



CONTACT:
Mary Whittier
Executive Director
Bivona Child Advocacy Center
Phone: 585-935-7808
mwhittier@bivonacac.org

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MEDIA CONTACT:
Heather Johnson
Eric Mower and Associates
Phone: 585-389-1839
hjohnson@eric.mower.com

BIVONA CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER ACCREDITED BY NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Less than two years after opening its doors, the Bivona Child Advocacy Center (BCAC) has earned accreditation from the National Children's Alliance (NCA).

By becoming accredited, the BCAC gains access to funding streams restricted to accredited agencies as well as the right to use the NCA name and logo and network with other professionals in the field of child abuse treatment and prevention.

"We are honored to be recognized by the National Children's Alliance," said Mary Whittier, executive director at the BCAC. "The accreditation is really a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our team, as well as the support we receive from the Rochester community."

Of the more than 600 child advocacy centers nationwide, the NCA has accredited only about 375, 14 of which are in New York. The BCAC, which opened its doors on August 1, 2004, is one of the youngest centers ever to be awarded the accreditation.

To become accredited, the BCAC underwent a months-long application and review process that included site visits and interviews with key personnel to ensure that the center complies with NCA standards. The program components necessary to receive NCA accreditation are:

- A child-appropriate and child-friendly facility: A children's advocacy center must provide a comfortable, private setting that is both physically and psychologically safe for clients.
- Multidisciplinary team: A multidisciplinary team for response to child abuse allegations includes representation from law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, mental health, medical professionals, victim advocacy and children's advocacy center.
- Organizational capacity: A designated legal entity responsible for program and fiscal operations must be established.
- Cultural competency and diversity: The child advocacy center must promote policies, practices and procedures that are culturally competent.
- Forensic interviews: Forensic interviews must be conducted in a manner which is of a neutral, fact-finding nature, and coordinated to avoid duplicative interviewing.

- Medical evaluation and therapeutic intervention: Specialized medical and mental health evaluation and treatment must be available to clients, either at the child advocacy center or through coordination and referral with other specialized providers.
- Victim support/advocacy: Victim support and advocacy must be made available throughout the investigation and subsequent legal proceedings.
- Case review: Team discussion and information sharing regarding the investigation, case status and services needed by the child and family need to occur on a regular basis.
- Case tracking: Child advocacy centers must develop and implement a system for monitoring case progress and tracking case outcomes for team components.

“Accreditation by the NCA ensures that we are offering the best services possible for the abused children in our area,” said Monroe County District Attorney Mike Green. “In less than two years, we have helped more than 1,300 abused children and families. We’re proud that the BCAC accomplished accreditation at such an early stage in its existence. It speaks to the quality of the center we have established here in Monroe County.”

The BCAC is the only center in New York that was specifically built and constructed for the purpose of holding a child advocacy center, allowing for optimum use of space and funds.

About Bivona Child Advocacy Center

The Bivona Child Advocacy Center (BCAC) is a non-profit organization that provides abused children with the opportunity to meet with representatives from Child Protective Services, law enforcement, the district attorney’s office, victim advocates and medical providers from Golisano Children’s Hospital at Strong in one place at one time. The Bivona Child Advocacy Center has quickly become a resource to the community for all issues related to child sexual abuse. For more information, please visit www.bivonacac.org.

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