

MaineHealth

LD 1470: Meeting a Critical Need by Expanding Access to Acute Psychiatric Inpatient Services in Southern Maine

A Joint Project of Southern Maine Health Care and Maine Behavioral Healthcare

Background

Maine's acute care hospitals have experienced a significant growth in patients with psychiatric illness who get assessed in Emergency Departments and are determined to need inpatient care. MaineHealth hospitals are no exception. Between 2017-2019, MaineHealth hospitals saw an average of 2,456 patients per year in their Emergency Departments who needed inpatient psychiatric care.

During that time, Southern Maine Health Care (SMHC) saw a 41% increase in volume of patients in need of inpatient psychiatric services, growing from 454 patients in 2017 to 764 patients in 2019. Its existing 12 bed psychiatric unit did not provide the capacity needed to meet the growing demand.

The average length of stay in the Emergency Department for these patients was 31 hours. The average length of stay of patients with other medical needs was 5 hours.

In 2016, 21% of Cumberland and York County patients who needed inpatient psychiatric care were sent to hospitals outside of the service area.

Identified Solution

A formal needs assessment showed a clear need for additional psychiatric inpatient capacity to support York and Cumberland Counties in the future. In 2014, SMHC transitioned its inpatient beds on the Goodall Hospital Campus in Sanford to Biddeford. Working collaboratively with Maine Behavioral Healthcare, SMHC determined that with some financial investment, those beds could be repurposed to support inpatient psychiatric care.

A formal plan was developed to create 42 psychiatric beds and a psychiatric emergency room on the Goodall Campus in Sanford, providing relief for patients stuck in hospital Emergency Departments throughout the state, and particularly York and Cumberland Counties

- 50 new jobs for Sanford
- \$11 million investment by Southern Maine Health Care
- Run by Maine Behavioral Healthcare, treatment would be highest quality and complement community based services provided throughout the region.

Payor Mix

In their first few months of operations, the payor mix is 45% MaineCare, 10% commercial, 41% Medicare, and 2% uninsured. To contrast, SMHC's general payor mix is 15% MaineCare, 32% commercial, 47% Medicare and 2% uninsured.

State's Role

MaineHealth met with the State in August, 2018. The State supported the proposal and agreed to work with MaineHealth on an adequate rate to support the cost of MaineCare and uninsured patients.

- State agreed that current Medicaid rate was 33% below cost of providing care
- MaineHealth agreed to have the project licensed by SMHC rather than Spring Harbor to avoid challenges of paying for adult Medicaid patients in Institutes of Mental Disease (IMD)
- MaineHealth agreed to maintain existing Section 45 psychiatric rate for existing beds while requesting enhanced rate to support new bed capacity
- MaineHealth agreed to wait on determining final rate until impact of Medicaid expansion could be factored in
- MaineHealth proceeded implementing project based upon tacit agreement that an increased rate would be forthcoming.

In November, 2020, MaineHealth met with the State to discuss rate request. Provided all methodology and revised request that factored in impact of Medicaid expansion.

In February, 2020, MaineHealth received an email from the State stating that it would not agree to rate that supports the cost of providing care to patients in the new units.

In October, 2020, the first unit opened. In February, 2021, the second unit partially opened. In March, the average daily census for the two units was 22. The units are anticipated to be fully operational by fall, 2021.

Precedent

Two Maine hospitals with psychiatric units have specific rates provided in Section 45. MaineHealth hospitals provide the majority of the community-based inpatient psychiatric treatment in Maine, with units at Pen Bay, Maine Medical Center (geriatric), and MidCoast in addition to Southern Maine Health Care.

Legislation and Fiscal Note

LD 1470 requires the Department to provide a rate that reflects the cost of care for the new Sanford psychiatric beds. Though a fiscal note has not been posted, the cost per discharge is \$10,166.

This project was built under a trust agreement that the State would support adequate rates to cover the cost of its MaineCare patients.

Patients who are stuck in Emergency Rooms for days a time can attest to the importance of his project.

We need your help to ensure that MaineCare rates are adequate to pay the cost of providing services to MaineCare patients in need of help. Please Support LD 1470.