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Houston-area centers receive behavioral health funding

By Lora Hines

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Houston's Legacy Community Health Services will receive \$250,000 under the Affordable Care Act to provide behavioral health services.

Two Houston-area community health centers each will receive \$250,000 in federal funding to expand services for patients needing mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Houston's Legacy Community Health Services and Lone Star Community Health in Conroe are among nine Texas facilities to receive a total of more than \$2.2 million under the Affordable Care Act to establish or expand behavioral health services for nearly 38,000 Texans.

"This wonderful grant allows us to treat more people and expand services," said Legacy Executive Director Katy Caldwell in a written statement. "We strive to provide excellent integrated health care to all individuals."

Nationally, 210 health centers received \$51.3 million for behavioral health services for nearly 440,000 Americans.

"These funds support the (Obama) administration's focus on improving recognition of and responding to mental health needs of Texans and people nationwide," said Mary Wakefield, administrator of the federal Health Resources and Services Administration.

Health centers can use the funds to hire mental health professionals, add mental health and substance use disorder health services and help patients receive primary care.

The 2010 health care law extends mental health and substance use disorder benefits and protections to an estimated 60 million Americans, including nearly 5.2 million Texans.

About 70 Texas health centers, including Legacy and Lone Star, operate more than 405 sites and provide care to more than 1.1 million patients statewide. In 2013, Texas health centers treated about 58,000 behavioral health patients.

Nationally, nearly 1,300 health centers operate more than 9,200 sites and provide care to more than 21.7 million patients. In 2013, health centers treated more than 1.2 million behavioral health patients across the country.