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Advocates and HMEA Announce Affiliation

'Like-minded' human service agencies joining forces for greater impact and new opportunities for individuals and families

FRAMINGHAM, MA, APRIL 27, 2021—Advocates and Horace Mann Educational Associates (HMEA)—two leading Massachusetts human service agencies—today announced a strategic partnership to better serve children, adults and families with intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism, and behavioral health needs.

“Our industry is changing in ways that require organizations like ours to affiliate in order to continue to be successful and to grow and innovate to meet the needs of those we serve,” said Diane Gould, President and CEO, Advocates. “We’ve accepted that challenge and are excited about the possibilities this affiliation provides for advancing our collective mission in the evolving human services system.”

Together, Advocates and HMEA serve more than 35,000 children, adults and families in Massachusetts and Rhode Island and employ more than 2200 staff, the majority of whom are essential direct care human service workers.

The organizations provide similar services in the areas of adult family care; shared living; family supports; day habilitation and employment; and residential programs for people with autism (ASD) and intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), acquired and traumatic brain injuries (ABI and TBI), and individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Advocates also provides behavioral health services including outpatient counseling and residential supports, emergency psychiatric services, community justice and jail diversion programs, and integrated care management. HMEA provides a wide range of supports for individuals of all ages and operates Autism Resource Central, an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Clinic, The Darnell School, Tech Access of RI and Cloud4Causes—an IT consulting service for nonprofit organizations.

Advocates and HMEA already have an established track record of successful collaboration that spans more than a decade, most recently in the areas of IT, Trauma Care and Covid 19 related needs. And, in some instances, they provide different services to the same individuals and have staff members who work for both organizations.

“This affiliation was not a difficult decision, since our organizations are very like-minded, share the same values and hold each other in the highest regard,” said Jule Noack, HMEA President and CEO. “Both organizations have talented staff who care about the people they serve and are passionate about the

work they do. We see lots of potential to learn from each other and create new opportunities for employees across both organizations that will attract and retain talent, drive innovation and enhance the services we provide.”

Beginning in July, Advocates and HMEA will initiate a joint three-year strategic planning process to identify and adopt best practices across both organizations in order to assess ways to be more efficient and effective through collaboration and integration and to make the most of their combined strengths, talent, and technology.

Under the affiliation, both organizations will remain separate nonprofit corporations with distinct Boards of Directors and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). Leadership of both organizations will remain the same with Gould continuing to serve as President and CEO of Framingham-based Advocates, and Noack continuing as President and CEO of Franklin-based HMEA.

For more information, please visit <https://www.advocates.org/> and <https://www.hmea.org/>.

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