New Hampshire's 10-Year Mental Health Plan

Key Accomplishments - 2024

Report on Priorities for Implementation of New Hampshire's 10-year Mental Health Plan of 2019

Pursuant to Chapter 248, Laws of 2019 (Senate Bill 292) to the New Hampshire Health and Human Services Oversight Committee, et al.

October 2024

Department of HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The Department of Health and Human Services' mission is to join communities and families in providing opportunities for citizens to achieve health and independence.

Message from DHHS Commissioner Lori Weaver



On behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), I am pleased to submit the New Hampshire 10-Year Mental Health Plan Annual Report. This year marks the halfway point of the Plan, which has served since 2019 as a blueprint for individuals, communities, policymakers and stakeholders to collectively change the landscape of New Hampshire's mental health system. With some of the plan's work completed and some still in progress, we are on track to meeting the goals of an ambitious plan to improve the mental health and well-being of the people we serve.

Specifically, over the last year, the Department has implemented several initiatives to address mental health needs; including:

- The creation of Mission Zero, a data-driven, collective effort to address emergency department boarding for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis;
- The launch of the Children's Behavioral Health Resource Center, which provides education on the Children's System of Care framework, evidence-based practices for families and providers, and searchable provider resources for families.
- Increased funding for Community Mental Health Centers through changes in the Medicaid managed care program.
- Federal approval for the Community Re-Entry program, which will provide limited Medicaid benefits for incarcerated individuals diagnosed with a mental illness for 45 days prior to their release.

We are grateful for the unwavering support of Governor Chris Sununu and the Executive Council, our state and federal partners, and the policy changes and funding opportunities that have helped us to fulfill the Plan's identified objectives so far. Perhaps most importantly, we are grateful for our compassionate and skilled community mental health services providers, who have worked tirelessly at the ground level to build system capacity, support innovation, and expand the continuum of care for mental health services across the State.

As we enter the 6th year of the 10-Year Mental Health Plan and continue to focus on the remainder of our system-wide goals, the 10-Year Mental Health Plan will remain the framework for addressing the State's service needs and opportunities for further improvement. The Plan will continue to be updated to reflect New Hampshire's long-term strategies for system-wide improvements through this framework.

The State's focus in the coming year includes:

- Advancing the integration of behavioral and physical health through the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic model.
- Expanding crisis services by establishing location-based Rapid Response Crisis Stabilization Centers.
- Expanding independent housing, supported housing, and residential treatment options.
- Supporting successful community re-entry following an inpatient hospitalization or incarceration by prioritizing connections to community healthcare providers, substance use programs, and peer support.
- Improving access to NH's Behavioral Health System of Care through a broad range of community-based and residential services to meet the needs of children and families.
- Promoting behavioral health awareness, how to access services, and encouraging help-seeking as a routine and positive action through Strong As Granite, New Hampshire's coordinated effort to bring help, hope, and healing to all Granite Staters.

Together with elected officials, advocates, peers, and providers, DHHS will continue to focus on ensuring that New Hampshire has a comprehensive, high-quality, and sustainable mental health system.

Sincerely,

Lori Weaver

Lori Weaver, Commissioner, NH Department of Health and Human Services

New Hampshire's 10-Year Mental Health Plan

Key Accomplishments - 2024

Department of HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Goal 1: Expand Coordinated Continuum of Care

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has continued to build out the mental health system's continuum of care and fill gaps in care coordination, especially as people move from one level of care to another. We have achieved this by:

- Launching a coordinated "Care Traffic Control" process to centralize Involuntary Emergency Admissions (IEA) processes. New Hampshire Hospital serves as the hub that manages IEAs and data tracking.
- Maintaining a centralized NH Rapid Response access point, which has responded to 86,469 calls since its launch in January of 2022.
- Developing hand-off protocols among 988 Lifeline Centers, the NH Rapid Response Access Point, and 911.
- Expanding Transitional Residential Enhanced Care Coordination for youth, increasing enrollment by 37% in 2024 and serving 372 youth and families as of May 2024.
- Maintaining statewide Critical Time Intervention (CTI) for adults transitioning from a Designated Receiving Facility (DRF) to the community, serving over 575 adults since 2023.
- Accepting a $1M federal Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) planning grant to explore the CCBHC model of integrated care, culminating in NH's selection as a Medicaid demonstration state.

