

Regional framework for youth with complex mental health needs

HENNEPIN COUNTY
MINNESOTA

Youth in crisis

A small but significant population of county-involved youth have unmet needs due to complex mental health diagnoses, behaviors, and trauma. Gaps and barriers in the current system leave these youth without treatment options, forcing them into inappropriate placements that are far from their support systems and oftentimes more damaging.

Youth with complex needs may be involved with multiple systems, including human services and juvenile justice systems. In addition, Minnesota licenses and certifies placement facilities separately from treatment programming, which means youth can't always access appropriate services.

Fundamental structural reform is needed. At this time, a group of metro-area and other counties is developing a regional plan to enhance and improve the continuum of care, serving county-involved youth with a whole-person, cross-system approach.

This plan is built on the recommendations of the 2024 Working Group on Youth Interventions, and will include the voice of the youth and families most impacted.

Immediate response: crisis stabilization center

To address one of the most acute gaps in services, Hennepin County is funding and opening a youth crisis stabilization center at our Behavioral Health Center at 1800 Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis.

Target population and services

- Youth with complex behavioral health needs, regardless of which system they enter
- Residential crisis stabilization for youth who cannot remain safely at home: treatment and therapeutic supports while triage, assessment, and planning take place with families
- Culturally responsive services delivered by a community agency, intended to reduce the deep racial disparities concentrated in this part of the system
- 10-15 beds for short-term stays of 30-45 days

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Long-term response: regional framework offering continuum of care

Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Scott, Ramsey, and Washington counties in the metro, plus St. Louis, Olmsted, and Stearns counties in outstate Minnesota, are collaborating to leverage their individual and collective strengths and capacities to create a continuum of services, facilities, and care that supports youth with complex mental health needs and their families.

Leaders and staff from participating partner counties will jointly identify actionable reforms, innovative solutions, and broad strategies to fill the gaps in the care continuum.

Legislative proposals

As this effort begins, several legislative policy changes have been identified that would have both immediate and longer-term impacts on maximizing capacity and getting care for the young people who need it.

Proposals address:

- **Licensing and certification**
- **Medicaid benefit policy**
- **Reimbursement rate structure**

See supplement for details on policy and funding proposals.