From the CEO

Spring is the time of year when flowers bloom, and so, too, does hope. Here at David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC), we see such stories unfolding every day, as children and adults find the help, hope, and healing that they need.

Their stories of rebirth and renewal are always enjoyable to share, particularly right now during May, Mental Health Awareness Month. But when it comes to mental illness, not every story has a happy ending.

People with serious mental health challenges typically die 25 years younger than the general population.

That’s a hard truth, particularly here in Collier County, where we are in the worst mental health crisis in our history. A combination of exploding population growth and an ongoing healthcare staffing dilemma has made the crisis even worse.

You’ve heard me say it before, and it bears repeating now: We cringe at the thought of turning anyone away, but the lack of available space to provide care sometimes forces those in need to seek treatment outside of Collier County. That’s just not acceptable.

These hard truths are the driving factors behind our new initiative, Hope for Collier: Building Stronger Minds Together. This is a multi-pronged, complex effort to address our local mental health and substance use challenges—to not only help people live longer but to live well.

The Hope for Collier initiative has been designed to increase the size and scope of our facilities in Collier County while ensuring the sustainability and growth of DLC’s 45 programs and services:

- The creation of the county-owned Collier County Behavioral Health Center will almost triple the number of crisis beds to serve adults in our community. This new state-of-the-art facility, funded by the county and operated by DLC, will break ground later this year.

- As our main campus undergoes a transformation, we’ll build out the Van Domelen Children’s Center for Excellence, which will double the number of crisis beds to serve our most vulnerable population, our children, plus greatly expand our myriad of outpatient services for the wonderful kids of Collier County.

- A new Access and Integrated Care Center, also on the main campus, will increase our ability to serve our community’s veterans and all our adult clients in various outpatient programs.

(continued on next page)
It will also provide the ability to offer primary healthcare services right on DLC’s campus.

Renovation of remaining campus buildings will allow for an upgrade and expansion of the highly successful Crossroads residential substance use treatment facility and detoxification unit as well as the Administration Complex and on-campus pharmacy.

Complementing our existing six-bed Hope Home recovery residence for adult males, our new home on the same acreage across from our campus will augment our services to clients in need of transitional housing as they continue their recovery journey.

Simultaneously, DLC has committed to making a significant investment in staff. This will ensure that the organization can recruit the most talented physicians, APRNs, nurses, clinicians, and allied service providers while retaining the exceptional 400 team members already serving our community each and every day.

I’m the first to admit that this is an ambitious plan. But thanks to the remarkable support of friends like you—indeed, of so many throughout our community—we dream big at DLC.

And when we dream big, we pave the way to recovery and wellness for thousands in need of care.

I’m grateful to have friends like you who care so deeply about these issues...and who help make it possible for so many in our community to find hope.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Scott Burgess, CEO
“People Who Give You Hope”

How one veteran describes DLC’s program to those who have served

May is National Military Appreciation Month and concludes with Memorial Day. In recognition of both, we’re spotlighting our Veterans’ Services Program and how it has helped one veteran rebuild his life...

Years before even serving in the military, 44-year-old veteran Alex Kane was experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

At 10 years old, Alex was living in Lima, Peru, where his father was working as a DEA agent. Members of a drug cartel bombed a car in front of their home. No one was killed, but the blast rocked the house and blew out all the windows.

The frightening incident prompted the rest of Alex’s family to move back to the U.S. for safety, while his father stayed in Peru.

Over the next two years, Alex was separated from his father and missed him terribly. Plus, the trauma of the bombing in Lima lingered in his mind.

“I was dealing with anxiety,” said Alex, “and I had a lot of nightmares.”

At age 13, Alex drank beer for the first time, and he liked how it “numbed things.” By the time he was in college, he was drinking heavily. Still, he earned a degree.

Alex spent five years in the Navy as an officer and received an honorable discharge. Yet, during this time, his drinking continued to spin out of control.

Over the next decade, he fell into a cycle of rehab and relapse, and he violated the law several times.

Eventually, his probation officer urged him to seek care at David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC).

A diagnosis, and clarity

Once in treatment at DLC, Alex was diagnosed with PTSD. Suddenly, the cause of his many years of suffering became clear.

The care and compassion of DLC’s staff impressed Alex as he went through the Crossroads residential rehabilitation program and then moved into sober living.

