

County group gets grant to promote fatherhood

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Clinical Outcomes Group Inc. has been awarded a \$25,000 grant to strengthen the bond between father and child.

Clinical Outcomes Group was one of 25 organizations across the country to receive the grant money from the National Fatherhood Initiative through the National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity Building Initiative.

"We currently offer several programs that will be enhanced by the grant money as well as offer training and programs for our community partners," David Zanis, Clinical Outcomes Group president, said.

The NRFCBI is administered by NFI through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

According to a press release, the growing absence of fathers in their children's lives has emerged as one of the nation's greatest social problems, resulting in lost opportunities for children and a financial burden to society. The annual cost to the American public is estimated to be \$55,000 for each fatherless family.

"We can lower our community costs by engaging fathers in practical ways in our community," Tina Zanis, Clinical Outcomes Program director, said. "Fathers are critically needed by children to parent, teach and support them. This grant will give us the opportunity to put programs in place that will help fathers of all walks of life become more engaged with their children and become the type of father that their children need in their lives."

Social services event

David Zanis said part of the grant specifies an outreach to other community service groups to help incorporate a fatherhood component to their existing programs.

"We want to provide training for individual health, social and educational service providers to add fatherhood initiatives along with their services," he said.

With this in mind, a Fathering Program for health, correction, education and social service agencies to engage fathers in service delivery is scheduled from 2 to 4 p.m. April 14 at Penn State Schuylkill Campus Conference Center.

The program is sponsored by Clinical Outcomes Group in partnership with Schuylkill County's VISION and Temple University.

The program will teach practical methods for working with fathers to increase father and family involvement.

Participants will learn how to lower costs by teaching fathers to take responsibility for their family.

The guest speaker will be Jay Fagan, a professor of social work at Temple.

A father's advice

In addition to the program for service agencies, Clinical Outcomes is recruiting participants for a leadership group on fathering.

"We are looking for good fathers willing to share their stories focusing on fatherhood. People who dedicate a good portion of their daily lives to fathering," Zanis said. "We are looking for simple acts that don't require a lot of government funding that can be used to improve the relationship between fathers and children."