



JCESC/LA

The Bridge to Tomorrow

## JEFFERSON COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

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**Contact: Superintendent Dr. Chuck Kokiko**

**For Immediate Release**

### **JCESC Prepares for OhioRISE to Go Live July 1**

STEUBENVILLE-The Jefferson County Educational Service Center has been busily preparing as part of a new initiative to help children with behavioral health needs which goes live July 1.

This February, JCESC was among 20 regional providers to receive grant funding through OhioRISE (Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence) to coordinate services in eight area counties including Jefferson, Belmont, Harrison, Carroll, Columbiana, Monroe, Tuscarawas and Stark. The initiative is being overseen by Aetna Better Health of Ohio but JCESC will serve as one of the community-oriented Care Management Entities (CMEs) and received a little more than \$1.1 million to defray start-up costs for local programming. So far, officials have created 20 new positions to assist the effort with the potential for 100 more jobs upon the enrollment of participating families.

CME Program Director Linda Trushel said the primary focus was to have the necessary staff and tools in place when the program begins.

“The coordinators have been reaching out to families who might qualify and telling them what the program can offer. If the family is willing, the coordinators meet with them to complete a CANS (Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths) assessment to determine eligibility for the program.”

Trushel noted that as enrollment grows, more care coordinators will be needed to coordinate services. Two offices are also opening in Canton and Steubenville to aid that effort and employment opportunities are available on the JCESC website under the “About” tab.

“Currently, there were 19 jobs created with 14 care coordinators, a program director, two secretaries, one in the fiscal department and one for IT support, but we can have up to 100 employees based on enrollment of families in the program. The care coordinators work directly with them to help children with various behavioral health needs.”

The coordinators, along with Trushel and JCESC Superintendent Dr. Chuck Kokiko, have met with Family and Children First Councils, school districts, children’s services and juvenile justice systems within the participating counties to explain the program, and the employees have also undergone extensive training since March 7 to make the transition a smooth one.

“This is a brand-new program and there’s a lot of prepping, orienting and training to get in place,” she added. “We are doing a lot of outreach and are excited to get the program off the ground to help families in our region.”

While JCESC will coordinate services, other agencies will provide counseling and therapy to the children. Additionally, Dr. Kokiko said the JCESC has had a lot of support since the project award helping to prepare for the go-live date.

“Our progress would not be possible without the support of the JCESC board,” he continued. “They have made themselves available whenever needed and completely supported the project. Current and new staff also worked diligently to see that JCESC would be ready for Day One enrollments, and both the Ohio Department of Medicaid and

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## OhioRISE-2

Aetna have been a tremendous source of assistance since the onset of the program. I would like to thank everyone who has got us to this point and we look forward to providing resources to children and families who will benefit from OhioRISE.”

JCESC became involved with OhioRISE after looking to expand outreach services beyond grades K-12 and address issues schools face today. Leaders noticed an increasing number of challenges surrounding mental health, substance abuse and developmental disabilities among students which ultimately could impact schools and families. Working with organizations such as the Family and Children First Council, Help Me Grow, Early Intervention and ENGAGE, as well as growing programs including alternative schools, Virtual Learning Academy (VLA) and Jefferson Health Plan, helped prepare for becoming a CME. When Gov. Mike DeWine announced that Aetna would oversee the program, JCESC leaders realized it would create access to knowledge and resources the service had to offer and would enable the regional CMEs to maintain local services for local children and families.

About 2,335 youth ultimately would be served throughout the region with an overall estimate of 60,000 kids statewide. The network to support them includes moderate care coordinators and intensive care coordinators and a majority of the new hirings would fall within those categories. Qualifications range from helping children through mental health and child welfare to developmental disabilities, juvenile justice and behavioral health care.

Ohio Department of Medicaid officials said OhioRISE was the state’s first highly integrated care program for youth with complex behavioral health and multi-system needs. The remaining CMEs provide community mental health and substance abuse, specialty care coordination, hospital and educational services. They include Unison Health, Harbor, National Youth Advocate Program, Choices Coordinated Care Solutions, CareStar, Lighthouse Youth and Family Services, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Healvine, Integrated Services for Behavioral Health, The Village Network, The Buckeye Ranch, I Am Boundless, Inc., Wingspan Care Group, Coleman Health Services, OhioGuidestone, Positive Education Program, Ravenwood Health and Cadence Care Network while some of those organizations are in partnership with the Child and Family Health Collaborative. OhioRISE will be available to youth under age 21 who are Medicaid-eligible.

For more information on public and partnership opportunities, contact JCESC Superintendent Dr. Chuck Kokiko at (740) 283-3347 or [ckokiko@jcesc.org](mailto:ckokiko@jcesc.org) and Trushel for children’s referrals to the program at [ltrushel@jcesc.org](mailto:ltrushel@jcesc.org) (740) 792-4011, ext. 502. A resource directory is also available on the JCESC website at <https://www.jcesc.k12.oh.us> under the “OhioRISE” tab with more details on the OhioRISE webpage at <https://managedcare.medicaid.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/mac/managed-care/ohiorise>.