

Dept. of Health Services: Youth crisis stabilization facility opens in Milwaukee

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The first of three planned [youth crisis stabilization facilities](#) funded by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is now open in Milwaukee. Under a [grant from DHS](#), Milwaukee County is partnering with Wisconsin Community Services to operate a six-bed facility for boys ages 13 to 17 with mental health needs, who without immediate assistance may need to be admitted to a hospital.

“With our community partners, we are building a new option along the continuum of care to help ensure a more appropriate alternative and avoid unnecessary hospitalizations,” said DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm. “For too long, youth experiencing a non-life-threatening mental health crisis have been taken to hospitals. Youth crisis stabilization facilities provide a safe, home-like alternative for youth to receive the support they need to cope with, and recover from, tough times in healthy ways.”

Stays at the facility are short-term, with the expected length of stay to be five days or fewer, although some stays may be as long as 30 days. A team of professionals provides counseling and other treatment services during the youth’s stay, which is initiated by a referral from the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division. The treatment team also collaborates with the youth’s support system, including their family, school, and other service providers to ensure the youth’s mental health needs are met when they return home.

DHS also is funding the development and initial operations of two other youth crisis stabilization facilities. These will provide care for boys and girls ages 17 and under. Eight beds in Wausau operated by North Central Health Care and four beds in

Ashland operated by Ashland County are expected to open by the end of the year.

The opening of the Milwaukee facility is the culmination of more than three years of work to create this new facility type in Wisconsin, with DHS authorized to establish this service in the 2017-2019 state budget.