



News Release

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Salt Lake County Solution Halts Further Provider Changes For Its Mental Health Service Consumers

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Salt Lake City, UT—Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams says an agreement has been reached between the County, its mental health services contractor OptumHealth and major service provider Valley Mental Health that will preclude more consumers from being dropped from Valley Mental Health's client rolls.

In July, Valley Mental Health began delivering letters to some of its clients, notifying them that they would be transitioned to other clinicians for ongoing mental health care. To date, approximately 730 consumers have received that letter, prompting confusion, anxiety and protests from some in the mental health community.

"Thanks to hard work and collaboration by my staff with OptumHealth and Valley Mental Health, we've developed a plan to help 120 people who currently use the Valley Mental Health Respite Program to retain this care--and in most cases retain the same provider," said Mayor McAdams. "This agreement should result in curtailing Valley Mental Health's original plan to stop serving approximately 2,200 consumers."

McAdams said that respite care is a service under the county's Medicaid plan that is designed for families who have a child under age 18 who receives services through the county's network. McAdams said the service is usually provided directly in the home and is designed to give caregivers a break, while offering appropriate supervised activities for the child. McAdams said Valley Mental Health currently acts as a subcontractor for this program, but that the county and OptumHealth have discovered a way for OptumHealth to manage it directly, thus saving money. Optum has a list of providers that are approved under its management contract to provide

respite care and will also work with providers not currently in its network to become network providers. Salt Lake County and OptumHealth have a transition plan in place, including a dedicated telephone line for people seeking respite care provider referrals.

McAdams said more information is available by calling (801) 982-3036.

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