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## **GRANT FUNDS MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT TO REDUCE OPIOID-RELATED DEATHS**

*Project is a partnership of Monroe Plan, GBUACO, and Endeavor Health Services  
to expand access to MAT treatment for Medicaid recipients*

*BUFFALO, N.Y., October 18, 2018* – The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has awarded a three-year, \$1.5 million grant to Monroe Plan for Medical Care, a not-for-profit Medicaid managed care organization, to enhance access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) services for Medicaid recipients with opioid use disorder (OUD). The Greater Buffalo United Accountable Care Organization (GBUACO) and Endeavor Health Services (Endeavor) will work in partnership to help deliver the project titled, “*Addressing Buffalo’s Opioid Epidemic with Medication-Assisted Treatment.*” GBUACO is a New York state-authorized Medicaid accountable care organization, and Endeavor Health Services, is a private, not-for-profit organization that provides a wide array of behavioral health services.

Joseph Stankaitis, M.D., M.P.H., Monroe Plan Chief Medical Officer, stated, “Addiction to medical or street opioids has become a scourge in Western New York. This grant allows us to offer evidence-based treatment to some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community by closely collaborating with both GBUACO and Endeavor Health Services.”

The project will expand access to MAT services, including the medications buprenorphine and naltrexone, to primary care doctors in the GBUACO network and their patients with OUD. The goal of the program is to reduce opioid misuse and overdose deaths among Medicaid beneficiaries in Erie County. According the Erie County Health Department, 268 county residents died of a confirmed or suspected opiate overdose in 2017.

“Long-lasting changes in brain chemistry can cause difficulty with abstaining from opioid use; withdrawal symptoms and cravings can be overwhelming,” said Raul Vazquez, M.D., chief executive officer of GBUACO. “MAT can help reduce withdrawal symptoms and curb opioid cravings that can lead to relapse. In fact, studies show that long-term MAT has an 85% chance of reducing mortality among people with OUDs. The importance of this SAMHSA grant cannot be overstated.”

“We are excited to be able to partner with Monroe Plan and GBUACO to offer this much needed service to the community,” said Elizabeth Mauro, LCSW-R, Endeavor Chief Executive Officer. “Our approach to Medication Assisted Treatment is comprehensive, and utilizes a holistic, interdisciplinary approach in the treatment of alcohol and substance abuse. Individuals have access to a wide range of behavioral and physical health services provided where and when they need it.”

Among other objectives, the program is designed to drop the incidence of illicit opioid use and prescription opioid misuse among project participants from a baseline of 56% to 45% by the end of 2019; to 42.5% in 2020; and to 40% by the end of 2021. By the end of each project year, 90% of GBUACO's primary care doctors will have completed trainings and adopted consistent evidence-based MAT treatment guidelines. A full 100 percent of GBUACO's primary care physicians will have daily access to support from addiction medicine practitioners. By the end of September 2019, 70 percent of all GBUACO practices will have a primary care doctor certified to prescribe MAT pharmaceuticals.

Endeavor (formerly known as Mid-Erie) will be co-locating behavioral health counselors at the GBUACO primary care sites to provide counseling as part of the comprehensive treatment approach in using Medical-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder.

**About Monroe Plan for Medical Care:**

Monroe Plan for Medical Care is a not-for-profit health care services organization that has been meeting the needs of our members in the Greater Buffalo and Rochester regions for nearly 50 years. The parent company of MP CareSolutions (our Healthcare Management Services subsidiary) and YourCare Health Plan, Monroe Plan provides health home services and other critical health care services to individuals covered by Medicaid, Child Health Plus and the Essential Plan. Following our mission and vision to improve the health status of individuals and families, Monroe Plan's innovative clinical care management programs are structured to meet the unique needs of members, providers, health care organizations and the communities we serve. Monroe Plan has consistently been recognized as a national leader in the "safety net" area, with a proven track record of improving health outcomes and reducing disparities by supporting a health care delivery system that ensures the availability of high-quality medical care for all.

**About GBUACO:**

The Greater Buffalo United Accountable Care Organization (GBUACO) is the first Medicaid accountable care organization in New York State. It is a group of physicians, specialists and other health care providers who have come together to give coordinated care to the patients they serve. Coordinated care helps avoid unnecessary duplication of services and allows for a free flow of medical information among providers. GBUACO operates under a value-based payment system. Under a value-based payment system, practitioners in GBUACO are incentivized for the quality, and not the quantity, of services rendered. GBUACO's doctors and health care providers have to meet clearly defined quality standards and metrics that focus on prevention and effectively managing patients with chronic diseases.

**About Endeavor:**

Serving the community of Western New York since 1972, Endeavor Health Services is a private, not for profit organization which provides a wide array of behavioral health services. The mission of Endeavor is to collaborate with consumers, families and communities to promote wellness and recovery. Endeavor is proud to be a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic, one of only 13 in New York State.

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