

# A Story of Compassion

USDA Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

## Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs

St. Paul, Minnesota

"We're very excited about it," said Ron Brand, executive director of the Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Program. "We're going to make a big difference in our state. We think there'll be new ways of doing business and new ways of sharing resources among professionals and with our partners."

The 25 member centers contributed \$250,000 in matching funds to attract the grant from USDA Rural Development. The project is one of the largest of its kind in the country and one of the first times the USDA has awarded a large grant for rural mental health.

The network will extend beyond the 25 member centers, to 80 sites total. Brand said the project will help leverage the state's scattered mental health resources to benefit under served rural areas.

"We're committed to bring services to people in their own communities," Brand said. Over the next year, the project will be phased in as equipment is installed at each site and the staff is trained to use it, he said. "It's ambitious; it's a state-wide project and this is a good start for Phase 1. We're hoping that this support will be a foundation to leverage further investment."

## How the Initiative is Helping

Through the outreach efforts under the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, more than two dozen rural

mental health centers will benefit from a \$475,000 federal grant to build a communications network to allow for assessment, supervision and family education to be provided over long distances. The award was made through the USDA Rural Development Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program to the Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs, a non-profit organization.

## About the Organization

The Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP) is a not-for-profit membership organization representing community mental health and provider agencies throughout the state. The Association is a leader in the planning and implementation of community mental health services in Minnesota. MACMHP is a pro-active advocate for increased funding as well as innovative and expanded programs for community-based providers.

The Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs mission is to provide leadership and services that strengthen member agencies, improve service quality, and foster a unified voice for service providers and clients.

