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## **CHILD & ADOLESCENT TREATMENT SERVICES AND LAKE SHORE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TO MERGE**

***New organization will set the standard in family-focused behavioral health***

**BUFFALO, NY (May 3, 2016)** – The Boards of Directors of Child & Adolescent Treatment Services and Lake Shore Behavioral Health announced today they plan to merge and form a new organization. Employing more than 525 people, the new organization will be one of the largest community-based behavioral health organizations serving children and adults of all ages in Western New York. The target date for finalizing the merger is January 1, 2017, pending approvals by all necessary regulatory and legal authorities.

“Today we celebrate what started as a formal affiliation two years ago when two like-minded organizations came together to offer a comprehensive set of behavioral health services to people of all ages,” stated Ellen Bieler, current Board Chair of Child & Adolescent Treatment Services and incoming Board Chair of the new organization. “The new organization will occupy a distinct position in the behavioral health marketplace by providing a comprehensive array of family-focused services across the life span of health, wellness and recovery.”

From a staff leadership perspective, although several details are yet to be finalized, Howard Hitzel, Psy.D, current President of Lake Shore Behavioral Health, will serve as the CEO of the new organization and Bonnie Glazer, LCSW-R, current President of Child and Adolescent Treatment Services, will maintain a key role in the organization going forward with a focus on alignment, integration and innovation.

“It is my distinct honor and pleasure to lead our team of stellar professionals as we combine forces with an emphasis on employing evidence-based practices, improving healthcare integration, and reducing the stigma that is too often associated with mental and behavioral health,” stated Howard Hitzel, Psy.D. “Working closely with Bonnie Glazer and other senior team members from both organizations, we plan to unveil our organization name and structure in the coming months.”

The United Way of Buffalo & Erie County provided financial support when the affiliation between the two organizations became formal two years ago. United Way President, Michael Weiner, said, “The United Way believes in the missions of both organizations and this consolidation will result in an even stronger organization. By combining the services of both organizations under one name they will be able to enhance their efficiency and outcomes by providing a comprehensive set of services that assist families in our community.”

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