



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Mental Health Center of Denver recognized with national awards for effective treatment, innovation and diverse leadership**

**Denver –April 1, 2011** - The Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) recently received several national awards for innovative use of technology, effective mental health treatment and leadership training that improves services for Denver’s diverse community.

The 2011 Awards of Excellence from National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare recognize individuals and organizations that have significantly shaped behavioral health care and improved the lives of people with mental illness and addiction disorders.

The Mental Health Center of Denver was recognized in several categories:

**Winner, Excellence in Service Innovation Award – Integrating Care through Court to Community (IC3) Program** -- MHCD’s Court to Community Program jail diversion program started in 2006 with the mission of creating a flexible and responsive system to serve and manage misdemeanor offenders with serious and persistent mental illness as an alternative to jail.

Now entering its fourth year, Court to Community has proven to be an enormous success for Denver as a jail diversion program that promotes mental health recovery, reduces psychiatric admissions and hospitalizations, days spent in jail and detoxification facilities and costly public services and criminal justice costs. It saves the community \$2.50 for every dollar spent on treatment.

The program recently began providing consumers with integrated primary health care services to address their physical health care needs as well as providing mental health treatment. Court to Community (IC3) is a collaborative effort between MHCD, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Denver County Courts, Colorado Access, Denver Health Medical Center and the University of Colorado Department of Family Medicine. It is funded by the City and County of Denver and the Colorado Health Foundation.

**Program of Significance, Excellence in Health Information Technology - Confidential Incident Reporting (CIR)** -- MHCD implemented a single electronic application that combines three different reporting systems into one more efficient, cost-effective system. This advanced reporting system provides better care to MHCD’s mental health consumers through improved

communication between treatment teams and consumers as well as resulting in superior security to protect privacy and confidentiality.

The Awards of Excellence will be formally presented to MHCD on May 3, 2011 during the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the National Council of Behavioral Healthcare in San Diego, California.

**Addressing Health Disparities Leadership Program Award** – Russ Urrutia, program manager at MHCD’s El Centro de las Familias clinic, was selected for a unique leadership program to further MHCD’s efforts to serve cultural minorities, drive cultural competency initiatives, and focus on developing programs and a workforce that reflects Denver’s diverse community.

Urrutia was selected from over 130 applicants from healthcare organizations across the country. Participants in the Addressing Health Disparities Leadership Program will be part of a year-long peer to peer learning community and receive group and individual coaching from expert consultants. The program includes a rich array of education, mentoring, career guidance, and networking opportunities.

El Centro de las Familias - a multi-cultural, out-patient clinic of MHCD - is located in southwest Denver and specializes in bilingual mental health services for Spanish speaking children, adolescents, adult and families <http://www.mhcd.org/Services/ElCentroDeLasFamilias.html>

To learn more about the Mental Health Center of Denver, visit [www.mhcd.org](http://www.mhcd.org).

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The Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) is known nationally for its successful groundbreaking approach to mental health treatment. At MHCD, those living with a mental illness are involved in shaping their own recovery and given the chance to regain control of their lives.

The Mental Health Center of Denver is a private, not-for-profit, 501 (c) (3), community mental health center, providing treatment and prevention services to the residents of the City and County of Denver since its founding in 1989. MHCD believes that people can, and do, recover from mental illness and that treatment works and improves the lives of people of all ages. Through more than 35 community sites, mental health providers in 18 Denver public schools, collaborations with community partners and home-based outreach, MHCD provides a comprehensive, innovative and accessible array of mental health and substance abuse services to over 15,000 children, families and adults annually.

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