

For Immediate Release

Northeast Business Group on Health Receives \$150K Behavioral Health Grant from New York Community Trust

Two-year grant earmarked to help improve access to mental health and substance abuse care for New York City, Long Island and Westchester County residents

NEW YORK, April 27, 2020 – Northeast Business Group on Health (NEBGH) announced today it has received a \$150,000, two-year grant from the New York Community Trust to help improve behavioral health care access for individuals in New York City, Long Island and Westchester County with employer-sponsored health insurance.

The grant is earmarked for the first two years of NEBGH's participation in The Path Forward for Mental Health and Substance Use, a five-year nationwide initiative led by the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychiatric Association Foundation Center for Workplace Mental Health and Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. NEBGH will lead one of eight Regional Employer Stakeholder Engagement Teams to leverage the influence of their employer and other health care purchaser members to work with health plans, medical and behavioral health groups, consultants and brokers to combat this public health crisis.

“We are so grateful to receive this funding from the New York Community Trust, which will help enable our organization to fulfill our participation in this very important initiative to improve care for mental health and substance abuse disorders,” said Candice Sherman, CEO of NEBGH. “Amid the COVID-19 epidemic, the need for improved access to behavioral health services is at an all-time high and the emotional fallout from this crisis will be significant. Employers, working in collaboration with health plans, providers and other stakeholders, can play a significant role in improving the access to high-quality, high-value behavioral health care and bringing care for mental health and substance abuse to the same level of care afforded to physical medical care.”

During the first two years of the project, NEBGH will gather data, engage its employer members and develop a work plan to meet the Path Forward's goal. Specifically, NEBGH will create a 16-member oversight group, develop a five-year operational plan, survey members to identify behavioral health access and payment challenges, collect actuarial studies and other publicly-available data on cost and provide availability, provide data and policy materials to support employers in health plan negotiations and conduct quarterly workshops to educate members on coverage disparities for behavioral health care.

“Despite longstanding parity laws mandating that Americans have the same access to behavioral health care as they do to physical health care, finding in-network mental health and substance abuse services is too difficult for millions with employer-purchased and self-insurance health coverage,” says Irfan Hasan, The Trust's Program Director for Healthy Lives. “We're funding Northeast Business Group on Health to work with coalitions across the country to fix this problem. While we planned to fund this project before New York became the U.S. epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of better access to affordable behavioral health services has never been more critical.”

Launched in late 2019, the Path Forward is a five-year plan to execute a disciplined, private sector approach to improve mental health and substance use care for Americans across the nation. [Learn more about The Path Forward for Mental Health and Substance Use here.](#)

About Northeast Business Group on Health

NEBGH is an employer-led, multi-stakeholder coalition that empowers members to drive excellence in health and achieve the highest value in healthcare delivery and the consumer experience. NEBGH's employer/purchaser members cover 6 million lives in the U.S. and 10 million globally.

About The New York Community Trust

The New York Community Trust connects past, present, and future generous New Yorkers with vital nonprofits working to make a healthy, equitable, and thriving community for all. We are a public grantmaking foundation dedicated to improving the lives of residents of New York City, Westchester, and Long Island. For more information, visit us at nycommunitytrust.org.

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