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MAZZONI CENTER RECEIVES PLANNING GRANT TO PURSUE FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTER STATUS

September 19, 2011 - Mazzoni Center is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a Health Care Planning Grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration, which is part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, to conduct the essential planning activities that will enable the agency to pursue Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) status. FQHCs are community-based organizations that serve a variety of Federally designated Medically Underserved Area/Populations, providing them with comprehensive primary care and preventive care, including health, oral, and mental health/substance abuse services to persons of all ages, regardless of their ability to pay. Becoming an FQHC would allow Mazzoni Center to expand both the availability of culturally competent care to underserved LGBT populations and the health care safety net for low-income uninsured populations in Philadelphia County.

“We are thrilled at this news, and at the prospect of expanding care to underserved populations here in Philadelphia,” Mazzoni Center Executive Director Nurit Shein said. “We feel strongly that becoming a Federally Qualified Health Center is an important and logical step for the agency, so that we may continue to develop and build our services in a sustainable fashion, and thereby meet the growing demand for high quality, culturally competent care for both LGBT and low-income/uninsured residents of our area.”

In the coming weeks Mazzoni Center will begin to prepare a comprehensive community needs assessment of the overall service area (Philadelphia County) as well as the specific needs of LGBT and low-income/uninsured populations within this area. The needs assessment will enable the agency to better understand the demographic factors affecting the target populations’ need and demand for health services, including: age range, languages spoken, socioeconomic and housing status, health insurance status, ethnicity/culture, health status, and health care utilization patterns. It will also explore the perceptions of the target populations about their own

health care needs and barriers to accessing needed services; other providers of health and social services within the service area; population specifics; and gaps in services.

“The staff and board of Mazzoni Center have worked extremely hard to get this far in the FQHC process,” Michael Wolf, M.D., President of Mazzoni Center’s Board of Directors, said. “While there is a great deal of work still ahead, we embrace the challenges and the tremendous opportunities this will provide to increase and improve access to health care for the communities serve.”

Because Mazzoni Center already offers a full spectrum of health care and support services, planning activities will focus primarily on how best to expand the availability of existing services to accommodate projected patient growth, including requirements for additional space, clinical and support staff and equipment, as well as how to supplement existing referral relationships for services not currently offered on site, including dental, diagnostic laboratory and radiologic and intensive psychiatric services.

A planning committee will review data from the needs assessment as well as patient data from the EMR on the number of referrals provided and the number of referrals completed, to identify additional gaps in care for the target populations and determine if additional services are needed to supplement Mazzoni Center’s existing continuum of care. In an effort to minimize duplication of services while ensuring patients receive a full continuum of culturally competent services, the committee will also review information from its inventory of health care providers and specialty care providers compiled through the needs assessment, in order to identify potential collaborating partners and develop additional referral arrangements as needed.

About Mazzoni Center

Mazzoni Center was founded in 1979 to provide and advocate for the unique health needs of Philadelphia’s sexual minority communities. In 1981, Mazzoni was among the first organizations in the area to incorporate HIV care and prevention services into its continuum of care. For the past 20 years, Mazzoni Center has remained at the forefront of designing and implementing programs and services to combat HIV/AIDS while continuing to provide specific services to LGBT communities. In 2005, the organization opened Mazzoni Center Family and

Community Medicine (MCFCM), a comprehensive health care facility offering primary medical care, reproductive health services, HIV primary medical care, sexually transmitted infection screenings and treatment, transgender specific services, vaccinations for hepatitis A & B, flu vaccinations, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, psychiatric medication monitoring, case management, and nutritional services.

Because MCFCM is currently the only community-based practice in Greater Philadelphia to offer medical services directly targeting the health care needs of LGBT populations, and one of only a half-dozen in the nation, it has experienced extraordinary growth since its inception – a testament to the demand for culturally competent LGBT care in the region. In four years, the number of patient visits provided has more than doubled from 3,800 to 8,000 and the staff has increased by 40%. Today the health center has an active and growing roster of more than 5,000 patients. Moreover, in FY 2010, 12% of visits were by new patients. Mazzoni Center is also an important culturally competent health care resource and safety net for non-LGBT low-income and uninsured individuals and families in its surrounding neighborhoods. In FY 2010, 17.6 of its patient base were non-LGBT low-income and uninsured patients.

Established in 1979, **Mazzoni Center** provides quality comprehensive health and wellness service and is the only health care provider in the Philadelphia region specifically targeting the unique health care needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities. Mazzoni offers a full array of outreach, prevention, education, direct medical and care services, psychosocial services, legal services, and support groups, and is dedicated preserving the dignity and improving the quality of life of the individuals it serves. It is the oldest AIDS service organization in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the fourth-oldest in the U.S. With over 30,000 individuals benefiting annually from its services, Mazzoni Center is a leader among community-based organizations in the greater Philadelphia area, with a reputation for excellence and innovation in service delivery to its constituents. More information at:

www.mazzonicenter.org