



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PITTSBURGH MERCY ANNOUNCES SENIOR MANAGER,  
EMERGENCY SHELTER SERVICES &  
SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS AT SECOND AVENUE COMMONS**  
*Enhancements will expand access to services for the most vulnerable*

**PITTSBURGH (April 17, 2024)** – [Pittsburgh Mercy](#), one of the region’s largest social service nonprofit organizations, serving more than 18,000 people annually, today announced the addition of [Becky L. Ludwig, MSW, LSW, CCDP, CCJP](#) as senior manager of Emergency Shelter Services, a newly created position in its award-winning homeless services continuum of care that will focus solely on emergency shelter services. Ludwig is responsible for operations at the 92-person, year-round, low-barrier emergency shelter and 40-person winter overflow shelter at [Second Avenue Commons](#) in Downtown, as well as for the 28-person, year-round, low-barrier emergency shelter at [Bethlehem Haven](#) in Uptown. Pittsburgh Mercy has operated the emergency shelter, winter overflow shelter, and engagement center at Second Avenue Commons since it opened in November 2022. Bethlehem Haven, which serves primarily women and gender non-conforming individuals, has been part of the Pittsburgh Mercy family of care since 2016.

Ludwig has over 25 years of combined experience in direct care and administrative positions in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment, mental health and integrated care treatment including inpatient, outpatient, and residential treatment settings, in prison therapeutic communities, and in private practice. She has spent most of her professional career helping persons with complex, serious, and persistent mental health disorders, substance use disorders, and co-occurring disorders. She also designed, implemented, managed, and expanded several behavioral health programs to address the unmet needs of underserved populations.

“Becky is an experienced, welcome addition to our deeply committed homeless services team,” stated [Michael Turk](#), vice president of Community & Wellness Services at Pittsburgh Mercy. “Becky brings a unique set of skills to the position. She has an extensive social services background both as a leader and direct clinician serving people experiencing mental health and substance use disorders and people who are unstably housed. She has tremendous compassion and a heart for serving the most vulnerable. Becky’s leadership, oversight, guidance, and dedication to emergency shelter services will further enhance our efforts to be welcoming, safe, healing environments for our emergency shelter guests and the colleagues who serve them. Since Day One, this has been – and it continues to be – Pittsburgh Mercy’s priority at Second Avenue Commons,” added Turk.

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“I am looking forward to working with our amazing colleagues and multidisciplinary team to make a positive impact on the people we serve by fostering a welcoming, safe, and strengths-based environment while working to connect our guests with the resources they need on the path to more permanent housing,” stated Ludwig.

Ludwig comes to Pittsburgh Mercy from another health and wellness organization, where she served as senior director of integrated services and lead integrated physical and behavioral health care across a 23-county service area in Pennsylvania. Ludwig also created and supervised behavioral health and care navigator positions with a focus on veteran and LGBTQ+ communities. Ludwig also previously held various positions, including vice president of program management, at a community corrections organization where she was responsible for medically monitored detoxification, inpatient and outpatient substance use disorder treatment, mental health services, and re-entry programs.

Ludwig earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science at Point Park University and a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree at the University of Pittsburgh. She is a licensed social worker (LSW), a Certified Co-Occurring Disorders Professional (CCDP), and a Certified Criminal Justice Addictions Professional (CCJP) in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She is also a member of the National Association of Social Workers and a board member of the Community Corrections Association of Pennsylvania through September 2024.

She taught two sociology-related courses at the university level.

As part of Ludwig’s on-boarding experience, Turk will introduce her to Pittsburgh Mercy’s community partners through a series of in-person and virtual meetings.

In addition to announcing Ludwig as the senior manager of Emergency Shelter Services, Pittsburgh Mercy announces the following service enhancements that have been implemented or are planned at Second Avenue Commons:

### **Overflow Shelter Season Extended Again Beyond Winter**

For a second consecutive year, Pittsburgh Mercy extended its Winter Overflow Shelter season at Second Avenue Commons past the scheduled March 15, 2024, closure date. We recognize the importance of continuing this needed service as Allegheny County Department of Human Services and our community partners work to make additional housing options available. Pittsburgh Mercy’s Overflow Shelter remains open and continues to serve up to 40 individuals seven days a week, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. An end date has not been determined.

