May 2025

DONOR Connection

PITTSBURGH MERCY
A HERITAGE OF HOPE

Did you know that **nearly one-in-five adults** in the United States lives with a mental health condition during a given year? That's the equivalent of **46.6 million** family members, friends, neighbors, and colleagues struggling to manage their mental wellbeing.

With all of the organizations, acronyms, and entities that make up our regional health and human services providers, it can be hard to understand what makes one provider stand out from another. For International Mental Health Awareness Month, let's dive into what makes Pittsburgh Mercy one of Western Pennsylvania's preeminent behavioral health care providers.

Ever since the Sisters of Mercy first arrived in Pittsburgh in 1843, Pittsburgh Mercy has been a leader in providing compassionate, transformative care for the most vulnerable people in our community, with particular emphasis on the sick, impoverished, and disenfranchised.

Over the years, the organization has shifted to serve the needs of an ever-changing population, but community-based care—bringing care to the people, and not simply people to the care—has always been at Pittsburgh Mercy's core. Today, Pittsburgh Mercy embodies this commitment by leading national efforts to integrate physical and behavioral health care.

As **one of the first** Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers (CCBHC) (referred to

as Integrated Care and Wellness Centers (ICWC) in Pennsylvania) in the United States and **the only such center in Western Pennsylvania**, Pittsburgh Mercy is paving the way for providing a one-stop-shop for individuals needing multiple physical and behavioral health care services.

These nine core CCBHC services/levels of care are:

1. Outpatient mental Health and Substance Use Services
2. Person- and Family-Centered Treatment Planning
3. Community-Based Mental Health Care for Veterans
4. Peer Family Support and Counselor Services
5. Targeted Case Management
6. Outpatient Primary Care Screening and Monitoring
7. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services
8. Screening, Diagnosis, and Risk Assessment
9. Crisis Services (through our partnership with resolve)

Despite the obvious benefits of coordinating multiple levels of care for each patient, in practice, this kind of integration can pose challenges for service providers. Each level of care has state-set regulatory requirements that must be met in order for an organization such as Pittsburgh Mercy to provide that level of care, whether that be outpatient therapy, substance-use disorder treatment, case management, etc. Such rules and regulations make integrating several layers of care a major challenge—one that is made even more difficult by the complex lived experiences of Pittsburgh Mercy's population served.

By following the CCBHC model, Pittsburgh Mercy is able to integrate many types of care in real time, collaborative care, thereby breaking down regulatory and communications barriers that can inhibit healing and providing a holistic approach to care.

In other words: All service providers in the CCBHC model (therapist, psychiatrist, peer counselor, etc.) can be on the same page regarding their patients' needs and treatment plans via up-to-date electronic health records. In this way, a person served by Pittsburgh Mercy's outpatient therapy, primary health care, and case management services can focus on achieving one treatment plan in which all of their needs are addressed.

*Learn more about Pittsburgh Mercy's person-centered, trauma-informed, evidence-based services throughout Allegheny County by visiting our **website**.*

Q: As a professional mental health clinician at Pittsburgh Mercy, how do you prioritize your own mental health care?

A: "For me, my self-care practice is not a thing I do or series of things I do. It is about being intentional about routinely checking in and asking myself what is it that I need. Those can be very different things depending on the day, my mood and energy level, and the type of stress I am experiencing. Self-care might mean that I need a long walk alone in the park, or it might mean socializing with friends. Asking myself 'What will rejuvenate me right now?' has been a helpful framework."

--Kim Kir, practice administrator, adult outpatient services

Help Us Celebrate Pets Each and Every Day

May is National Pet Month, and here at Pittsburgh Mercy, we recognize the vital role pets can play in a person's health, happiness, and well-being.

Few things give more comfort than the loving companionship of a pet—companionship that is all the more indispensable during an emergency or time of need. This is especially true for people who are experiencing homeless or are unstably housed, who are often required to choose between entering a shelter and accessing critical support services or keeping a beloved pet—essentially a choice between their own welfare or keeping their families intact.

As the only homeless services facility in Allegheny County that allows guests and their pets to enter and stay in the shelter together, Pittsburgh Mercy's emergency shelter, winter overflow shelter, and engagement center at Second Avenue Commons provide unmatched services and support for pet owners experiencing homelessness or unstable housing who wish to remain with their pets—including any pet supplies they may need.

Help Pittsburgh Mercy keep pet families together and donate via our **Second Avenue Commons Pet Supplies Wish List** at www.chewy.com.

View Wish

List

Be the Good You Wish to See in the World

At Pittsburgh Mercy, our volunteers provide a truly meaningful and enriching experience for community members in need. ***Thank you to our compassionate and inspiring volunteers!***

Would ***you*** like to make a difference in the lives of the thousands of people served by our programs? Pittsburgh Mercy offers numerous ways to get involved.

Consider these volunteer opportunities:

- Serving food at Second Avenue Commons.
- Hosting a sporting event watch party at a behavioral health residential program.
- Making arts and crafts at our adult day programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Making PB&J sandwiches for persons served at Pittsburgh Mercy's Engagement Center at Second Avenue Commons.
- Sorting donated clothing and basic hygiene supplies for people experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, or other crises.

For more details or to sign up, contact Pittsburgh Mercy's Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator Brendan Copp at **Brendan.Copp@pittsburghmercy.org** or 412-897-8822.

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