

Mission: Mental Health

East Metro Mental Health Roundtable

10-YEAR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Data-driven improvement

One of the Roundtable's first initiatives was to identify and track key mental health care metrics. This dataset was used to identify gaps in the system and track the community's progress.

Public-private partnership

The East Metro Mental Health Roundtable is a collaboration of over 25 community organizations in the east metro region and counties. Roundtable members share a common mission of improving how our community cares for people with mental illnesses.

This report highlights Roundtable initiatives aimed to improve care, educate the public, prevent mental health crises, and curb the mental health-related use of emergency room, hospital and legal resources. Through public-private partnership, the Roundtable has improved care, and reduced costs for treating mental illnesses.

Mission: Medication access

Lack of access to psychiatric medications is a leading cause of mental health crises that require hospital care. To provide medications in a timely manner, the Roundtable implemented the **Mental Health Drug Assistance Program** (MHDAP) in 2008.

How it works

The program covers co-pays, deductibles or the full cost of medications for up to three prescription fills in 90 days. If patients do not have health insurance, the program helps them get coverage so they can continue to get medications and care. Adults living in the east metro who receive care from designated clinics can participate. Patients can go to one of ten participating pharmacies to fill prescriptions. An automated billing system reimburses the pharmacy for the medication.

Helping 350 patients each year

Each year, MHDAP provides more than 1,000 prescriptions to about 350 people. In 2017, the MHDAP reduced the cost of prescriptions by 84 percent (from \$172 to \$28 per prescription) by filling prescriptions with medications on HealthPartners formulary. This collaborative effort has helped our patient population* to reduce:

- ▶ Psychiatric hospitalization – **down 37%**
- ▶ Jail visits – **down 16%**
- ▶ Homelessness – **down 30%**
- ▶ Thoughts of harming self – **down 21%**

*Compares patients' self-reported status from 60 days before beginning program to 60 days in the program

Mission: Crisis management

Mental health crisis situations are urgent but do not require a visit to the emergency room. However, many people in these kinds of situations go to the hospital anyway, due to a lack of options or a lack of awareness of those options. Addressing this problem, the **East Metro Crisis Alliance** was a key partner in designing and realizing several vital programs for people who are facing a mental health crisis.

From crisis to ongoing care

Historically, crisis services consisted of having a licensed clinical social worker evaluate a patient and make a referral. The East Metro Crisis Alliance improved this process by adding a new service called Mental Health Crisis Stabilization. In the stabilization system, peer specialists and healthcare navigators provide short-term treatment to help move a person from crisis to ongoing care. The team also includes a psychiatrist or advanced practice provider to diagnosis, start and manage psychiatric medications.

A Wilder Research [analysis](#) found that for every one dollar spent on crisis stabilization services, there is a savings of \$2 to \$3 in medical costs.

Urgent care for mental health

In 2011, the Alliance opened an Urgent Care for Adult Mental Health in St. Paul. It's the first of its kind in Minnesota and provides walk-in access to crisis services. Individuals can walk-in or call the 24/7 mental health crisis line. This urgent care provides services for **2,706** patient visits each year. **227** of those patients would have used emergency room resources otherwise.*



*Data from 2012-2016

Mission: Emergency room readiness

Some mental health situations do require a visit to the emergency room. But hospitals are not always equipped to handle every mental health patient and situation. The Roundtable has worked with several local hospitals at improving mental health emergency readiness.

More beds for mental health

Since 2007, the number of hospital mental health beds in the east metro has increased by nearly 20 percent.

	ST. JOSEPH'S	UNITED	REGIONS	TOTAL
2007	40	59	80	179
2016	46	74	100	220

Source: Minnesota Hospital Association

Specialized emergency room care

REGIONS HOSPITAL

8,700 patients experiencing a mental health crisis come to Regions Hospital's Emergency Center each year. In 2011, a special emergency area of 11 beds was created to care for them.

ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL

In 2015, St. Joseph's created a four bed behavioral health emergency care center. This increased their annual crisis care capacity by over 2,000 patients.