### **Expanded Engagement Center Hours**

Pittsburgh Mercy is working to expand the hours of operation for the Engagement Center at Second Avenue Commons. Expanding the hours will allow Pittsburgh Mercy to serve even more people in need of a meal, a shower, laundry, substance use disorder services, and links to housing and other vital services. The center is currently open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pittsburgh Mercy hopes to expand the Engagement Center hours to seven days a week, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. by mid-summer. The exact start date will be communicated directly to our community partners and announced on Pittsburgh Mercy’s social media channels.

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### **Behavioral Health Services**

Pittsburgh Mercy offers outpatient behavioral health services at Second Avenue Commons on Wednesdays, from 9 a.m. to noon.

### **Pathways to Housing: Reunification with Family Members**

In an effort to help shelter guests find other viable options toward more permanent housing, Pittsburgh Mercy and Allegheny County Department of Human Services are working with A Second Chance to reunify individuals who are experiencing homelessness and are currently guests in emergency shelter with their families. The program services are already in place at Bethlehem Haven's emergency women's shelter with plans to also include the emergency shelter at Second Avenue Commons in the near future. The program is modeled off kinship navigation programs that work to reunify children who have been removed from their homes with their families.

### **Admitting Persons Discharged from Hospitals**

Pittsburgh Mercy is partnering with UPMC Second Avenue Commons Health Center to create a hospital discharge process to safely admit individuals who are experiencing homelessness to the emergency shelter at Second Avenue Commons and the Bethlehem Haven emergency women's shelter upon discharge from a hospital stay. To be admitted the emergency shelter, individuals must be homeless, able to do activities of daily living, take medication and operate medical equipment as prescribed by their health care provider, and meet other eligibility criteria.

### **Dental Services**

Dental health is vital to physical health. Pittsburgh Mercy is in early discussions with a dental services provider to work to bring mobile dental services to Second Avenue Commons and Bethlehem Haven.

### **Enhancing Colleague Training, Education, & Development Curriculum**

Colleagues who are hired to work for Pittsburgh Mercy programs at Second Avenue Commons already undergo extensive training during new colleague orientation and on-boarding, including but not limited to life safety, CPR, First Aid, AED, Mental Health First Aid, overdose prevention (naloxone), harm reduction, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, non-violent crisis intervention and de-escalation, LGBTQ+ and Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) 101 training. Pittsburgh Mercy is working to expand the professional training, education, and development curriculum for emergency shelter colleagues to include other trainings to support colleague well-being and resiliency and support them in their work with vulnerable individuals who have complex trauma histories.

### **Feedback**

Pittsburgh Mercy runs a client leadership group at Second Avenue Commons to ensure the voice of shelter guests relating to their experience of care, such as feedback regarding emergency shelter rules and practices, are heard. This practice was implemented in November 2022. Pittsburgh Mercy continues to meet weekly with other providers at Second Avenue Commons, monthly with the Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) and our Second Avenue Commons partners, and with other interested community members and groups upon request.

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If you have questions or comments or would like to request a meeting with a Second Avenue Commons representative to share your feedback, please contact [Becky L. Ludwig](mailto:becky.ludwig@pittsburghmercy.org) at [becky.ludwig@pittsburghmercy.org](mailto:becky.ludwig@pittsburghmercy.org).

Pittsburgh Mercy continues to explore grants and other funding opportunities that will allow it to further expand the services it provides at Second Avenue Commons and across its vast homeless services continuum of care, stated Turk.

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***About Pittsburgh Mercy***

[Pittsburgh Mercy](#) is one of the largest community health and social service providers and employers in Southwestern Pennsylvania. We offer help – and hope – to 18,000 of our community's most vulnerable in 60+ locations:

- People who have complex behavioral and physical health challenges.
- People who have intellectual and developmental disabilities
- People who are experiencing homelessness
- People who need wrap-around services to live safe, healthy, and well in the community.

We are the largest Integrated Community Wellness Center (ICWC) in Pennsylvania and the only one in Southwestern Pennsylvania. We are a five-time awardee of Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) expansion grants.

Pittsburgh Mercy is a member of [Trinity Health](#), serving in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. Our mission is to be a compassionate and transforming, healing presence within our communities. To learn more about Pittsburgh Mercy or to make a donation in support of its important work in the community, please visit [www.pittsburghmercy.org](http://www.pittsburghmercy.org). Follow Pittsburgh Mercy on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [X](#) (formerly known as [Twitter](#)).

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