

Youth Home, INC. announces reduction in force, cites challenging health care climate

Little Rock, AR, Release: January 23, 2019. *For Immediate Release*

Mental health provider Youth Home in Little Rock announced Wednesday that thirty-one of 227 team members will be laid off, and CEO David Napier said the job losses are the direct result of a challenging health care climate in the state.

Started in 1966, Youth Home provides mental health services through a variety of programs including adolescent residential treatment, community based treatment, outpatient, and school based programs. While primarily known for its work with youth, the organization also serves clients of all ages, couples, and families through its outpatient clinic Behavioral Health Services of Arkansas, located at 10 Corporate Hill in Little Rock.

The layoffs will include both administrative and direct-care staff who work primarily in the residential psychiatric care program on Youth Home's 52 acre campus located on Colonel Glenn. While the need for this program has not diminished, it is primarily funded through Medicaid, which has not provided a reimbursement increase for provided services since 2001. This rate freeze has translated to the program losing money for over a decade. Youth Home tries to make up this shortfall through fundraising and developing other programs. The downsizing will mean the closing of one residential cottage and a reduction of available beds. Four residential houses on the campus will remain operational for now, as well as the community based care residence for teens living in the Beth Cartwright House.

"These steps do not necessarily mean our organization will stop losing money but it does ensure that our mission can continue on a slightly smaller scale for some time to come. This slows the financial loss and these painful cuts allow us the opportunity to reorganize, reserve resources, explore new programs, and continue to provide a broad range of vital services for families from all over the state," Napier said.

The layoffs are expected to be completed by March 1. Youth Home has committed to helping those team members impacted by the downsizing by organizing job fairs, providing résumé assistance, and, when appropriate, providing severance packages meant to help with the transition. The organization will continue to explore other possible program offerings and revenue opportunities in the hopes that in the future, the twelve beds left empty by this move can again provide service for those in need.

Napier reminds the community that, "The need for our services has not diminished and neither has our commitment to fulfilling our mission. We will continue to serve and advocate for those families impacted by mental illness. I want to encourage anyone passionate about this topic or concerned with the direction things are going in our state in regards to available services for the mentally ill to stay informed, get involved, and to consider ways you might support organizations like Youth Home."

For more information about Youth Home, its programs, or mission, those interested are invited to visit YouthHome.org. Information about outpatient services can be found at BHSArkansas.org.

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