

**F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E**

August 1, 2016\*

**Arizona's Community-Based Behavioral Health System Leads the Nation:  
June 30, 2016 Marks Achievement of Benchmark  
In Stipulation That Ended Decades Old Lawsuit**

**PHOENIX** – June 30 marks an important date as part of Arizona's exit to a decades old lawsuit known as *Arnold v. Sarn*. *Arnold* was a class action lawsuit filed in 1981 against the State of Arizona alleging a failure to provide a comprehensive community mental health system as required by statute.

The end of the litigation was crafted in January 2014 when officials from the Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADHS/DBHS), Maricopa County, and the Office of the Governor reached an accord with the *Arnold* Plaintiffs and entered into a Stipulation which resulted in the dismissal of the litigation. The Stipulation included a commitment for the State to increase service capacity for Maricopa County residents in four areas: Assertive Community Treatment; Supported Employment; Supportive Housing; and Peer and Family Services. The Stipulation also called for the implementation of a quality service review, network capacity analysis and SAMHSA fidelity tools. Officials agreed these areas would be met by June 30, 2016, and that moving forward the State would continue to develop and maintain high quality services for its members.

The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) is Arizona's single state Medicaid agency. Effective July 1, as part of a merger with DBHS, AHCCCS assumes responsibility for the State's public behavioral health system, contracting directly with the RBHAs.

"June 30, 2016 marks the end of a journey that began in the courts but truly took shape in the community," said AHCCCS Director Tom Betlach. "Today we celebrate an official exit from a court-based process and return the behavioral health system to the community where it belongs. Through the leadership of Peers and Family Members working in partnership with providers, AHCCCS, and the RBHAs, Arizona leads the nation in a community-based system of care. Though we exit the *Arnold* litigation, we remain committed to its principles and to a level of transparency that allows the community, rather than the courts, to hold the public behavioral health system accountable."

Today, Arizona continues to build its community-based system of care and boasts 1,150 trained peer support specialists across Arizona delivering Medicaid reimbursed peer support services establishing Arizona as a national peer support leader. Arizona also leads the nation in reaching out to justice-involved populations and connecting them to needed behavioral health services. Additionally, AHCCCS and its contracted health plans/RBHAs are expanding efforts to connect members to the housing and employment supports they need to live and work in the community.

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\*Updated from release issued June 30, 2016

For more information, contact the AHCCCS press office at (602) 417-4534 or go to the AHCCCS website at:  
[www.azahcccs.gov](http://www.azahcccs.gov).