

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 17, 2022

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, providing an informational update on the Mental Health Emergency Center

File Type: Informational Report

BACKGROUND

In December 2020, the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services signed a letter of intent with four area health systems to create a new psychiatric emergency room that will quickly assess and treat individuals in psychiatric distress. This new facility will reduce criminal justice system involvement for mentally ill, provide meaningful connections to community mental health services, and reduce potentially unnecessary psychiatric hospitalizations.

The facility will serve all residents regardless of ability to pay. And revenues are not anticipated to fully cover costs of providing care. The private healthcare partners have agreed to subsidize 50 percent of the operational deficit with the remaining subsidy coming from Milwaukee County. This project represents an innovative public-private partnership aimed at providing high quality emergency mental health services in a location that is convenient and accessible.

UPDATE

The Mental Health Emergency Center (MHEC) opened on September 6, 2022 and operated concurrently with the Behavioral Health Services Psychiatric Crisis Services (PCS) until September 9, 2022. On September 9, PCS closed and the MHEC took over the role of psychiatric receiving facility for people under Emergency Detention in law enforcement custody and for people in a mental health crisis seeking emergency care. Over the first six weeks of operation, the MHEC has experienced a very similar pattern of client visits as PCS has over several years. With substantial support from the Behavioral Health Services legal team and BHS Treatment Director, they have successfully satisfied their role as the County receiving facility required under Chapter 51 and have served

many Milwaukee County residents seeking care in a crisis. An agreement is in place that requires MHEC to always have a County-approved Treatment Director Designee on duty, and BHS has managed training and approvals for 25 physicians that act in this legally required role. All parties have approached this new service from the perspective of continuous quality improvement, including the incorporation of significant feedback from a number of community advocates, people with lived experience, and other stakeholders.

FISCAL EFFECT

No anticipated variances from existing project budget. This item is informational only.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director
Michael Lappen, Administrator, Behavioral Health Services
Kevin Kluesner, Mental Health Emergency Center Administrator, Kevin.Kluesner@aah.org

PREPARED BY:

Michael Lappen, Administrator, Behavioral Health Services

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director

ATTACHMENTS:

None

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Liz Sumner, Chair, Finance Committee
Sup. Shawn Rolland, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, and Strategic Planning
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Senior Budget and Management Analyst, DAS