

Expanding capacity and improving access to treatment in state-operated psychiatric facilities for adults and children

Improving access to DHS-operated psychiatric facilities will mean that dozens more adults and children can be admitted and treated each year.

Challenge

Demand for admission to DHS-operated mental health facilities for adults, children and adolescents has risen dramatically. However, there is not enough capacity to meet the growing needs.

Building capacity systemwide will require significant investment over a period of years. But in the meantime, immediate steps to increase funding and reallocate existing resources will add treatment capacity where it's needed most and improve admissions at DHS-operated psychiatric hospitals over the next six to 12 months.

Proposal

The proposal from Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan adds 16 more beds at the Forensic Mental Health Program in St. Peter. These additional beds will take pressure off the Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center and allow for dozens more admissions at that facility each year.

The plan requires closing an existing substance-use disorder program in St. Peter and reallocating the facility, staff and funding for psychiatric beds. To help offset increased costs, a second substance use disorder program in Carlton will be closed. The proposal also provides increased funding to operate the Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Hospital, or CABHH, in Willmar at its full 16-bed capacity. Currently, the CABHH is funded to operate eight beds.

Why It's Important

Heavy demand for admissions and limited treatment capacity have resulted in substantial waiting lists at the Forensic Mental Health Program in St. Peter, Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center in Anoka and the Children and Adolescent Behavioral Health Hospital in Willmar.

Addressing urgent needs for psychiatric treatment beds

To improve access to timely treatment, DHS needs more beds at the Forensic Mental Health Program in St. Peter. Discontinuing an existing substance use disorder program in St. Peter and reallocating its 16-bed facility, staff and funding is the quickest way to meet the urgent need for more psychiatric treatment beds.

The Forensic Mental Health Program (formerly known as the Minnesota Security Hospital) primarily treats people who have been civilly committed as mentally ill and dangerous. Because patients spend an average of five years there, beds do not turn over quickly. Currently, the Forensic Mental Health Program is full and many new patients who should be treated there end up at Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center, or AMRTC. This ties up AMRTC's beds for extended periods, greatly reduces the number of patients the facility can admit and treat, and adds to an already substantial waiting list.

Improving patient flow

The proposal will allow long-term patients to be transferred to the St. Peter facility, which will free up beds and improve patient flow at AMRTC. Because patients at AMRTC typically can be stabilized and safely discharged in a few weeks or months, the move is expected to allow AMRTC to admit and treat several dozen more patients each year.

Serving more children and teens

In addition, at a time of starkly increased need for inpatient treatment services for children and teens, increasing funding to allow the CABHH in Willmar to operate at its full 16-bed capacity means many more children and teens will get the care they need.

The changes are in line with a task force's recent recommendation to immediately increase mental health treatment capacity at DHS-operated facilities.

The proposal also creates a Mentally Ill and Dangerous Commitment Reform Task Force and establishes a consultation service within DHS's Direct Care and Treatment Administration to advise and provide technical assistance and medication-specific recommendations to county correctional facilities.

For More Information

Governor's budget page: [Expanding Access to DCT Care \(PDF\)](#)
Minnesota Department of Human Services: [Direct Care and Treatment](#)