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Meridian taps Allina Executive James Smith to Lead Behavioral Health Expansion

Smith named chief operating officer of Minnesota's largest for-profit mental health and chemical dependency company as it expands services and locations throughout Minnesota and surrounding region

ST. PAUL, Minn., (February 10, 2014) — Meridian Behavioral Health today announced James Smith as its new chief operating officer. Smith was formerly the head of Allina Health's inpatient and residential mental health and chemical dependency services for many of its hospitals, as well as holding system-wide operational responsibility for emergency room crisis assessments, telehealth, and the entire clinic service line.



"Jim comes to Meridian with an impressive track record of guiding strategic growth in behavioral health programs," said Fran Sauvageau, president/CEO of Meridian. "He's the right person coming at the perfect time for Meridian and its stakeholders."

Meridian is the largest for-profit behavioral healthcare company in Minnesota, offering a range of substance abuse and addiction treatment services, including medication-assisted treatment. At a time when the region suffers from a shortage of behavioral health services, Meridian continues to add facilities and programs. In January, Meridian acquired Douglas Place in East Grand Forks, Minn., an 85-bed residential addiction facility for adults, young adults and Native American's. In March, Meridian will open a 23-bed men's residential treatment program in Mahtomedi, Minn.; and break ground on a new, state-of-the-art 48-bed residential program in St. Francis, Minn.

Smith comes to Meridian with an extensive career pedigree in operations, human resources, and business development. Over the past eight years at Allina Health, he provided operational leadership of nearly 300 inpatient beds across 11 hospitals, 33 integrated primary care clinics, three hospital-based clinics, and emergency room department assessment and referral staff. Smith created the system's Patient Advisory Council to empower patients, as well as leading formal and informal structures for cross-functional collaboration and initiatives around patient care, population health, patient affordability, and organizational vitality. Prior to Allina, he served in a variety of senior roles at Right Management, Target Corporation, Jostens, and Carlson Companies.

"I'm thrilled to be joining Meridian during this exciting time of growth," says James Smith. "It will be my mission to support Meridian's continued efforts of delivering consistent and great care across its continuum of addiction treatment services. And I look forward to further establishing Meridian as an addiction treatment leader."

About Meridian Behavioral Health

Based on evidence-based practices and a patient-focused approach to care, Meridian Behavioral Health is a leading provider of substance abuse treatment services in Minnesota. With 17 facilities representing both residential and outpatient settings, Meridian offers a range of alcohol and drug treatments (including medication-assisted treatment) — with specialized programs for adult men and women, young adults (16-20), LGBT and Native American's. All of its residential programs and many of its outpatient programs are MI/CD licensed to treat clients with both chemical dependency and mental health (dual) diagnoses. Visit www.meridianprograms.com or call 1.877.367.1715.

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