

CRAIN'S
Health Pulse

Two behavioral-health IPAs join forces in lower Hudson Valley

Two independent practice associations that provide behavioral-health services in the lower Hudson Valley have merged in order to better serve the region and pursue value-based payment contracts.

Comprehensive Care Network of the Hudson Valley has joined the IPA of Coordinated Behavioral Health Service. They provide behavioral-health services, including substance-use treatment, mental health care and care management, in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties.

Their merger will enable them to pursue value-based payment contracts that fulfill the goals of the state's Medicaid-reform agenda and DSRIP to lower costs and improve outcomes. The state Office of Mental Health and the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services' provided \$2.4 million to CCN's Behavioral Health Care Collaborative and \$2.5 million to the BHC of Coordinated Behavioral Health Service to develop their infrastructure.

"We realized it would be much more effective if we both came together and worked as one," said Amy Gelles, CEO of the Guidance Center of Westchester and co-chair of CCN. By pooling their resources, they will be able to hire a CEO, a clinical officer and other employees; improve their IT infrastructure; and work toward long-term sustainability, she said.

"As in any good merger, we're all changing to use the strength of everyone involved," said Amy Anderson-Winchell, co-chair of CBHS and CEO of Access: Supports for Living. "It gives up a very strong complement of behavioral-health services throughout the Hudson Valley."