

News Release

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Tower Foundation Supports Mount St. Mary's Neighborhood Health Center's Behavioral Health Screening Program

Lewiston, New York (September 13, 2016) Mount St. Mary's Hospital Foundation has been selected to receive a \$190,000 grant from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation to support behavioral health screening services for pediatric and OB/GYN patients at the Mount St. Mary's Neighborhood Health Center in the city of Niagara Falls.

"According to Niagara County's Community Health Needs Assessment, mental health hospitalization rates for area children ages 0 – 17 are 26% higher than the New York State rate," said hospital President and CEO Gary C. Tucker, FACHE. "Our partnership with the Tower Foundation will give the talented physicians and clinical staff at our Neighborhood Health Center a unique opportunity to recognize and address behavioral health issues early, reducing the need for hospitalization."

Tracy A. Sawicki, Executive Director of the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation agrees. "Early identification and treatment of mental health issues are Foundation priorities. This initiative at Mount St. Mary's Neighborhood Health Center addresses both. It is very important work that will make a difference for young people and their families. The Foundation is pleased to support it."

The program's goal is to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness by incorporating behavioral health screenings into routine primary care visits for the 2,300 pediatric and obstetrical patients served at the Neighborhood Health Center each year. By integrating early screening, intervention and referral to behavioral health providers, the Pediatric Care Coordination program can improve maternal and child health in Niagara Falls.

"This program will be important to our patients because the family unit is the main source of support for a child with mental health issues," said Patricia Villani, Director of the Mount St. Mary's Neighborhood Health Center. "The program will also provide wrap-around services for families struggling with poor living conditions, hunger or other basic needs. This support strengthens the family and child's ability to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors. We are thrilled to partner with the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation to improve the health of children in our community."