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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Otsego County awarded funding for Mental Health Services in schools through a System of Care Expansion grant.**

Otsego County Community Services has been awarded funding for the development of a **Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC)** designed to support children and their families maximize their ability to fully benefit from education services by uniting schools, the healthcare system, government agencies and community based organizations. The BHRC will be the hub for educators, health and service providers, families and students to access an array of resources that will include assessment, treatment, family support, peer services, prevention, early intervention, training, education, juvenile justice support, social services and crisis services. The BHRC will be strategically located at the **Otsego Northern Catskill Board of Cooperative Educational Services (ONC BOCES)** as another shared service with 12 schools districts.

In addition, **Family Resource Network, Inc. (FRN)**, a member of Families Together in New York State, will continue to lead the Otsego County's System of Care expansion and enhancements for birth – age 5 children and families with a special need through the creation a collaborative hub of integrated community empowerment services (CHOICES) for families.

The goal of the System of Care expansion is to bridge the chasm between education and healthcare by creating clinical linkage through the BHRC, increase early identification of youth at risk of developing and/or experiencing mental health needs and improving access to services for families.

The award, which is from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), provides \$999,996 annually for a four year period.

The evaluation component of the System of Care expansion will be conducted by the Bassett Research Institute.

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