But it wasn’t long before old patterns re-emerged. Remembering his positive experience at DLC, he returned, this time with a renewed commitment. Alex’s counselor recommended a sober living home with Warrior Homes of Collier (WHC). He also completed Home Base Florida’s Resilient Warrior program, a six-session educational mind-body course that helps veterans and service members manage stress more effectively.

(continued on page 8)
The symbolism of spring’s new beginnings can also apply to our mental wellness and overall health. By taking small steps, we can learn to thrive in so many new ways.

Consider these five suggestions to help your healthy habits blossom this season:

1. **Engage in Self-Care:** As we face life’s hurdles, it is important to recognize and regulate our emotions. When in need of a refresh, turn to things that generate feelings of joy and calm. Be sure to work self-care into your daily routine to prepare for—and decompress from—stress felt during the day. Not sure where to start? Check out the “8 Dimensions of Wellness” by scanning the QR code below to identify which aspect of your wellness needs some attention, and then apply a self-care technique that will enhance that dimension.

2. **Reframe Your Thoughts:** Negative thinking can be toxic for our mental health. When we take a moment to reflect on our self-talk, we can identify patterns in the way we think. When words like “shouldn’t” or “can’t” are used often, it can lead to challenges with self-esteem and a decrease in feelings like happiness and excitement. Make a conscious effort to rephrase negative thoughts by incorporating positive words and self-affirmations. Be kind to your mind!

3. **Connect to Community:** Great ways to build a strong community and personal satisfaction are to connect with family and friends; participate in local groups and events; volunteer time and talent; and identify resources available when in need.

4. **Disconnect from Screen Time:** While social media can have a positive impact on the ability to stay in touch with others, there are some drawbacks that affect our health. Scientists have found that our brains process 74 gigabytes of information a day through various screen and media sources— that is the equivalent of watching 16 movies! With exposure to that much content—which often generates feelings of anxiety, anger, and sadness—it is essential to take intentional breaks and limit our time in front of screens.

5. **Pay It Forward:** Helping others gives us a feeling of reward and purpose—a true mental health boost! To feel more comfortable and confident providing support and reassurance to someone in their time of need, visit DLCenters.org/Events to review the schedule of trainings and webinars available. Knowledge is power and the more we learn as a community about mental wellness, the better equipped we will be to help ourselves and others.

As springtime continues, don’t let flowers be the only thing in bloom! Prioritizing mental wellness now will have beneficial changes that carry throughout the rest of the year. As always, DLC is here to help with any challenges that need an extra hand. Our 24/7 emergency services are available at DLC’s main campus in Naples, at 6075 Bathey Lane.

**Scan the QR code to discover the “8 Dimensions of Wellness”**
Success Story:
COLIN

Colin’s problems started with bullying in middle school. A family move and isolation during the pandemic intensified his depression. And when his mother was diagnosed with cancer, life became too much for him to handle.

“I felt a lot of emotions I had never felt,” said Colin, who is now a freshman at a Naples high school. “It was really difficult for me to understand what was going on.”

One year into the pandemic, Colin’s younger brother found him trying to hang himself and stopped the suicide attempt. Alarmingly, neither one told their parents. Days later, Colin completed a school assignment indicating that he wanted to die, and he was admitted to Collier County’s only children’s crisis unit at David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC).

Colin’s challenges and symptoms were intense. He returned four more times for inpatient care because of his suicidal thoughts.

The turning point for Colin—and his family—was the care they received through DLC’s family-centered intensive mentoring and treatment program, Community Action Team (CAT). After a year in the CAT program, Colin’s grades and communication improved, and he stabilized on his medications.

“There’s no way he would be here,” said his mother, Stephanie. “The care that Colin and I received at DLC truly saved his life. Now, he has a chance at a future filled with health, hope, and possibilities.

Emily Korolevich
Clinical Coordinator of Immokalee Outpatient Therapy

How long have you been at David Lawrence Centers (DLC), and how did you find your way to your current role?
I’ve been here for over four years. After graduate school, I began my role with DLC as an Outpatient Clinician at the Immokalee satellite office and worked toward licensure to obtain my LMFT. Now, I am Clinical Coordinator of Immokalee Outpatient Therapy services.

Could you share a few details about your favorite part of your position and the team at DLC?
One of the best parts of my position is working with clients and getting to witness their progress toward goals and their personal growth first-hand. I work at the Immokalee office, which is small and tight-knit. We collaborate to help the clients we serve—including support staff, community-based therapists, case managers, and outpatient and medical services.

