

MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY CENTER

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

CY 2025

National Model for Emergency Mental Health Care

The Mental Health Emergency Center (MHEC) offers 24/7/365 emergency mental health assessment, stabilization, treatment, and transition care for children, adolescents, and adults. The goal is for all patients to receive timely emergency treatment and transfer to the next best level of care.

MHEC is one component of the improved and evolving mental health crisis delivery system. MHEC services coordinate with mental health inpatient, residential treatment, outpatient providers, law enforcement, the juvenile justice system, community-based providers, and more.

It also integrates other Milwaukee County Behavioral Health crisis services including mobile crisis, crisis transportation, access clinics, and care management programs.

Public-Private Joint Venture

MHEC, a joint venture between Milwaukee County and the area's four health systems - Ascension Wisconsin, Aurora Health Care, Children's Wisconsin, and Froedtert ThedaCare - has been in operation since September 2022. Aurora Health Care serves as the manager of MHEC and is responsible for the employment of physicians and staff, as well as day-to-day operations, under the direction of the joint venture's Board of Directors.

2025 SNAPSHOT

7,975

Patient visits:
4,192 voluntary
3,783 involuntary**

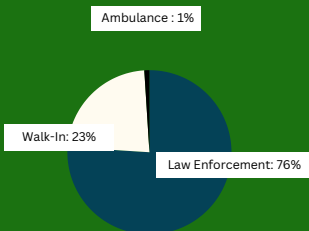
4,547

Patients served

Average Length of Stay:

Adults: 7.4 Hours
Adolescents: 10.5 Hours

Mode of Arrival:



Discharge Locations:

Community-Based Care or Home: 64%

Psychiatric Hospital: 24%

Medical Hospital: 5%

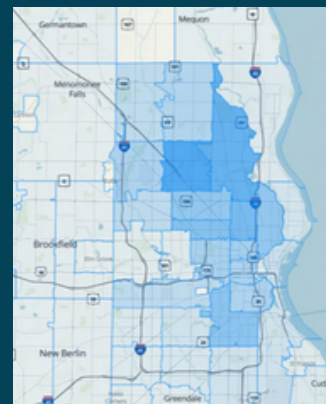
Other: 7%

Patients Served

The center is located at 1525 N. 12th Street in the City of Milwaukee and serves patients residing in Milwaukee County and surrounding communities.

The location is served by public transportation and adjacent to the freeway, ensuring ready access for those in need of care.

Visits by Zip Code



**Involuntary: Patients under emergency detention who may be at risk to themselves

FOCUS

OUTCOMES

Clinical Excellence

- All patients are seen by a psychiatrist within 30-60 minutes of arrival.
- The majority of patients are discharged to their next stage of care within 12 hours or less
- Received 3-year DNV Psychiatric Hospital accreditation in 2023 and completed successful annual DNV surveys in 2024 and 2025
- Non-psychiatrist clinic team members are trained in evidence-based de-escalation intervention techniques

Transition Care Management

- Social work services are provided by a Behavioral Health Care Coordination team, led by a full-time licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), to assist with discharge planning, including connection to social support services.
- Discharge planning is conducted in a timely manner, including facilitation to inpatient or community-based care, with transportation provided by Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) transportation services and post-discharge follow-up through BHS care management organizations.
- A patient support closet is available to meet the immediate non-care needs of patients who present to MHEC. The closet is stocked with clothing, shoes, toiletries, bus vouchers, and more.

Medical Education

- Host a required 3rd-year Psychiatry residency rotation for the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)
- Host MCW medical students completing their Psychiatry clerkship rotations
- Created the Chief Resident in Emergency Psychiatry role to bolster educational experience for learners
- Offered shadowing and clinical rotations for other educational specialties (e.g., Emergency Medicine physicians, pharmacists, and APPs)

Mental Health Workforce

- All staff positions are filled with limited staff turnover
- At least 60% of hires filled by people of color, representative of the racial and ethnic backgrounds of patients served at MHEC
- BHS continues to offer psychiatric training modules, allowing MHEC physicians to function as County Treatment Director Designees

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- Participated in multiple community information sessions, panels, and town halls to build an understanding of MHEC's services and solicit input for improvement.
- Participated in multiple cross-specialty committees to more effectively liaise with community partners and stakeholders, including law enforcement, legal system representatives, Milwaukee County EMS, area hospital Emergency Departments, and psychiatric inpatient units.

FUNDERS

PRIMARY FUNDERS:

- Ascension Wisconsin
- Aurora Health Care
- Children's Wisconsin
- Froedtert ThedaCare
- Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services

PUBLIC & PRIVATE FUNDERS:

- Community Project Funding/Congressional Direct Spending grant award through the Health Resources and Services Administration, facilitated by Senator Baldwin
- State of WI ARPA funding facilitated by Governor Evers
- Rogers Behavioral Health
- Zilber Family Foundation
- Milwaukee Mental Health Consultants/Irving H. Raffe Fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation

PATIENT EXPERIENCE

"I really appreciate how the nurse and doctors treated me with respect like a human being. I'm so thankful that you have treated me so nicely."

"You guys did a wonderful job with my daughter. I would recommend that place to anyone I know who is going through something in their life...And I'm proud of you guys. Keep up the good work of saving people in their depressed stage, or in a down and out stage, and making them feel important and happy. "