

For Immediate Release Upon Receipt

September 29, 2020

Media Contact: Cherie Messoré
Sr. Manager of Public Relations
716 255 1679
messorec@shswny.org

**Spectrum Health Wyoming County Site Earns Grant:
*Funding Supports Innovative Text Program***

Earlier this year, Spectrum Health and Human Services, headquartered in Orchard Park, received a \$46,000 grant to launch a unique service in Wyoming county. The service - Text Line for Emotional Wellness and Support – is a seven-day-a-week opportunity to engage with trained counselors through the safe anonymity of texting.

“People are more comfortable using their mobile phones to communicate,” said Eric Dryja, Managing Director. “Some people are not comfortable meeting with a counselor face-to-face, so this provides another opportunity to get help and support with an immediate response.”

Called the Texting Help Line, the service operates from 7pm to 10pm nightly at 585-543-1015. A team of trained counselors monitor the texts and in the first five months have fielded more than 2,000 texts. Users appreciate what the Texting Help Line offers. One frequent Texting Help Line user said, “What I like the most is the comprehensive and understanding atmosphere u ladies bring combined with ur outright honest willingness to offer friendship and support.” Another user of the service said, “ I like this text line because there’s always someone to talk to me about my anxiety and the people are amazing”.

Texters are also encouraged to use MyStrength, an online resource that supports the personal interaction with our professional counselors. Dryja said, “MyStrength is an interactive program that can be personalized to meet your needs anytime, anywhere. If you’re getting anxious and need a break, you can pull up MyStrength to help calm you down.”

The goal of the initiative is to find new ways to reach more individuals in need of mental health or addictions support in Wyoming County. Dryja said, “Recognizing and addressing mental health concerns is not generally part of the public’s conscious; the Texting Help Line offers one more way to expand our reach to people. The more people we can reach the better it is for our entire community as a whole.”

The initiative is funded by a grant from the William H. Thiel Trust of the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo. For more than a century, the Community Foundation for

Greater Buffalo has enhanced and encouraged long-term philanthropy in the Western New York Community. A 501(c)(3) organization, the Community Foundation's mission is: Connecting people, ideas, and resources to improve lives in Western New York. Established in 1919, the Community Foundation has made the most of the generosity of individuals, families, foundations, and organizations who entrust charitable assets to the Community Foundation's care. Learn more at cfgb.org

Spectrum Health and Human Services is a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) providing mental health, addiction, and crisis services. Spectrum Health promotes hope, empowerment and self-defined improvements to adults, children, and families as they recover from behavioral and/or addiction-related disorders. Spectrum Health operates two offices in Wyoming County and has served the county for more than 10 years. Visit www.shswny.org for more information.