

Long Island FQHC to expand behavioral health integration

Charles Evans Center, whose patients include adults and children with developmental disabilities and behavioral health concerns, is seeking the state's permission to expand and further integrate mental health care and substance-abuse treatment within its existing medical and dental services.

The Federally Qualified Health Center, which has clinics in Bethpage and Hauppauge, is proposing the project under DSRI, which has stressed the integration of behavioral and physical health.

The Nassau Queens Performing Provider System has found that its service areas of Queens and Nassau counties have "significant unmet behavioral/mental health needs, with mental illness ranking as the second-most-common condition for Medicaid recipients in the PPS area," according to the certificate-of-need application.

Charles Evans will deploy a multidisciplinary team, including primary care physicians, dentists, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and nursing staff, "to provide a whole health approach that ensures optimum coordination of care," according to the application.

While the FQHC already offers mental and behavioral health care, it's planning to expand and better integrate its service by adding licensed social workers to its primary care practices. The integration model will allow for screening of behavioral health needs, facilitated diagnoses and treatment, and, if needed, referrals for additional services.