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Amanda Viliocco-Smith
Madison County Transit
618-797-4600

MCT Announces Partnership with Chestnut Health Systems to Support Community Outreach for Individuals in Crisis

PONTOON BEACH, IL, NOVEMBER 11, 2024... Madison County Transit (MCT) is proud to announce a new partnership with Chestnut Health Systems™ (Chestnut), a private, not-for-profit organization, aimed at providing critical support to MCT bus passengers. Beginning December 1, 2024, Chestnut will deploy behavioral health teams at MCT transfer stations, on MCT buses, and on MCT Trails throughout Madison County. These professionals will engage riders, conduct screenings, and link individuals to necessary services, including mental health, substance use, primary medical care, as well as community and recovery supports.

“We’re finding that a growing number of individuals who ride MCT buses are in need of services that we’re not equipped to provide,” said MCT Managing Director SJ Morrison. “This partnership allows MCT to come alongside our passengers and get them the help they need.”

Chestnut’s team will work with Agency for Community Transit (ACT) drivers, road supervisors, and facilities staff, as well as local emergency services, law enforcement, and community agencies to ensure a comprehensive coordinated effort that meets the needs of underserved populations.

“We are excited to expand our expertise in behavioral health and peer recovery to Madison County Transit,” said Amy Gibbar, vice president, integrated care, Chestnut Health Systems. “This collaboration enables us to reach more individuals and provide them with the care and support they deserve.”

Chestnut’s behavioral health specialists will not only engage bus riders and individuals in crisis on the MCT Trails but will also assist with transportation to service locations when necessary. Their work will include individual assessment, emergency and safety planning, overdose prevention education, and a “warm handoff” to critical social services. Monthly, quarterly, and annual reports will document the outcomes of this initiative, helping to evaluate its impact.

“MCT is more than just a means of transportation—it is a lifeline for many people in the communities we serve,” added Morrison. “So, I appreciate Chestnut’s relational approach and their willingness to spend the time learning about each individual’s specific needs.”

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MCT PARTNERS WITH CHESTNUT HEALTH SYSTEMS FIRST AND FINAL ADD

The MCT partnership builds on the success of Chestnut's similar initiatives with St. Clair County Transit District and Bi-State Development (Metro Transit) in Missouri, which have effectively provided behavioral health support over the last few years. By expanding their reach to include MCT, the partnership aims to foster a safer, more supportive environment for all riders and to better assist transit workers in addressing behavioral health-related situations.

"MCT has long been committed to ensuring that residents of all income levels and abilities have access to services, and I want to commend the MCT Board of Trustees for their support of this program," said Morrison. "This partnership represents another example of that commitment to serving the residents and communities of Madison County."

About Chestnut Health Systems:

Chestnut Health Systems is a not-for-profit organization that has cared since 1973 for the most vulnerable in our communities. Chestnut provides substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery; mental health treatment; primary care; dental care; and housing and supportive services. It is also a leader in behavioral health-related research through its Lighthouse Institute. Learn more at www.chestnut.org.

For more information about this initiative or to inquire about any of the services provided by MCT email info@mct.org, call 618-797-INFO (4636), or visit www.mct.org.

Madison County Transit (MCT) provides multi-modal transportation services for Madison County, Illinois. MCT operates a fixed-route bus service, connecting to MetroLink; express weekday commuter service directly to and from downtown St. Louis; and seasonal express service to the Muni. For elderly and disabled residents who are unable to use the fixed-route buses, MCT provides complementary door to door service. MCT is also responsible for the construction and maintenance of 138 miles of bikeways that comprise the MCT Trails system, as well as overseeing RideFinders, the St. Louis region's FREE carpooling and vanpooling program.

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