

PRESS RELEASE

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NEW PROGRAMS ENABLE THE NAMAQUA CENTER TO REACH HUNDREDS MORE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

LOVELAND/FORT COLLINS, CO – In an effort to meet the changing and growing needs of Larimer County’s most vulnerable children, Larimer Center for Mental Health (LCMH) has chosen to transition the services provided at the Namaqua Center of Loveland from residential to home-based, intensive treatment programs. This transition will allow Namaqua Center to serve nearly ten times the number of children it currently serves.

Founded in 1976, Namaqua Center specializes in treating children ages three through twelve who have suffered severe trauma because of neglect and abuse. Throughout its 33-year history, the hallmark of Namaqua Center’s care has been residential treatment. However, new and highly successful models for treating abused and neglected children have been emerging across the country. Namaqua Center and LCMH have been exploring these new models, and have announced that they will now take the intensive resources and services that go into residential treatment and instead target them into family environments.

“Meeting the changing needs of the kids in our care has been our first priority for more than three decades,” said Cyndi Dodds, LCMH Chief Operating Officer who oversees Namaqua Center. “These changes are just the newest generation of care at Namaqua Center.”

Programs that will grow at LCMH’s Namaqua Center include the Family Support Program, the Specialized Foster Care Program, Respite Care and the Kinship Navigation Program. Within these programs alone, the Center’s reach will grow annually from its current number of 35 children to 250 children and families. These programs, and others that are currently under development with partners like the Larimer County Department of Human Services, mean that the 24-hour per day residential treatment provided now at Namaqua Center will no longer be offered.

“For many of the children we have been privileged to serve over the past 33 years, Namaqua Center has been the only ‘home’ they have ever known where adults care for their needs, encourage their growth and development, and treat them with the dignity, respect, and love every child needs,” Dodds said. “We are deeply saddened to end this era at Namaqua, but we couldn’t be more excited about the new programs that will better meet our mission to provide psychological treatment to children with emotional and behavioral disorders resulting

from extreme neglect and abuse. We are also thrilled that we'll be able to serve so many more children and families.”

Namaqua Center introduced highly intensive services for the most abused and neglected children to Larimer Center for Mental Health when the two agencies merged in 2007. “We are so glad that we partnered with Namaqua Center when we did,” says LCMH Chief Executive Officer Randy Ratliff. “Our partnership has meant that care for abused children is enhanced, and the outcomes for the families are even better. Namaqua Center is now one of our most cherished programs, and we will continue to live out its mission long into the future.”

A renewed perspective on treatment for traumatized children is the most important reason the Center is changing its services, but not the only reason. Funding for children to receive treatment in Therapeutic Residential Child Care Facilities like Namaqua Center has fallen as cash-strapped counties choose less cost intensive methods of intervention for their at-risk children. Further, state funding is inadequate to pay for the full scope of residential care. In fact, Namaqua Center’s audited daily costs per child are \$235, while the state Medicaid reimbursement is only \$178 per day.

“One of the best consequences of the merger between LCMH and Namaqua Center has been the ability to weather financial difficulties in a changing environment,” said Ratliff. “The seamless and uninterrupted treatment of the children in our care is our first priority. We are pleased that as an agency we have been able to meet the short term needs of the children currently in Namaqua’s residential program while transitioning to programs that will better enable LCMH to provide successful treatment in the long run.”

Nearly 31 full-time equivalent positions will be lost during the transition. This includes full-time, part-time, and relief employees. “The staff at Namaqua Center has served the children with unending dedication, care and love, and we are incredibly grateful to them,” said Dodds.

“Even though we will miss the children and staff from our residential program, we are confident that we are doing what is right and best for the children in our care,” said Dodds. “And that is what we will continue to do.”

To learn more about Larimer Center for Mental Health and its programs like Namaqua Center, please visit www.larimercenter.org or contact Emily Dawson Petersen, LCMH Development and Marketing Director at 970-494-4226.

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