



**T**he **Mental Health Emergency Center** is a joint venture between Milwaukee County and the area's four health systems: Aurora Health Care, Ascension Wisconsin, Children's Wisconsin and Froedtert Health. Just one component in the broader array of mental health services in Milwaukee County, **the center serves as a national model for emergency crisis care that is patient-centered, recovery-oriented, and culturally informed.**

## Scope of Services

- The emergency center offers **24/7/365 crisis mental health assessment, stabilization, treatment and transition care management for children, adolescents and adults.** There is a separate treatment area for child and adolescent patients, as well as a separate entrance for those arriving via law enforcement.
- The center provides a **therapeutic environment for both voluntary and involuntary patients** and facilitates a timely transfer for those under law enforcement custody to the care of highly trained, compassionate mental health professionals.
- The **goal for all patients is to receive timely emergency treatment and transfer to the next level of care.** The emergency center has six stabilization beds for adults for short-term stays if clinically needed. Children and adolescents needing observation or inpatient services are promptly transferred to a pediatric mental health facility.
- The center provides extensive **care management and navigation services** ensuring safe and timely connections to continuing care — be that extended inpatient, residential or outpatient mental services or medications, housing, food and other social supports.

## Community Need

**About 1 in 5 individuals experience mental illness in their lifetime,** and access to mental health resources has been identified as an important need in local community health assessments for many years.

Since 2010, significant input from consumers, community partners, advocates, and health care providers has helped shape the redesign of mental health services in Milwaukee County.

The Mental Health Emergency Center is a major milestone in our community's journey toward holistic, decriminalized, de-stigmatized and equitable mental health care.

## Community Access

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

This location is served by public transportation and is adjacent to the freeway, ensuring ready access for those in need of care, as well as for county-wide law enforcement personnel assisting with a crisis response.



## The Mental Health Emergency Center is currently on pace to serve over 7,000 patients per year.

## Joint Venture

The center is a **joint venture between Milwaukee County** and Milwaukee's four health systems: **Aurora Health Care, Ascension Wisconsin, Children's Wisconsin and Froedtert Health.**

**Construction and start-up costs for the new center were approximately \$18 million, with the County covering 50% of those costs and the health systems covering the other half.** The center is expected to deliver care with an **operating loss of \$12 million annually.** Operating shortfalls are similarly split 50/50 between the County and the health systems. Efforts are underway with the State of Wisconsin to enhance crisis reimbursement to ensure long-term viability and to secure philanthropic funding for uncovered services.

**Aurora Health Care serves as the manager of the center** and is responsible for the employment of the physicians and staff, as well as the day-to-day operations under the direction of the joint venture's Board of Directors. As the largest provider of behavioral and mental health services in the state, Aurora Health Care brings significant clinical and patient service expertise to the delivery of care.

## Local Impact

The emergency center serves as an 'anchor institution' in the surrounding neighborhood, providing **increased safety, revitalization and economic benefit.**

The center **employs about 70 full-time equivalent staff, with 60% of the hires filled by people of color, representative of the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the clients served at the emergency center.**

MHEC also serves as a training center for psychiatric medical residents, and offers professional educational opportunities for other mental health personnel.

During construction, dozens of jobs were created through the project's construction firms, CG Schmidt, and minority-owned JCP Construction.



1525 N 12th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53205

[MentalHealthMKE.org](http://MentalHealthMKE.org)