

**North Philadelphia Health System  
d/b/a The Behavioral Wellness Center at  
Girard  
Community Health Needs Assessment  
2021 to 2023**



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## President's Comments

The Community has known us as the North Philadelphia Health System since 1990 and this campus as Girard Medical Center. We are now NPHS dba as The Behavioral Wellness Center at Girard. Our name change reflects the work we are doing in the community and the services we provide based on the needs we have assessed through a process of collaboration.

The Be Well Center provides a continuum of service unparalleled in the City of Philadelphia. We operate a 65-bed private in-patient acute psychiatric hospital; 208 drug and alcohol beds and the 650 client Medicated Assisted Treatment Goldman Clinic where clients receive methadone, Suboxone or Vivitrol to address their substance use disorders.

In determining the psychiatric; drug and alcohol services and the programs that support them, we have and continue to partner with a plethora of entities across the city and the state so that the services we provide address the needs of our community and support the health and ability of our patients to return to their neighborhoods as contributing members of society.

Being a partner with the community and a contributor to its health and viability is very important to us. Therefore, our meetings with Community Behavioral Health (MCO) provider meetings, regular meetings with elected officials at every level and their constituent services representatives, community organizations, members and leaders are our way of gathering information to steer The Be Well Center in the direction of always supporting the current needs of the community.

Our goal is to provide to you the information we have gathered so that you can understand and continue to partner with us as we address our community health needs. There is an opportunity for you to review this Health Needs Assessment and express any feedback you may have or ideas that you think should be included regarding the health issues in our community by following the link provided.

We are so proud to be a part of this community and to be entrusted with your health, especially at this time when behavioral healthcare has become even more important in our lives. Thank you for your trust.

Sincerely,

Gerri H. Walker  
President/CEO

North Philadelphia Health System dba The Behavioral Wellness Center AT Girard



## Our History

The Behavioral Wellness Center at Girard began its life as the Philadelphia Children's Homeopathic Hospital established in 1896, and later moved to 8th and Franklin where it was renamed St. Luke's and Children's Medical Center. St. Luke's was one of the first treatment facilities for alcoholism in the 1930's and, in 1947, the Saul Clinic was created to provide medical and sub-acute treatment for alcoholism. The Helen L. Goldman drug rehabilitation program was established in 1904 and, in 1970, the clinic now known as the Goldman Clinic, began offering methadone treatment. St. Luke's later became known as Giuffre and then as the Girard Medical Center, located at 8th Street and Girard Avenue.

In 1990, the North Philadelphia Health System (NPHS) was formed and incorporated through a merger of Girard Medical Center and another long-standing community hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, located at 16th Street and Girard Avenue. The hospitals operated under the NPHS corporate entity, with more than 1600 employees, and served as the economic engine in one of the city's oldest, financially deprived, and medically underserved communities. For a few years, the NPHS was managed by Mercy Hospital System and the hospitals were restructured to eliminate duplication of services. St. Joseph's provided medical and surgical services and Girard Medical Center provided Behavioral Health programs. In 2016, NPHS sold St. Joseph's Hospital and only provided Behavioral Health services, e.g., Psychiatric Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) programs, through the Girard Medical Center.

Now known as The Behavioral Wellness Center at Girard, the Center has always been at the forefront of innovation in the provision of treatment services for individuals with substance use disorders and mental health challenges and a willing partner to the City of Philadelphia in serving City residents. In the early 1990's, the Center opened one of two Residential Intensive Non-hospital Treatment (RINT) programs to serve individuals discharged from the closing of the Philadelphia State Hospital. Later, it partnered with the City of Philadelphia to address the number of individuals imprisoned who were in need of Substance Use Disorder treatment; and to develop a variety of Forensic Intensive Recovery (FIR) programs, which allowed men and women to be released from prison directly into care. In 2007, the Center again responded to a request from the City of Philadelphia to open specialized residential treatment programs for chronically homeless men in Philadelphia; and, along with five other programs, these programs have helped to significantly reduce homelessness in men as well as address the chronicity of untreated behavioral health issues with the City's homeless population.

The role of The Behavioral Wellness Center at Girard in the health and wellness of the citizens of Philadelphia has been and continues to be critical, particularly given the Center's location and easy access to much needed services for the surrounding communities.

### **Our Mission**

To provide effective, evidence-based behavioral health services to our participants, which inspire hope, encourage change, improve our community and offer services in a manner that is spiritually and culturally sensitive, and responsive to community needs.

