



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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### **Hospitals and Mental Health Center Seek to Improve Crisis Response**

**Manchester, NH-** The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester, Catholic Medical Center and the Elliot Health System announce a newly developed Shared Emergency Response System that will provide 24/7 psychiatric crisis response services. The new system, which is now in place, is the result of a unified approach that is more efficient and cost-effective because it shares staffing resources and provides standardized services across the system of care. Patients will benefit from a more comprehensive service that emphasizes emergency intervention, assessment and referral to appropriate follow-up care, which all lead to the best possible patient outcomes.

The service will provide patients with timely access to care and decreased wait times in the emergency departments. Increased patient volume and lengthy wait times in emergency department is a significant concern and this model of service will help people get care more quickly and completely. According to Anna Pousland, Vice President of Behavioral Health Integration at The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester, "Given the decrease in resources and growth in demand for emergency care, we are committed to working together creatively to meet the needs of patients and their families in an increasingly challenging healthcare environment, particularly as it pertains to mental health."

The Shared Emergency Response System is staffed by psychiatrists, emergency service clinicians and psychiatric nurse practitioners. The psychiatrists have admitting privileges at all three facilities, a significant distinction that did not exist previously. The system provides 24/7 crisis intervention and assessment at the Emergency Department (ED) of each hospital as well as at The Mental Health Center. Follow-up outpatient stabilization services are provided by the same team of psychiatrists and mental health clinicians that provide coverage in the EDs, which facilitates engaging the patient in treatment and providing consistency in care. As part of this follow-up, psychiatric nurse practitioners provide medication evaluation and management, which can be an important component that fills the gap between a patient's ED visit and their ongoing treatment appointment. In addition, crisis stabilization plans utilize Motivation Enhancement Services, a specific set of treatment approaches that are designed to engage and motivate patients in order to increase the likelihood they will follow through with recommended treatment plans.

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## Crisis Response / Add 1

“This new approach really came out of agreement among all three organizations that, by working together, we could develop a fully integrated model that was more efficient and would provide enhanced patient care,” notes Bob Duhaime, Vice President of Operations/Chief Nursing Executive at Catholic Medical Center. Over the last several months, representatives of the three organizations have collaborated to develop an innovative model that shares staffing and allows for the fine-tuning of coverage during peak hours. The new model also provides a standardized set of services system-wide as well as more comprehensive and consistent follow-up.

“The new Shared Emergency Response model provides better care for patients who present to emergency departments throughout the city. Patients, the community as a whole, and the partner organizations will all benefit from a coordinated system that meets the needs of the community we jointly serve, notes Kevin Donovan, Senior Vice President of Clinical Operations at Elliot Health System.

To facilitate success, an Advisory Board comprised of leadership from all three organizations will meet regularly to monitor performance and make recommendations regarding improving efficiency and quality. The Advisory Board will also consider ways to broaden engagement with the community at large including: healthcare providers; police; other first responders; schools; and other who are impacted by the needs of those facing behavioral health issues.

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