



Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center (EMCMHC) Partners with Frontier Psychiatry to Offer Montanans Innovative Addiction Telemedicine Services

New collaboration utilizing a virtual platform delivers much-needed psychiatric services to even the most rural communities across Eastern Montana.

Billings, Montana, March 8, 2021 – People of Eastern Montana struggling with substance use disorders will now have access to comprehensive treatment services, starting March 15, 2021, thanks to a partnership between [Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center \(EMCMHC\)](#) and Frontier Recovery, the addiction medicine service of [Frontier Psychiatry](#).

EMCMHC is the largest provider of mental health services in Eastern Montana, offering care in 17 counties across an expansive 48,000 square miles. EMCMHC already delivers addiction counseling services, however, those valuable services are not widely used outside of the criminal justice system.

With limited addiction treatment resources to meet people where they are, EMCMHC has had to rely on the criminal justice system to connect with community residents. It has long offered Substance Abuse and Dependency Services (SADS) but was unable to offer addiction medicine services such as medication-assisted treatment for opioid or alcohol use disorders. This partnership with Frontier Psychiatry allows for the coordinated care of individuals with substance use disorders, now adding medication management in what is an evidence-based, comprehensive approach.

“Community members with related conditions, including opioid use disorder, typically only get access to treatment after they find themselves on the wrong side of the law. They think that we’re the place they need to go if they get in trouble. This partnership with Frontier Psychiatry will change that perception,” said Kathy Beason, Chief Information Officer of EMCMHC.

Frontier Psychiatry is the largest and most comprehensive psychiatric practice in Montana, with subspecialists available in child/adolescent psychiatry, geriatric psychiatry, addiction psychiatry, and forensic psychiatry. Currently, it supports the mental health service offerings of over 20 healthcare organizations across Montana, adding valued partners every week. The [team’s](#)

clinical depth allows them to deliver telepsychiatry services across the care continuum, from primary care-based integration to emergency services.

“It’s not just about having a psychiatrist prescribing medication. I think this new partnership will only enhance relationships with the community. We’ll be able to intervene sooner and keep people in the community. We’re not functioning as two different bodies—we’re working together as a treatment team. We’re going to have an evidence-based program to get you the skills you need and then get you connected to the community,” said Brenda Kneeland, CEO of EMCMHC.

“We’re so proud to join EMCMHC in helping to expand the range of addiction treatment services for Montanans across the eastern half of the state. Our goal is to ensure that everyone in this region can access high-quality, evidence-based care for substance use disorders,” said Dr. Bob Sise, Director of Addiction Medicine at Frontier Recovery, and Montana’s only board-certified addiction psychiatrist.

The vast distances in Eastern Montana and limited number of psychiatry professionals can be a barrier to treatment. Psychiatrists are hard to come by beyond the Billings metro area, let alone integrated, patient-centered services for addiction treatment like the ones being provided by Frontier Recovery. With the EMCMHC-Frontier Recovery partnership, community members will now be able to access hard-to-find services at a nearby location or even from the comfort of home. Linking patients to community resources and getting people back to their lives as soon as possible will be a central focus of the work that will start in mid-March.

“Community members in Malta have to drive at least 200 miles one way to see a psychiatrist in Billings. For individuals living in Eastern Montana and dealing with debilitating mental health issues such as substance abuse and chemical dependency, that’s not always an option. A lot of the people we work with don’t have reliable vehicles or the means to even get access to transportation,” said Mary Hughes who has worked for EMCMHC for over three decades and now oversees several offices for the agency, including a few of the many far-flung communities of Glasgow, Plentywood, and Wolf Point.

“I’ve never met a group as unselfish as Frontier Psychiatry. They’re so kind and responsive and so inclusive. It’s exciting to know that our licensed addiction counselors will be able to learn from such talented professionals. This partnership will redefine the future of addiction recovery in Eastern Montana,” said Kneeland.

For more information, visit <https://www.frontier.care>

About Frontier Psychiatry, PLLC

Frontier Psychiatry, PLLC, an all-virtual psychiatry practice, was founded in 2019 by a trio of passionate psychiatrists who are driven to make psychiatric care available to all Montanans by 2025. One of the largest psychiatry practices in Montana, it offers the following specialty services: addiction medicine, child/adolescent psychiatry, geriatric psychiatry, and emergency psychiatry.

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About Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center (EMCMHC)

Established in 1967, Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center (EMCMHC) provides quality, professional, and comprehensive mental health services for substance abuse issues, depression, family crises, behavioral health issues, and other mental health issues in seventeen counties throughout Eastern Montana.

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