### **Our Vision**

To be the region's premier provider of a continuum of behavioral health services.

### **Our Values- CHIRP**

**Choice** – Recognizing and supporting the participants' right to choose and to understand the consequences.

**Hope** – Expecting and embracing change.

**Integrity** – Doing the right thing because it is the right thing.

**Respect** – Listening to the concerns and needs of our participants.

**Professionalism** – Providing care with the skill, respect, good judgement, and polite behavior that is expected from a person who is trained to do a job well.



## Executive Summary

At the time of preparing this CHNA, our nation is in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very negative impact on the needs of the behavioral health care clients and the health care delivery system for the typical American and member of the Philadelphia community. These problems further compounded problems that have been growing for years via the reduced Psychiatric beds and the growing Opioid crisis.

To combat the concerns regarding psychiatric and substance abuse The Behavioral Wellness Center houses one of the most complete behavior health continuums in Philadelphia. The continuum is a vital part of The Behavioral Wellness Center ability to serve a community with multiple and complex needs. The continuum is comprised of an impressive collection of Substance Use Disorder, Co-Occurring, and Psychiatric programs that offer stabilization to Participants as well as a framework for developing a recovering lifestyle. On the mental health end, BWC operates several inpatient psychiatric units (Acute; extended acute; and a sub-acute unit). The Co-Occurring offerings include the Residential Treatment Facility for Adults; and Miracles in Progress /JOH program for chronically homeless men. Finally, the Substance Use Disorder programs span the spectrum of detoxification and residential non-hospital programs including programs for Latino men; the Forensic populations; women only and Medicated Assisted Programs in outpatient and residential settings. MAT offerings include the use of Methadone, Vivitrol and Buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder. MAT services have been provided at all levels of care for more than ten years. The introduction of Vivitrol began more than four years ago. And through a collaborative relationship with a federally qualified health center co-located on the campus Buprenorphine services began in May of 2018. NPHS is licensed to provide two hundred and eight (208) non-hospital bed services at the 3.5 and 3.7 level of care.

To ensure it is the very best care previously discussed, we have established a comprehensive training plan that is comprised of clinical, managerial, and technical skills programs for all of our staff. We have embraced innovation by establishing a withdrawal management program with around the clock medical care provided by doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses and support staff. In addition, we have also begun same day induction, making sure Participants don't have to wait before being inducted and admitted. These programs have been initiated to support each client's initial choice to enter treatment a little easier. The Be Well Center has established partnerships to support the housing needs of our clients and is expanding alliances for the training of medical professionals in the discipline of addiction medicine and psychiatry on our campus. Our vision is of a network made up of community, organizations, government agencies



and individuals all working together to ensure that the social determinants that affect us all, support the health of all.

The Behavioral Wellness Center will monitor its success by comparing the number of patients cared for before the implementation of the planned strategies and after. Increased services and completion of our programs will be the ultimate validation of success.



## Community Definition

The community is defined separately by The Center's 2-core service lines Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Disorder as there is a significant variance between the admissions sources and geography of each community.

The Behavioral Wellness Center's Psychiatry patients originate from the following sources:

- Prisons throughout Pennsylvania
- Norristown State Hospital
- Various City of Philadelphia Agencies located throughout the city
- Philadelphia Crisis Centers throughout the city

Consequently, the geographic spread of patients is:

- 39% from outside of Philadelphia
- 61% from within Philadelphia, but the spread is from all parts of the city

The Behavioral Wellness Center's Substance use disorder patients originate from the following sources:

- Philadelphia Crisis Centers located close to the facility
- Walk in clients

Consequently, the geographic spread of patients is:

- 80% from the zip codes within 3 miles of the facility
- 20% from the zip codes greater than 3 miles of the facility



## Data Sources

The following data sources were used:

1. The Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (HC4) hospital data (most recent fiscal year was 2020). The Pennsylvania HC4 requires healthcare providers in Pennsylvania to annually submit various health statistics for services performed. This data is made available to the public and downloaded and used in this analysis.
2. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health performed a Community Health Needs Assess in 2019. The summary of the findings applicable to the Behavioral Wellness Center are utilized in this analysis.
3. A Stateline Article titled "Amid Shortage of Psychiatric Beds, Mentally Ill Face Long Waits for Treatment" published August 2, 2016. Other articles as listed in this report were used as well.
4. Internal Behavioral Wellness Center at Girard statistics from FY 2021.

