

BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS WALK-IN CENTER TO OPEN IN MONTROSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Montrose, CO -- March 29, 2019 – This spring, The Center for Mental Health (The Center or CMH) will open a state-of-the-art Crisis Walk-In Center in Montrose that will provide essential crisis behavioral health services to the six counties of Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel. Currently, those services are not available or are available on a limited scale. The Center for Mental Health will work closely with these communities to ensure that their population has access to urgent behavioral healthcare they may need in the most appropriate and effective of settings. All services will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with walk-in availability. On Friday, March 29, a community open-house was held to give the community, first responders, providers and supporters an opportunity to tour the facility prior to opening.

Last year, The Center for Mental Health responded to nearly 3,500 crisis behavioral situations across the region, largely through its mobile crisis support services. These may include everything from a community member experiencing a severe depressive episode to an overdose to a suicide attempt. “Although our mobile services may have been effective in the treatment of those in need of mental health triage, a mobile service certainly cannot meet the current demand effectively,” said Shelly J. Spalding, Chief Executive Officer for The Center for Mental Health. “The Western Slope community is in dire need of a resource where those with behavioral health episodes can get the care they need, close to home.”

Approximately 10,000 square miles, the six-county region has limited access to urgent behavioral health services. Patients in need of mental health and substance-abuse emergency services, oftentimes travel hundreds of miles to Grand Junction, Durango, or Denver to access care. “In many cases, patients from our area travel four to six hours to a larger city to get the urgent care they need,” said Amanda Jones, Chief Clinical Officer. “That’s simply not acceptable and our citizens deserve better.” In addition to putting lives at risk, this distance makes it nearly impossible for families to visit and support their loved ones during recovery. A local facility will positively impact the lives of people seeking behavioral health services in the community and ensure people can access the critical support they need close to home.

The new Crisis Walk-In Center will provide both mental health and substance abuse services. An on-site, no-appointment-needed Walk-In Clinic will offer rapid response care and then provide patients outpatient services once the crisis is stabilized. “We expect to manage 96 percent of all regional behavioral health episodes in Montrose at the Crisis Walk-in Center,” added Spalding. “For anyone who must leave this region for inpatient care, the care we offer in Montrose will serve as pivotal step down from the hospitalization to living and recovering at home with familial and friend support.



The integrated planning team has worked diligently to ensure that the community will have access to this care when needed. “Our goal is to treat anyone who needs care regardless of their ability to pay,” said Kjersten Davis, Chairman of the Board for CMH. “When a person is faced with a behavioral health crisis, that isn’t the time to turn them away because they may not be able to pay. We are working closely with our third-party payers to make sure most insurance providers will support their care.”

Serving all ages, the new Crisis Walk-In Center will treat children and adolescents as well; currently, these services are nonexistent on the Western Slope. “The adolescent population who needs bed-based mental health or substance abuse care are typically sent to the Front Range. As you can well imagine, this creates a significant burden for parents, friends and extended family members to offer support, resulting in extra stress and trauma for everyone,” adds Jones who brings extensive knowledge of mental health care for the adolescent population.

Substance Abuse Withdrawal Management will be another key service provided. Currently, there are very limited bed-based detox services on the Western Slope. Individuals in need of detox services may access the Walk-In Clinic for an assessment. If the on-site medical providers determine that hospitalization isn’t warranted, outpatient detox therapies will be administered where family members and friends are a welcome part of the treatment process.

In addition to serving the overall community, the burden on law enforcement will be significantly reduced. The Crisis Walk-In Center will help reduce the guess work for first responders who are managing people experiencing behavioral health episodes so they can better determine where the patient should be transported. Currently, when first responders come across an individual exhibiting unusual behavior, one of the options is jail, which is not the calmest location when someone is in their most fragile and vulnerable condition. “The staff at The Center has taken great strides in bridging the gap in immediate care and response for our citizens,” said detective Phil Rosty of the Montrose Police Department. “We are currently partnering police officers across the region with mental health professionals to ensure we provide the best service to those in need. As first responders, this resource provides a specialized and valuable resource for our responding officers to utilize while helping those in crisis.”

The Crisis Walk-In Center will employ nearly 30 people; it will have 11 – 15 inpatient and observation beds and can treat approximately 16 people at any given time. “After extensive due diligence, we discovered a need for a facility of this kind was dire,” said Kjersten Davis. “After we raised more than \$3 million through public and private funding, we were able to create a place where our citizens can access quality mental health services available for people of all ages and walks of life, void of barriers, physical, cultural, or financial.”

The Center for Mental Health is a nonprofit organization seeking to promote mental health and well-being. It provides behavioral health services through sixteen facilities across 10,000 square miles including Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel Counties. Visit www.centermh.org to learn more.

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