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OhioMHAS Unveils New Behavioral Health Connection Resource

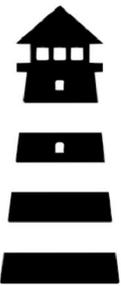
Online Psychiatric Bed Registry to Help Link Patients with Serious Mental Illness to Inpatient Care

(COLUMBUS, OH) – The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) unveiled a new tool today that will improve access to inpatient psychiatric care for residents in Northeast Ohio with serious mental illness. The Behavioral Health Connection, or B-CON, is an online psychiatric bed registry intended to facilitate timely admission to an inpatient psychiatric unit. This tool is part of a larger effort in Ohio to meet people with serious mental illness where they are and to ensure they receive the care they need in the most appropriate setting.

“All too often individuals experiencing a psychiatric crisis have long delays in obtaining appropriate services. These delays result in serious consequences, including long waits at home, in emergency departments, or in jails until necessary services become available. Reducing these delays is a top priority for the Department,” said OhioMHAS Medical Director Justin Trevino, M.D. “We believe this registry will improve patient care, ease overcrowding in emergency rooms, and expedite the process of connecting patients with psychiatric hospitals and hospital psychiatric units.”

Limited inpatient beds and lack of knowledge of bed availability present major barriers to adequate care for people with serious mental illness. Ohio is one of 23 states awarded \$150,000 in one-time funding from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish and/or expand comprehensive, psychiatric crisis bed registry programs.

B-CON is built on the OpenBeds® platform, which provides a real-time view of available psychiatric beds. The online portal will be used by emergency departments, psychiatrists and other physicians, and clinicians to quickly find available beds so individuals in psychiatric crisis can rapidly access inpatient treatment.



B-CON
Ohio Behavioral
Health Connection

“During my time as a practicing emergency medicine physician I witnessed patients waiting hours, or even days, to access inpatient mental healthcare services, which is happening across the nation and simply unacceptable,” said Nishi Rawat, MD, senior vice president of Appriss Health and co-founder of OpenBeds. “We are thrilled that this new program will help Ohioans access mental healthcare resources faster, when they need it most.”

Participating hospitals include: Akron Children’s Hospital, Ashtabula County Medical Center, Assurance Health (Hudson), ClearVista Health and Wellness (Lorain), Generations Behavioral Health (Geneva), Highland Springs, MetroHealth System, Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare (Northfield), Southwest General Hospital-Oakview Behavioral Health (Middleburgh Heights), and St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. Community partners include National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Ohio, Lorain Mental Health and Drug Court, and Portage Mental and Drug Court. Additional partners are expected to join the project.

“Behavioral health care systems across the country have suffered for too long from being isolated and siloed, creating barriers to navigation and continuity. This is a first, huge step in eliminating those barriers,” said Patrick Runnels, M.D., a board-certified psychiatrist with University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center. “Ohio has been a national leader in healthcare innovation and system-wide partnership. We’re thrilled to be at the forefront of this effort in the state and across the nation.”

Staff at each hospital will regularly update psychiatric bed availability as patients are discharged and beds become available. Although the project initially focuses on enhancing access to inpatient psychiatric care, the Department expects enhanced access to outpatient services, support services, and care for substance use disorders as the system expands in Northeast Ohio and to other regions of the state.

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