



HEARTLAND
Human Services

Questions... And The Answers.

Commonly Asked Questions About Mental Health Services In Effingham

Does Heartland have Psychiatrists? *Yes – we currently have a psychiatrist named Dr. Rhoda Gottfried who came to us from John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD. Dr. Gottfried is also a trained nutritionist. And we have a psychiatric nurse practitioner named Dr. Lynn McLellan. Both are excellent prescribers who do a great job with our clients.*

Does Heartland accept Medicaid and Medicare? *Yes, we accept both. NOTE: Only licensed clinical social workers (LCSW) and the psychiatrists can bill Medicare, so we have to be selective about who Medicare clients see.*

Does Heartland accept insurance? *Yes, we accept health care insurance.*

How long does it take to see someone after I call in for an appointment? *Our goal is to get people into service within 30 days but we typically get them in within 15 days. The industry average is 45 days.*

Can I see a Psychiatrist right away? *Only in extreme exceptions. The typical model is to see a psychotherapist first for an assessment and maybe one or two subsequent sessions. The psychotherapist will determine if access to the psychiatrist is required.*

Is your staff licensed? *Yes, most of our psychotherapists are Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors or Licensed Clinical Social Workers. If not, they are actively working on that designation (which requires two years of professional oversight in an active clinical environment). Our substance abuse counselors are Certified Drug & Alcohol Counselors.*

Is your agency licensed? *Yes, we are licensed by the State of Illinois/ Department of Human Services/Division of Mental Health as a Community Mental Health Agency.*

Do patients spend the night at your facility? *Not at our main facility on Fourth street. This is an outpatient facility. We do have group homes at three locations in Effingham where we house and care for 22 acutely mentally ill individuals.*

How long have you been in business?

44 years. The Effingham County Mental Health Association was created in June of 1970. It has evolved over the years and changed its name and expanded its services.

How many employees do you have? *We employ 50 full time and 7 part time employees.*

Who owns Heartland? *No person or entity owns Heartland Human Services. We are a true community asset. Technically, we are owned by our Board of Directors which is comprised of 7 individuals from a cross-section of communities and vocations in Effingham County.*

Do you have reduced fees for the uninsured? *Yes, we offer a sliding fee scale for economically disadvantaged clients. Fees can be as low as \$5.*

Do you have a Crisis Hot Line? *Yes. 217-342-5504. It is staffed by live personnel 24/7. They will respond to a call within a matter of moments. They will be on-site within one hour. They only go on-site at the hospital ER, the jail, and health clinics.*

How do I get to your office? *Our address is 1200 North Fourth Street. We are very close to Interstate Exit 162. FROM THE EAST you would get on Evergreen Ave from North Route 45 and take a right on Fourth Street and our parking lot is approximately 200 yards on the right. FROM THE WEST you would access Evergreen Ave and take a left on Fourth Street and our parking lot is approximately 200 yards on the right. FROM THE NORTH OR THE SOUTH you access Evergreen Ave via Route 45.*

If I become involved in treatment what do I need to know? *Beginning treatment is a big step for individuals and families and can be very overwhelming. It is important to continue involvement in the treatment process as much as possible. Some questions you will need to have answered include:*

- What is known about the cause of this particular illness?
- Do you normally include a physical or neurological examination?
- What medications are generally used with this diagnosis? What is the biological effect of this medication, and what do you expect it to accomplish? What are the risks associated with the medication? How soon will we be able to tell if the medication is effective, and how will we know?
- What can I do to help you in the treatment?

What do I need to know about medications? *The best source of information regarding medications is the physician prescribing them. He or she should be able to answer questions such as:*

- What is the medication supposed to do and when should it begin to take effect?
- What are the side effects and what should be done if they occur?

If a medication is prescribed to me and I begin to feel better after taking it is it okay to stop taking it? *It is not uncommon for people to stop taking their medication when they feel their symptoms have become controlled. Others may choose to stop their medication because of side effects. A person may not realize that most side effects can be effectively managed. While it may seem reasonable to stop taking the medication, the problem is that at least 50% of the time the symptoms come back. If you or your child are taking medication, it is very important that you work together with your doctor before making decisions about any changes in your treatment.*

Once someone has had a mental illness can they ever get better again? *Remember, most people with mental illnesses who are diagnosed and treated will respond well and live productive lives. Many never have the same problem again, although some will experience a return of symptoms. The important thing is that there is a range of effective treatments for just about every mental disorder.*

How common is mental illness? *Mental illnesses are very common; in fact, they are more common than cancer, diabetes or heart disease. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, an estimated 23% of American adults (those ages 18 and older) or about 44 million people, and about 20% of American children suffer from a mental disorder during a given year.*

Even though mental disorders are widespread in the population, the main burden of illness is concentrated in a much smaller proportion, about 6 percent, or 1 in 17 Americans, who suffer from a serious mental illness (one that significantly interferes with functioning). It is estimated that mental illness affects 1 in 4 families in America.

What are some of the warning signs of mental illness?

In adults:

- Confused thinking
- Long-lasting sadness or irritability
- Extreme highs and lows in mood
- Excessive fear, worrying or anxiety
- Social withdrawal
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Strong feelings of anger
- Delusions or hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not really there)
- Increasing inability to cope with daily problems and activities
- Thoughts of suicide
- Denial of obvious problems
- Many unexplained physical problems
- Abuse of drugs and/or alcohol

In older children and pre-teens:

- Abuse of drugs and/or alcohol
- Inability to cope with daily problems and activities

- Changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Excessive complaints of physical problems
- Defying authority, skipping school, stealing or damaging property
- Intense fear of gaining weight
- Long-lasting negative mood, often along with poor appetite and thoughts of death
- Frequent outbursts of anger

In younger children:

- Changes in school performance
- Poor grades despite strong efforts
- Excessive worrying or anxiety
- Hyperactivity
- Persistent nightmares
- Persistent disobedience and/or aggressive behavior
- Frequent temper tantrums

**If you have a question or comment
for the Heartland Management Team,
please click here: [heartland general email address]**