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Lenape Valley Foundation breaks ground on first crisis residential center in Bucks County

By Jenny Wagner, staff writer 17 hrs ago

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An artist's rendering shows the exterior of The Lodge at Lenape Valley Foundation, which will be built on the campus of Lower B Hospital in Bristol Township. The lodge will be licensed for 12 beds, and will offer host of other services. It is expected to open in summer 2018.

Courtesy of Lenape Valley Foundation

Lenape Valley Foundation on Monday broke ground on Bucks County's first crisis residential center, which officials said will fill a gap in mental health services available to residents.

The Lodge at Lenape Valley Foundation will be built on the campus of Lower Bucks Hospital in Bristol Township and will be licensed for 12 crisis residential program beds. While that may not sound like a lot of beds, "it will make an impact," said Sharon Curran, chief operations officer for the foundation.

The program is designed for people who have significant mental health struggles like depression, postpartum depression or bipolar disorder, at times when they can't manage the symptoms at home, or when something unexpected happens and "they just need some added support," Curran said, adding that the program also will accept people with intellectual disabilities and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

"For individuals who are not a danger to themselves and others, this offers them a way to get treatment where they're not completely isolated from the community," Curran said.

The program will fall in between outpatient psychiatric treatment and a locked inpatient facility. It will be voluntary and stays will range between five to 10 days; patients can sign themselves in and out at any time.

The program will offer psychiatric evaluations, medication management and therapy in a home-like setting. It also will offer case management to help with other needs, such as housing or unemployment, which Curran said sometimes might be difficult to deal with during a crisis.

Initially, the program will be covered only for people who receive medical assistance and for those who are uninsured and referred through the county, but Lenape Valley will pursue contracts with major health insurance providers as well.

Curran noted that crisis residential programs typically are less expensive options for treatment and have been shown to help keep people out of more expensive options like inpatient facilities.

In addition to the crisis residential program, The Lodge also will house outpatient services, medication management and group therapy, as well as a countywide crisis call center and some of Lenape Valley's mobile programs such as the Seniors Empowered for Life Fulfillment.

The project is expected to take approximately 12-13 months and cost \$6.5 million, with startup expenses being covered in part by county reinvestment funds.

Jonathan Rubin, director of Bucks County Division of Human Services, said the reinvestment funds came from unspent Medicaid dollars that Lenape and the county behavioral health department got approval from the state to use for the project.

"I'm very happy that we're able to provide something more significant than what would be outpatient or partial hospitalization, but less restrictive than an inpatient facility," Rubin said. "It's adding to our continuum of care."

Curran said Lenape Valley will add jobs for The Lodge, but she couldn't yet say how many.

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