NEBRASKA: Rural Areas Face Bigger Mental Health Shortages

November 17, 2017
News Type: Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark News
State: Nebraska

Local efforts are underway to improve access to behavioral health care in rural Nebraska. One such effort is the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska (BHECN), which is working to address the shortage of mental health professionals in the state. BHECN was recently awarded a federal grant to help increase the number of behavioral health paraprofessionals in rural communities. The grant will provide full tuition to nontraditional students completing community health and addiction counseling programs. As a large portion of the state’s behavioral health workforce ages into retirement, recruiting and retaining young professionals in the field is seen as key. “If you want to have a large enough number of providers, you have to grow your own,” said BHECN Co-director Brent Khan. Integrating behavioral health with primary care and using telecommunications might also help increase access in underserved areas, according to Khan. “This is a key strategy, to train and place people in primary care clinics. That is the front line,” he said. “That strategy and video conference to cross distances are major ways to improve the access.”

Spark Extra! Learn more about behavioral health care [2] and rural areas [3].

Links within this resource

Printed on 05/06/2020 from https://www.sprc.org/news/nebraska-rural-areas-face-bigger-mental-health-shortages