



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 25, 2015

CONTACT:
Dan Reynolds
(231) 547-7629
d.reynolds@nwhealth.org



**HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**
of Northwest Michigan

www.nwhealth.org

Health Department and McLaren Northern Michigan partner to improve integrated health care

PETOSKEY – Thanks to the cooperation of local organizations, Northern Michigan may see improved access to integrated physical and behavioral healthcare services. MI-Connect, a regional collaborative of health service providers designed to expand access to high quality healthcare services for at-risk residents throughout Northern Michigan, was recently awarded a Rural Health Development Grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration. The grant seeks to improve the quality and delivery of rural health care by providing integrated primary and behavioral health care services. The Health Department of Northwest Michigan and McLaren Northern Michigan, through their partnership with MI-Connect, will explore integration within three McLaren-affiliated clinics: Petoskey Family Medicine, Indian River Family Medicine, and Cheboygan Family Medicine.

Approximately one in five people have a mental illness or addiction, and 68 percent of adults with a mental illness have one or more chronic physical conditions. According to the Center for Integrated Health Solutions, integrated care produces the best outcomes and is the most effective approach to caring for individuals with complex healthcare needs.

“This is an exciting opportunity for Northern Michigan,” said Natalie Kasiborski, PhD, LMSW, MPH, of the Health Department. “With limited resources, we must continually strive to improve our coordination of care and access to services to ensure our population is able to obtain the care they need. Because physical health often correlates with behavioral health, the integration of these services is essential to an effective, efficient health care system.”

Kasiborski will coordinate the effort among the local organizations. For more information regarding this grant, contact Kasiborski at the Health Department at **(231) 347-5144**.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties. Call **(800) 432-4121** for more information.