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**EXCELA HEALTH COMPLETES CONSTRUCTION
ON CENTER FOR PSYCHIATRIC CRISIS SERVICES**

GREENSBURG, PA, January 18, 2013 ... Excelsa Health debuts its new Crisis Response Center to the community this week, during an open house for county officials, community based behavioral health providers, payors and consumers as well as the media. The event marks the completion of remodeling and expansion of the Crisis Walk-In program on the Westmoreland Hospital campus. Remodeling and expansion of the center, located on the ground floor of the Behavioral Health Outpatient building across the street from the hospital began August 27 thanks to a \$750,000 grant from Westmoreland County. The center will open for service February 11.

The center consists of approximately 4,000 square feet. Within that space are five interview rooms specifically designed to accommodate individuals with multiple physical and emotional needs; a family conference room wired for latest communications technology; a living room; a gathering space and a re-designed street entry and waiting area.

In partnership with Westmoreland County Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, consumer and provider advisory councils participated in the development, influencing design, physical layout, furnishings and finishes, as well as service offerings. These groups represent the behavioral health organizations that play a critical role in the County's service delivery continuum, consumer and peer advocacy organizations as well as representatives from The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and Value Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania.

Once fully operational, the center will be staffed round-the-clock by nurses, therapists, behavioral health technicians and peer support specialists. Hiring is under way to augment existing staff.

The premise of the Crisis Response Center is three-fold: provide a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of individuals in psychiatric crisis; deliver the assessment/evaluation services in a comforting environment conducive to problem solving and engagement of available community programs and natural supports; utilize the principles of recovery to insure that each person receives the individual attention and services necessary to address their presenting problems in the least restrictive environment.

The program has components reflective of the “Living Room Model” of crisis intervention, in which treatment planning is holistic, delivered in a comfortable, nonthreatening surrounding and afforded the time to ensure the client’s stabilization and transition to next level of care. It incorporates elements of several similar centers with the realization that each client’s crisis will differ in terms of complexity, severity, service need and available resources.

Nationwide, the evidence shows this approach reduces seclusions and restraints in crisis episodes, reduces inappropriate utilization of Emergency Departments and increases the mid-term and long-term results of the intervention.

Currently, the majority of psychiatric emergencies in Westmoreland County are handled through hospital emergency rooms. “The environment of the emergency room is less than optimal for comprehensive service planning for behavioral health clients,” said Ray Grabowski, director of Behavioral Health Services for Excelsa Health, in his grant application. “The premise of the response center program is based on the assumption that creating an environment specifically designed to address the needs of the person in psychiatric crisis will decrease the likelihood of inpatient admission, decrease involuntary commitments and improve overall outcome of the crisis event.”

The Crisis Response Center is part of Excelsa’s full continuum of behavioral health services including: Acute Inpatient (adult/child/adolescent), Outpatient,

Partial Hospital, Clozaril Clinic, School-Based Behavioral Health, Mobile Medication Management and Home Psychiatric Nursing Care. In addition, Excelsa operates Peer Support Services, Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Mobile Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Clubhouse and Drop-In Center programs through its community non-profit subsidiary, CareGivers of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Combined, the Excelsa Behavioral Health programs serve more than 5,000 individuals per year.

To learn more about Excelsa Health's behavioral health services, visit www.excelahealth.org or contact the Excelsa Health Call Center, 10877077101234.