and housing and supportive services. It is a leader in substance use-related research. More at www.chestnut.org.

-###-