

Family Counseling Service Announces Planned Leadership Transition

Dr. Eric Ward to Step Down as Executive Director After 16 Years; Jason Andrade Named Successor

AURORA, IL, UNITED STATES, August 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Family Counseling Service (FCS), a nonprofit behavioral health provider that has served the Aurora and surrounding communities for more than 100 years, today announced a planned leadership transition. Dr. Eric Ward will step down as Executive Director effective

September 30, 2026, after 16 years in the role. The FCS Board of Directors voted unanimously to name Jason Andrade, MS, LCPC, currently Vice President of Organizational Development, as the organization's next Executive Director.

The transition marks the culmination of a succession plan years in the making. Ward and Andrade have known each other for 25 years, dating back to when the two worked together early in their careers doing crisis intervention work in the community. Andrade was born and raised in Aurora, while Ward moved to the city at age 19 and took his first job there at FCS, launching what would become a nearly four-decade career in the community. For the past several years, Andrade has worked closely alongside Ward to prepare for this moment, a deliberate and collaborative process the organization says reflects its long-standing commitment to leadership continuity.

"We've hoped FCS's Board of Directors would select Jason as the next Executive Director. He and I have worked closely together for the past couple of years to make sure he was ready to assume the role if selected," said Ward.

Ward's tenure at FCS spans nearly his entire career in nonprofit community mental health, a field he has worked in for almost 35 years. He began at FCS as a receptionist at age 19 and went on to serve in roles including master's-level intern, part-time group facilitator, and Clinical Director before being named Executive Director 16 years ago. Under his leadership, FCS grew from



Family Counseling Service Aurora Office

serving just over 600 clients a year in its Behavioral Health programs to nearly 7,000 last year.

"I've always believed every Executive Director has a shelf life," said Ward. "This organization has grown and changed so much, and I believe it's reached a point where it needs someone with a different skill set than the one I bring. I'm proud of what we've built together, and I'm looking forward to pursuing some other career ambitions, knowing FCS is in good hands."

Andrade brings more than 27 years of experience in community-based mental health to the role, much of it in administrative leadership across a variety of settings. Deeply tied to the community he grew up in, he has spent the past several years partnering directly with Ward to learn the responsibilities and vision that will guide his tenure as Executive Director.

"Eric and I have been on this path together for a long time, and I don't take lightly what he has built here," said Andrade. "I grew up in this community, and I've spent my career working to make sure families in our local communities have access to the care they need. I'm honored by the Board's confidence, and I'm ready to build on the foundation Eric leaves behind."

"This thoughtful, planned leadership transition speaks to the strength of this organization and the people leading it," said Luanne Irvin, President of the FCS Board of Directors. "Eric has spent nearly two decades building FCS into what it is today, and we are deeply grateful for his leadership. Having also worked closely with Jason for years, I can say the Board could not be more confident in him. His experience, his steady presence, and his deep roots in this community make him the right person to lead FCS into its next chapter, and we are excited to see where his leadership takes this organization."

FCS leadership expressed gratitude for the trust the community has placed in the organization throughout the transition planning process and looks forward to continuing to serve Aurora and the surrounding communities under Andrade's leadership.

About Family Counseling Service:

Family Counseling Service (FCS) is a nonprofit behavioral health provider, and has been a cornerstone of the Aurora and surrounding communities since 1925. Their mission is to help individuals and families navigate behavioral health challenges and develop the ability to thrive. For more information, visit aurorafcs.org.

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