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House Budget Includes Funding for Behavioral Health Program at Manet Community Health Center in Quincy

BOSTON—Last week, House Majority Leader Ronald Mariano (D-Quincy) joined his colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass its annual budget bill, making appropriations for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17). Since FY12, the Legislature has increased funding for substance addiction services by more than 65%. This year’s budget makes notable investments in community-based substance abuse services, including appropriations for a number of community-based organizations to develop and provide substance use disorder prevention and treatment programs to patients in a community health setting.

Representative Mariano was able to secure passage of an amendment providing \$150,000 for Manet Community Health Center (Manet) to develop and implement a behavioral health pilot program in its Quincy and Hull locations, which will integrate behavioral health with primary care by placing credentialed substance abuse and mental health clinicians inside the aforementioned care sites. These clinicians will form an in-house behavioral health care team that will work in tandem with primary care providers through a collaborative treatment plan that accounts for shared health records, to better fulfill the substance use disorder and behavioral health needs of Manet’s patients.

Rep. Mariano said of the program, "This innovative pilot program represents an important step forward as the legislature continues its work with community health partners to address the opioid crisis facing our communities. In studying addiction, we have learned that it is vital to treat the whole patient, not just the disease. This program signifies an important effort on Manet's part to incorporate this philosophy into their care delivery models by integrating mental and physical health care, to ultimately provide comprehensive and compassionate care from prevention to treatment to recovery."

“As front line providers, Manet’s doctors, nurse practitioners, overdose prevention specialists and entire health care team see firsthand the havoc that addiction and mental health disorders can wreak on patients and their families,” says Cynthia Sierra, Manet’s Chief Executive Officer. “We

recognize the importance of integrating behavioral health into our primary care model and we appreciate Leader Mariano's support in helping us to develop this innovative and comprehensive program that will undoubtedly improve the lives of our patients struggling with these disorders.”

These in-house behavioral health services will also support the existing medication-assisted treatment (Suboxone, and soon Vivitrol) services for opioid use disorders that are already provided at Manet, and will enhance efficiencies of care while educating providers and staff in best practices for screening, serving, and treating patients. This pilot program will foster the development of a high-functioning integrated behavioral health services program at Manet that will become a long-term resource for education and treatment in the community and optimize safety and sustained recovery for patients and their families.

Representative Mariano also thanked his House colleagues, Rep. Bruce Ayers, Rep. Tackey Chan, and Rep. Dan Hunt for their support of this funding and program.

The budget will now go to the Senate.

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