## CHNA Findings

The needs of the Psychiatric patients in the Philadelphia marketplace as well as the Pennsylvania statewide marketplace have continued to grow due to:

- The Psychiatric I/P needs have continued to grow as the number of beds/100,000 population has continue to drop. Pennsylvania is over 11% lower than the U.S. totals (10.4 vs. 11.7):

| State        | Psychiatric Hospital<br>Beds (2010) | Psychiatric Hospital<br>Beds (2010) | Beds per 100,000<br>people (2016) |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pennsylvania | 1,850                               | 1,334                               | 10.4                              |
| U.S.         | 43,318                              | 37,679                              | 11.7                              |

- The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a suit in 2015 against the State of Pennsylvania alleging that delays in service violates the rights of criminal defendants with mental illness. Those defendants were required to remain in prison during these delays. Consequently, Norristown state hospital has agreed to discharge many of its current clients to make room for these defendants. There is a shortage of beds available for these clients.
- According to STAT magazine The COVID 19 crisis combined with years of mental health care budget cuts, rising demand for mental health care, and an existing shortage of both psychiatric beds and providers appears to have put health care systems on a wartime footing. Patients are a lot sicker and in greater need of intervention” since the pandemic began, said Gail Ryder, vice president at Tampa, Florida-based BayCare Behavioral Health. But finding patients a bed is proving increasingly challenging.

The needs of the Substance use disorder Population in the community within 3 miles of the Behavioral Wellness Center at Girard has gone from a Crisis to a Catastrophe. The following findings were noted:

- According to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health In Philadelphia, PA, unintentional drug overdoses contribute to significant premature mortality. In 2020, there were 1,214 drug overdoses in Philadelphia, an increase of 9% and 6% from 2018 and 2019, respectively. Eighty-six percent of overdose fatalities involve opioids, a class of drugs that include pharmaceutical opioids, heroin, and fentanyl, a strong synthetic opioid that is the main driver of fatal overdoses. While fentanyl was involved in less than 10% of drug overdose deaths in Philadelphia in 2010, it was involved in 81% of all drug overdose deaths in 2020.
- According to the American Psychological Association, the ongoing stress and uncertainty of COVID-19 have led to increased demand for mental health services from psychologists in the United States—but conditions like anxiety and depression aren't the only mental health issues people are facing. Experts say misuse of opioids and stimulants is also on the rise—and psychologists are in a good position to help.





## Overview of Planned Program Intervention

After reviewing the needs of the Psychiatric and Substance Use Disorder communities served by the Behavioral Wellness Center at Girard, the following steps will be implemented:

### Psychiatric:

- The Acute **Psychiatric** unit which is currently 10 beds will be increased to 14 beds and staffing increased accordingly. This will bring the facility's staffed bed capacity to its Psychiatric license limit of 65 beds.
- Discussions will begin with insurers and the state regulators to permit the facility to open a new Extended Acute Unit which can accommodate the Norristown and other community Psychiatric patient needs.

### Substance Use Disorder:

- A recreation vehicle (RV) has been acquired and will be altered so that it can go into the community to perform assessments on clients at sites closer to where they reside. Upon completion of an assessment a client will have the option to receive multiple treatment options at The Behavioral Wellness Center. This includes Detoxification, withdrawal management, residential services, and outpatient services with or without methadone. All clients who are seeking treatment for opiate use disorder will have the option of Methadone, Suboxone, and Vivitrol. The RV will be staffed with clinical support staff who can engage the potential clients and perform all assessment tasks so the client can arrive at The behavioral Wellness Center and go right into treatment.
- A new service line call the Withdraw Management service will be opened and encompass 38 beds. Client can be admitted directly to this unit and begin the process of safely managing their withdrawal from substances.

### **Future Validation of Intervention Services**

In order to determine the effectiveness of these actions the facility will perform the following steps:

#### **Psychiatric:**

- The Acute Psychiatric unit's census will be monitored to determine if more patients have been admitted and the occupancy has increased.
- The key validation for the new Extended Acute Unit will be the approval to open and the actual opening.

#### **Substance Use Disorder:**

- The volume of new patients by admission source and the services that they utilize will be monitored to determine the effectiveness of the RV and its outreach team.
- The Withdrawal Management clients' numbers will be monitored to determine whether we are succeeding in moving these clients from their abuse of substance or not.



801 W. GIRARD AVENUE  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19122

### Contact for Feedback

Kate Bardelli  
North Philadelphia Health System  
Dba The Behavioral Welllness Center at Girard  
801 West Girard Ave.  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19122  
[kbardelli@bewellctr.org](mailto:kbardelli@bewellctr.org)