



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Wolf Announces Funding to Rehabilitate Historical Building for Behavioral Health Center in Downtown Scranton

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today announced that Commonwealth Cornerstone Group (CCG) has completed a New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) transaction of \$7 million with the Scranton Counseling Center (SCC) to help fund the adaptive reuse of a historic cornerstone building at 329 Cherry Street in downtown Scranton.

The rehabilitated building will be the site of SCC's behavioral health clinic and administrative offices, as well as a pharmacy and primary health clinic to provide support services for the clinic's clients. For the last 40 years, it has been operating out of a former Sears department store that was adequate but certainly less than desirable for its needs.

"As Lackawanna County's largest community behavioral health provider, this revitalized building will give the Scranton Counseling Center the sort of facility it needs to properly serve people in that region," said Gov. Wolf. "It also will provide additional capacity to meet the growing needs of the area."

SCC served more than 10,250 consumers during the 2018 fiscal year, which represents 14 percent growth compared with the previous year. Its client base is more than 80 percent low-income Medicaid, with most classified as having severe mental illnesses. Services are provided to the public regardless of their ability to pay. The center's extensive list of programs includes such things as psychiatric evaluations, 24-hour crisis intervention, community- and school-based behavioral health teams, and drug and alcohol treatment services.

The new facility is a 108,000-square-foot brick building located on a main thoroughfare in the city's revitalized south-side neighborhood. The historically significant building most recently functioned as a storage facility. The structure will be renovated to provide much-improved functionality for the center's programs and staff. The new location is not far from the center's current office, so it will cause minimal disruption for consumers.

"I can't emphasize enough the critical role played by the Scranton Counseling Center for people in Lackawanna County facing behavioral health challenges," said PHFA Executive Director and CEO Brian A. Hudson Sr. "This new structure should help the center provide a higher quality of care and offer more space to treat a larger number of clients in the years ahead."

This project is expected to create 39 temporary full-time construction jobs paying an average wage of nearly \$22/hour. Following construction, this project will allow retention of all 318 current employees. Plus, 70 of these jobs will be accessible to low-income people. The center's staff is paid an average wage of more than \$17/hour with a benefits package including health, eye and dental insurance; a 401K plan with a guaranteed company contribution; paid vacation and sick leave; and more. According to economic estimates, the project will support 10 indirect and induced jobs, representing \$601,000 in added wages and \$349,000 in added state and local taxes.

About Scranton Counseling Center

SCC is a private, nonprofit organization incorporated in 1947. The center is a comprehensive behavioral healthcare organization providing a complete range of evaluation and treatment services. Its mission is to promote wellness and recovery by providing an environment that is sensitive to the unique personal attributes of those they serve, and it helps them make informed choices to maximize their quality of life.

About Commonwealth Cornerstone Group

The goal of CCG, through its administration of New Markets Tax Credits, is to fund projects in key areas of communities that have historic or cultural value and offer opportunities to spark economic revitalization. CCG utilizes NMTCs to provide loans and equity investments for business expansion, mixed-use development, and community facilities across Pennsylvania. Examples of past developments that have benefited from CCG's investment of tax credits include Bakery Square in Pittsburgh, the Coal Street Community Facility in Wilkes-Barre, and the Stephen Klein Wellness Center in Philadelphia. Learn more at: www.commonwealthcornerstone.org/.

About the New Markets Tax Credit Program

The New Markets Tax Credit Program was established by Congress in 2000 to spur new or increased investments in operating businesses and real estate projects located in low-income communities. The NMTC Program attracts investment capital to low-income communities by permitting individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their federal income tax return in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial institutions called community development entities, such as Commonwealth Cornerstone Group. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

MEDIA CONTACTS: J.J. Abbott, Governor's Office, 717-783-1116
Scott Elliott, PHFA, 717-649-6522

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