

MENTAL HEALTH STUDIES OVERVIEW OF PROVIDER TYPES

BACKGROUND

While some mental health practitioners have independent practices, many are employed by one of several types of health care organizations that offer mental health care. This briefing paper outlines the various entities providing mental health services in Montana.

HOSPITALS

Hospital-based care can consist of both outpatient mental health treatment as well as inpatient psychiatric care, either through designated beds or specific, secure units. Licensed hospitals are located in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, and Missoula. The Montana State Hospital at Warm Springs is also a licensed hospital.

Section 50-5-101 of the Montana Code Annotated defines hospitals as facilities supervised by physicians. Among other things, the facilities must provide onsite emergency care 24 hours a day, have on-call medical staff available within 20 minutes at all times, and provide 24-hour nursing care by licensed registered nurses.

Critical access hospitals are specifically excluded from the definition of a hospital.

Montana administrative rules require that if a hospital provides psychiatric services, the services must be supervised by a psychiatrist on a 24-hour basis and that a licensed registered nurse or a practical nurse under the supervision of a registered nurse must be in charge 24 hours a day.

CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS

Forty-seven critical access hospitals serve many of Montana's smaller communities, providing essential and emergency care. Under federal law, these hospitals must be at least 35 miles from a hospital unless they are located in mountainous terrain or in an area where only secondary roads are available or they were certified by the state before Jan. 1, 2006, as being a necessary provider of health care services to area residents. In those instances, they may be only 15 miles from a hospital.

Critical access hospitals are limited to 25 acute care inpatient beds. Patients may stay in acute care beds for up to 96 hours. Up to 10 of the beds in a critical access hospital can be designated as a psychiatric unit.

FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS

Federally qualified health centers, or FQHCs, were first established as a federal demonstration project in 1965, to provide comprehensive health care in medically underserved areas. Congress has expanded the program over the years and provides grant funding to operate FQHCs in areas where access to affordable health care is limited by economic, geographic, or cultural barriers.

FQHCs must provide health care to patients regardless of their ability to pay and must use a sliding fee scale to charge for services based on the patient's income. The health centers also may bill Medicaid, Medicare, and other payors for the services they provide.

MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS

Mental health centers provide both outpatient and residential services to people with mental illness.

Administrative rules require, among other things, that mental health centers offer all of the following services: crisis telephone services, medication management, outpatient therapy, community-based psychiatric rehabilitation and support, and chemical dependency services. The centers may offer a range of other services and may contract with licensed health care professionals and mental health professionals, as well as facilities such as hospitals or clinics, to provide services.

TRIBAL HEALTH FACILITIES

Tribal members in Montana can receive services at several facilities operated or funded in part by the Indian Health Service (IHS). The IHS operates health care facilities on the Blackfeet, Crow, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, and Northern Cheyenne reservations. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes operate a health center on the Flathead Reservation, while the Chippewa Cree Tribe operates a facility on the Rocky Boy's Reservation.

Urban Indian Health facilities are located in Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula.

VA MONTANA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The VA Montana Healthcare System provides health care services to military veterans. Its mental health services are available at the main campus at Fort Harrison in Helena, as well as facilities in Bozeman, Great Falls, Kalispell, and Missoula.

Mental health services are also available via telehealth upon request, and the VA operates a Veterans Crisis Line.

Sources

- 42 CFR 485.610
- 42 U.S.C. 1395i-4
- 50-5-101, Montana Code Annotated
- Administrative Rules of Montana: 37.106.430, 37.106.704, 37.106.1906
- "Indian Health Service: Billings Area." *Indian Health Service*. Available at <https://www.ihs.gov/billings/>. Accessed Oct. 28, 2021.
- "Urban Indian Organizations." *Indian Health Service*. Available at <https://www.ihs.gov/urban/urban-indian-organizations/>. Accessed Oct. 28, 2021.
- "VA Montana health care: Health services." *U.S. Department of Veterans Services*. Available at <https://www.va.gov/montana-health-care/health-services/>. Accessed Oct. 28, 2021.