



GRANT FUNDING TO HELP HOMELESS DURING COVID-19
Five partner agencies will provide a variety of resources, services

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BLOOMINGTON, IL – The COVID-19 pandemic presents special challenges for people who are experiencing homelessness or who are housing insecure. Several local agencies will help meet immediate needs for those impacted thanks to grant funding recently awarded to Chestnut Health Systems.

Chestnut is one of four agencies in Illinois to receive funding from Meridian, which provides government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors and individuals with complex medical needs primarily through Medicaid, Medicare Advantage, Medicare-Medicaid Alignment Initiative, and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans. In all, Meridian is funding \$500,000 in grants to help those in the State who are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Chestnut's share of funding is \$150,000 to be equally distributed among McLean, Madison, and St. Clair Counties. Chestnut plans to partner with and distribute funds to the following local agencies to provide the services outlined here:

Table with 2 columns: Agency, Goods and service(s). Rows include Home Sweet Home Ministries, The Salvation Army Bloomington Corps, PATH, St. Vincent DePaul Society, and Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal.

Funding will also help pay for technology so that Chestnut's large clinical workforce can keep serving clients virtually and from a safe distance; and will enable increased staff presence at food drop-offs, homeless shelters, and school drop-off and pick-up sites for clinical outreach and assessment and to link those in need to counseling.

"People experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness lack protection from the environment, access to proper hygiene, and connections to critical primary health and behavioral health care. Combined with community spread of COVID-19 and a higher likelihood of underlying health issues, these factors mean a greater risk for this population of contracting the virus," said David A. Sharar, Ph.D., chief executive officer of Chestnut Health Systems.

"Chestnut is an amazing collaborative partner, standing shoulder to shoulder with us to provide all young people an opportunity for a great future," said Tony Morstatter, chief executive officer of Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal.

"This funding will assist us in continuing to keep Safe Harbor Shelter open 24/7 and will help address the increasing costs associated with keeping our facilities safe and operational during the pandemic," said Angie Bubon, director of development for The Salvation Army Bloomington Corps.

Chestnut Health Systems is a non-profit organization that has cared since 1973 for persons needing behavioral health services. Chestnut provides substance use disorder treatment, mental health counseling, primary health care, credit counseling, and housing and supportive services. It is a leader in substance use-related research. More at www.chestnut.org.