What makes DLC a great place to work? Why would you recommend others to work here?
DLC provides the opportunity for training and further learning, which has helped me gain additional skills to care for my clients, such as Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure for the treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. There are also opportunities to attend webinars and trainings.
Make a Difference by Learning the Signs: Become Mental Health First Aid Certified

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-based, instructor-led training that teaches how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and/or substance use concerns—and provides the skills needed to reach out and support someone who is struggling.

DLC offers two MHFA modules to choose from: an Adult MHFA Training, which addresses behavioral health concerns in individuals ages 18 and over, and a Youth MHFA Training, which addresses behavioral health concerns in adolescents ages 12 to 18.

Get Involved with the DLC Advocates!

DLC has a great opportunity for anyone (ages 18+) who is passionate about helping to address and solve our community’s mental health and addiction crisis.

The DLC Advocates is a group of individuals who raise awareness and support for DLC’s mission through their involvement, in partnership with DLC.

In addition to philanthropic fulfillment, DLC Advocates members enjoy networking with like-minded professionals and taking on leadership opportunities.

The DLC Advocates partner with DLC for social events each year and also participate in DLC’s larger, annual events, including the signature event, Sound Minds®.

All proceeds from DLC Advocates events benefit the mission, operations, and expansion of DLC’s inpatient, outpatient, and community-based prevention and treatment services. For more information, visit DLCAdvocates.org or send an email to DonorCare@DLCenters.org.

Next DLC Advocates Event:

Join the DLC Advocates for the 11th Annual Sunset Cruise for Mental Health and Help Support DLC’s Life-Saving Life-Changing Mission

June 13 at 6 p.m.
Naples Princess
550 Port O Call Way | Naples, FL 34102

For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, visit DLCenters.org/Events

For more information or to register for an upcoming training, visit DLCenters.org/Events or send an email to DLCEducates@DLCenters.org.
Thank You for Attending

With your support, we raised over $1.5 million!

Join Us for

SOUND MINDS®
2025

Sound Minds® 2025 featured guest:
Dennis Quaid

THURSDAY
MARCH 20, 2025

Building upon the momentum of a successful 2024 Sound Minds® event that raised critical funds to provide access to care for individuals in Collier County, DLC is pleased to announce that Emmy Award-Winning Actor and two-time Golden Globe nominee Dennis Quaid will take the Sound Minds® stage for our event next season. Tickets and sponsorships will be available in August.

For more details visit DLCSoundMinds.org
“People Who Give You Hope”

(continued from page 3)

“It’s the best choice I’ve ever made,” he said.

“I finally stopped listening to myself and started listening to other people who genuinely cared.” — Alex

Today, Alex is finishing a master’s program in counseling so he can help others experiencing similar challenges.

He said the combination of services he received at DLC made a big impact. “Being around people who give you hope, that’s big. They put me in a place where I was able to get my life back together to where I am now.”

Treating “invisible wounds”

Alex is just one of many who have been helped by DLC’s Veterans’ Services Program. During the last fiscal year, DLC provided 9,177 services to veterans.

The program serves individuals who are suffering from behavioral health issues, including PTSD, depression, anxiety, and co-occurring substance use challenges. It also builds meaningful partnerships with veterans and their families to help them function better at home, in the community, on the job, in educational settings, and throughout life.

Services include case management with a focus on peer-to-peer support, linkage to care, and help with transitional and long-term housing.

DLC also partners with WHC and Home Base Florida that specialize in housing and outreach.

According to Armando Hernandez, Senior Director at Home Base Florida, the organization aims to “heal the invisible wounds” experienced by veterans and their families.

“Invisible wounds’ is a term that we use to group together a number of things—post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, anxiety, depression, substance use, all the things that plague the veteran population,” said Hernandez. “We’re focused on delivering the best evidence-based care possible for veterans and their family members.”

Several DLC clinicians have also received extensive training in evidence-based treatment for PTSD from Home Base’s clinical experts from Massachusetts General Hospital, the nation’s leading psychiatry department.

“The clinical training we’ve provided DLC is some of the gold standards in trauma-based therapy as recommended by the VA (Veterans Affairs) and the DOD (Department of Defense),” said Hernandez. “It’s important that those who treat veterans have the training they need, so we work with DLC to make sure they understand the demographic that they’re serving, and the unique challenges that they face.”

Learn More about Our Veterans’ Services Program at DLCenters.org

You can also support these vital services by making a gift at DLCenters.org/donate-now

www.DLCenters.org | SPRING 2024