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**STATE AGENCY RECEIVES MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE
EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT**

The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services has received a two-year, \$200,000 federal grant to develop a mental health and substance abuse emergency response system that will aid in the event of future manmade or natural disasters.

“With increased emphasis on potential acts of terrorism within the United States, as well as natural disasters such as tornadoes or flooding, the federal government is encouraging states to be better prepared in the event of an emergency,” said Tom Thomson, ODMHSAS project manager. “This grant will help us lay out a well-designed plan to provide emergency aid to Oklahomans needing mental health or substance abuse treatment services after a disaster, two areas that often tend to spike after such incidents.”

The funding, provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), will be integrated into other emergency programs to develop an “all-hazards” plan, said Thomson. The state agency plans several regional workshops and trainings to educate community organizations about collaboration with other agencies, including law enforcement and medical personnel, during times of crisis.

“Disasters and other emergencies can leave deep scars and psychological trauma

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long after physical damage to buildings and other facilities have been repaired,” said U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson. “Should an emergency strike, these grants will help assure that resources for counseling, support and recovery are in place.”

Oklahoma was one of 35 states to receive the grant.

For more information, contact Thomson at (405) 522-8300.

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