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State Officials Celebrate Opening of Newly-Renovated Appalachian Behavioral Healthcare Patient Unit

ATHENS – The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services today celebrated the official re-opening of a new state-of-the-art patient unit at Appalachian Behavioral Healthcare (ABH). The eight-month, \$3.6 million project marks the first major renovation at the hospital, which opened in 1993.

“Our goal was to provide a warm, therapeutic healing environment that provides a safe and secure refuge for patients to receive treatment for years to come,” said OhioMHAS Director Tracy Plouck. “This state-of-the-art facility will dramatically improve patient care, while having a positive impact on employees, visitors and community partners.”

Work began in April on a range of updates, including the complete overhaul of 20 private and 34 semi-private patient rooms and redesign of dining/common areas. Crews also remodeled nurses’ stations and comfort rooms, expanded group/treatment team space, installed new furniture and various safety and security upgrades. The project was completed in four phases, and required a temporary reduction in patient census. Once patients move back into the unit, the hospital will return to its full, 88-bed operational capacity.

“ABH staff are very excited to be able to invite visitors to tour the newly renovated unit,” ABH CEO Jane Krason said. “My hope is that the community will use this opportunity to learn more about our facility and services, and interact with staff. By asking questions and seeing the building first-hand, this should help reduce some of the public stigma surrounding mental illness.”

ASM Partners, LLC served as project architect, while WAI Construction Group, LLC, was the general contractor. Former staff, persons in recovery, advocates and members of the public were invited to tour the facility -- a rare opportunity to peer inside hospital walls, ask questions and learn about services offered.

ABH serves the clinical psychiatric needs of patients from Athens, Belmont, Coshocton, Fairfield, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Hocking, Jackson, Jefferson, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Vinton and Washington counties. Beginning in January 2016, Adams, Lawrence and Scioto counties will be added to the service area.

About Ohio’s Regional Psychiatric Hospitals

OhioMHAS operates six regional psychiatric hospitals across the state. These specialized facilities provide short-term, intensive treatment to patients in both inpatient and community-supported environments. They also deliver comprehensive care to patients committed by criminal courts. All six hospitals have achieved The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization’s Gold Seal of Approval for providing high quality care and safety.



Appalachian Behavioral Healthcare

Promoting Wellness and Recovery

John R. Kasich, Governor
Tracy J. Plouck, Director

December 2015

Renovations Designed to Enhance Patient Recovery

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services began a patient unit renovation project on April 6, 2015, at Appalachian Behavioral Healthcare in Athens, Ohio. The \$3.6 million project was the first major capital renovation to the building since its opening in March 1993. The design team worked to create a safe and comfortable environment, while emphasizing personal empowerment and individual dignity. As the organization focuses on the principles of Trauma-Informed Care, we continue to work as a catalyst for improving health care practices and enabling patients to take control of their own healing process through individual and team-based inpatient care in a supportive, nurturing, safe and secure building.

The project, comprised of four phases, has a scheduled completion date in December. Following completion, ABH will return to its full capacity of 88 beds. Each of the four newly renovated units consists of single and double bedrooms, a comfort room, state-of-the-art treatment team/group rooms, two day areas and a dining area.

Design goals:

- An environment that promotes healing and safety
- Flexibility in treatment spaces allowing for multiple functions and effective space utilization
- A secure, functional and flexible environment
- Identify an approach to addressing security needs based upon areas of greatest concern
- Reduce stress and, therefore, reduce aggression

Highlights of the new facility:

- Renovated space
- Twenty private rooms and 34 semi-private rooms
- Patient information board
- Open floor plan in the dining and day areas
- Open nurses stations
- Comfort rooms
- Utilize nature as a healing distraction
- Security cameras located in blind spots
- Safety fixtures in bathrooms
- New bedroom furniture
- Expanded group/treatment team space