UNITED HOSPITAL

United Hospital has a crisis suite with six rooms that provide emergency care for people with mental health emergencies. The space can expand by three additional rooms when needed.

Post-hospital respite care

A partnership between Regions, St. Joseph's and United Hospitals and Catholic Charities provides a medical respite unit at the Higher Ground shelter for homeless adults in St. Paul. Opened in 2017, the unit cares for patients who are homeless, often have a mental illness and need a healing place to recover after leaving a hospital. In the first year, more than 200 patients benefited. About 40 percent of patients move to more stable housing after recovering.

Mission: Community support

For too many adults living with a mental illness, things aren't OK. Their housing situation isn't OK. Their legal standing isn't OK. Their relationships with friends and family aren't OK. Above all other missions, the Roundtable's goal is to make the lives of those in the East Metro with a mental illness a little safer, a little easier and a little more OK.

Providing stable housing

Ramsey County's RUSH (Re-Directing Users of Shelter to Housing) program works to provide stable housing for about 100 people who are the most frequent users of emergency shelters. In the first year and a half of the program, 69 individuals transitioned to stable housing. Case managers were working with 20 more individuals to move to permanent housing.

Streamlining the legal process

Patients who are in crisis may not have the ability to seek treatment on their own. State laws determine when involuntary treatment (civil commitment) is needed. In 2007, Roundtable partners convened to improve the civil commitment process. This ensures that people can get care more quickly and reduces the need for disruptive and expensive legal interventions.

RAMSEY COUNTY

Patients screened for civil commitment

2009 ----- 758 2017 ----- 668

REGIONS HOSPITAL

Patients in 72-hour holds

2009 ----- 2,167 2017 ----- 945

Make It .org

The East Metro Mental Health Roundtable recognized that many people wait years to seek treatment in part due to the stigma of mental illness. To address this, HealthPartners, Regions Hospital, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota launched a public awareness campaign in 2013 called [Make it OK](#). It encourages people to talk openly about mental illness to help reduce stigma. The campaign includes advertising, an informational website, documentaries featuring people who live with mental illnesses and an Ambassador program that trains interested advocates. In 2014, the campaign won a Board of Governor's Emmy.

- ▶ 500 mental health community ambassadors trained
- ▶ Community-wide campaigns in Goodhue and Dakota counties, Duluth and in communities in the St. Croix River Valley



Make It OK is a sponsor of the award-winning podcast [The Hilarious World of Depression](#). It features interviews with comedians, musicians and artists who live with a mental illness. The podcast has over 6 million downloads.

Mission: Moving forward

As the need for mental health services increases, the Roundtable will continue to identify gaps in care, design programs to address those gaps, and to expand the continuum of care already serving those in the East Metro community.

Addressing the opioid crisis with care and awareness

The East Metro Mental Health Roundtable has identified opportunities to address the opioid crisis, including:

- Addressing opioid and other addictions and stigma earlier
- Building on work to limit the use of opioids
- Supporting innovative models of care to treat chronic pain

New partnerships for care and treatment

[A 2016 report](#) from the Minnesota Department of Health found a lack of residential treatment facilities for patients who do not need hospital care. To help fill part of this gap, Regions Hospital opened Afton Place, a residential treatment program in Maplewood, MN. Roundtable members will continue to identify new public and private opportunities to serve east metro residents.

East Metro Mental Health Roundtable members

Allina Health, Canvas Health, Catholic Charities Twin Cities, Children's Hospital, City of St. Paul, CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio), Dakota County Social Services, East Metro Crisis Alliance, Emergency Care Consultants, Fraser, Guild Incorporated, Hamm Clinic, HealthEast, HealthPartners, Hearth Connection, Mental Health Resources, Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Philanthropy Partners, National Alliance for Mental Illness Minnesota, People Incorporated, Ramsey County District Court, Ramsey County Human Services, Regions Hospital, St. Joseph Hospital, St. Paul Police Department, St. Paul Public Schools, United Hospital, Washington County Community Services, Westside Community Health Services, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.



This report was prepared by HealthPartners for the East Metro Mental Health Roundtable