



## ***Southern Illinois Healthcare Transformation Collaborative iHub breaks ground on project to target behavioral and physical health needs in the region***

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**ELDORADO** – The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services is announcing the groundbreaking of Integrated Hub (iHub), a facility that will house one of its Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives, a partnership of healthcare providers that will bring the critical integration of behavioral health, substance abuse treatment and prevention and physical health services to a five-county area in southern Illinois.

iHub is the vision of a multi-faceted group of providers who came together to address the health needs of citizens in this region of the state. This group is one of many that were awarded funding for their community-centric project under the Department of Healthcare and Family Services' (HFS) Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives Program.

The iHub facility will provide a shared office space for the Integrated Care for Adults and Integrated Care for Kids programs, which will work to eliminate barriers to accessing behavioral health, substance abuse care and physical health care, and provide care coordination to individuals in this population, while also working to reduce disparities in the health care system across southern Illinois.

The [iHub collaborative](#) is being led by the Egyptian Health Department, and is based in Eldorado, serving a five-county area in Southeastern Illinois. The other partners are Southern Illinois Healthcare, Ferrell Hospital, Harrisburg Medical Center, Christopher Rural Health Clinic, Illinois Health Practice Alliance and Gallatin County Wellness Center. The service area is comprised of Gallatin, Hamilton, Saline, Wayne and White counties.

“The iHub project aims to fill some critical gaps in the health care landscape in the southern Illinois region, particularly in the areas of behavioral health and substance abuse treatment and prevention,” **Department of Healthcare and Family Services Director Theresa Eagleson said.** “Accessing comprehensive and specialty services like behavioral health services can prove challenging, and particularly so in rural areas of the state. The Department is thrilled that this Healthcare Transformation Collaborative shares our goal of broadening access to these vital health care services.”

“iHub is going to make a huge difference in southern Illinois by putting in place integrated care coordination that will better cater to every person’s specific health care needs,” **said HFS Medicaid Administrator Kelly Cunningham.** “A holistic approach that takes into account the social and structural determinants of health and recognizes that unique needs require individualized solutions will make for better health outcomes.”

This southern Illinois collaborative is working to enhance access to quality health care for Medicaid customers with behavioral health, substance use disorder and physical health needs. When the iHub project is completed and the center is operational, it will house wellness coaches, community health workers and care coordinators to create a system that aims to close gaps in care, address health disparities and connect individuals to the health care services they need in their communities.

“We are excited and grateful to the State of Illinois and Senator Fowler to have this project fully funded and are committed to provide quality care coordination for kids and adults in our community through partnerships,” **said Angie Hampton, Chief Executive Officer of Egyptian Health Department.**

This collaborative plans to increase the emphasis on the social determinants of health in their health screening tools; increase care coordination including more integration between primary care and behavioral health providers; roll out an educational campaign to raise awareness of the health care services that exist in these communities; and increase access to a range of health care services, including mental health and substance abuse services, transportation services and telehealth therapy services.

HFS is currently in the process of finalizing its decision on funding its next round of Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives.

#### **What is the Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives program?**

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services launched [Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives](#) in 2021, and iHub was one of nine chosen to be part of the first round. The program aims to close gaps in health care services and eliminate the barriers to access and inequities that persist in Illinois’ health care system. Illinois health care providers that are interested in being a part of Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives are asked to partner together to further these goals in their communities, creating collaboratives that are able to leverage their shared resources to create stronger and more innovative strategies for improving access, quality and equity in the health care landscape than they could individually. HFS is in the final stages of selecting the next round of collaboratives, which will receive funding to carry out their proposals as part of the state Fiscal Year 2023 cycle. The Department is authorized to spend up to \$150 million annually on Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives, with support from federal matching funds.

#### **About the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services**

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services is responsible for providing healthcare coverage for adults and children who qualify for Medicaid, and for providing Child Support Services to help ensure that Illinois children receive financial support from both parents. The department is organized into two major divisions, Medical Programs and Child Support Services. In addition, the Office of Inspector General is maintained within the agency, but functions as a separate, independent entity reporting directly to the governor's office.

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