Goal 2: Increase Community Education

The Department has continued its efforts to provide information and education to a range of audiences on available services and supports. It has done so by:

- Launching the Strong as Granite public awareness campaign in September 2023, which provides education about available resources and encourages help-seeking.
- Working with 35 NH Liquor & Wine Outlet locations to promote behavioral health support.
- Going live with the online Children's Behavioral Health Resource Center. The Center provides education on the Children's System of Care framework, evidence-based practices for families and providers, and searchable provider resources for families.
- Offering crisis intervention training to 535 individuals, in partnership with NAMI-NH; 37 new state trainers identified.
- Piloting the Zero Suicide Initiative with 3 Recovery Community Organizations and the NH Department of Corrections.
- Launching the Onward NH early intervention campaign.

Goal 3: Intervene Earlier through Prevention & Early Intervention Strategies

In recognition of the need to have services available so that the development of mental health conditions can be prevented or mitigated, DHHS has continued to invest in prevention programs, which includes:

- Expanding Early Childhood Wraparound services for children from birth through age five, with 61 children and families served in 2024.
- A new program for children/families who are grieving a death. The program provides hope through community/educational supports and awareness of grief as a public health and mental health issue.
- Carrying out the work called for in the Early Childhood Prevention and Treatment for Behavioral Health Plan (2022), including implementing Early Childhood Wraparound, supporting workforce expansion, and database development for Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP).

- The expansion of CPP to three cohorts, with 65 clinicians trained in the model in 2024.
- Supporting Regional Public Health Networks across NH as they partner with schools to incorporate suicide prevention programming.
- Student assistance programs, which now use the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Short Screener for mental health screening and referrals:
- Revision of the State's suicide prevention plan by the NH Suicide Prevention Council.
- Creation of school suicide prevention planning and training standards.
- Development of a standardized suicide screening and risk assessment tool for use in emergency departments.
- Juvenile Justice Transformation work, which has created a pathway for a universal strength and needs assessment and connection to community support before court involvement.

Goal 4: Ensure Robust Outpatient Services

People in NH rely on outpatient behavioral health services for a range of issues, from housing supports to care coordination and wraparound services. The Department has added the following initiatives to bolster its service array:

- A federally approved, revised Medicaid Supportive Housing benefit, which allows billing for the provision of services to adults with disabilities experiencing homelessness.
- Performance-based scoring, which allowed for an increase in funding awarded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Permanent Supported Housing, with beds expanding from 376 units to 406 in 2024.
- Six new projects awarded by HUD in 2024 to support adults and families experiencing homelessness.
- A landlord incentive pilot program to support the Housing Bridge program. Twelve people have successfully transitioned from higher levels of care into apartments.
- Housing Bridge vouchers increased by more than 28% in 2024, totaling 358 active vouchers.
- Of the contracted 20 new specialty residential beds for individuals with complex physical and behavioral health needs, the full occupancy of the first 5-bed home, with the second 5-bed home expected to open in fall 2024.
- Expanding the capacity of *Integrative*, a housing voucher pilot program for individuals with mental illness and criminal records, from 25 to 50. The program currently serves 29 people.
- Increased enrollments in FAST Forward (high fidelity wraparound services) from 100 youth and families in 2019 to 565 in 2024, totaling 1,511 families to date.
- Continued availability of specialized treatment programs for First Episode Psychosis, with four teams serving 60 individuals across the state.

Goal 5: Expand Step-up/Step-Down Service Options

The Department supports programs that help people at the level of care they need. Toward that effort, the Department has taken steps to:

- Adopt a Level of Care Utilization System (LOCUS) assessment tool to pilot in 2024. The tool will support discharge planning for transitions from New Hampshire Hospital and Glencliff Home to community-based settings.
- Maintain an 80%+ occupancy of Recovery Oriented Step-Up/Step-Down programs, which is a total of 15 beds.
- Increase the number of Comprehensive Assessment for Treatment (CAT). The CAT establishes clinical needs for children's residential care and placements are made based on identified needs and strengths. Since its launch, more than 2,100 assessments have been completed.

Goal 6: Transform Crisis & Inpatient Services

The Department has taken major steps to completely transform its crisis and inpatient services with new models of care. These include:

- Contracting with two agencies to establish NH's first Rapid Response Crisis Centers, which offer in-person services. The first center opened in Derry in July 2024. The second center is scheduled to open in late 2024.

- Continuing to mature the NH Rapid Response program, which includes an access point and statewide mobile crisis.
- Growing the reach of the national crisis line 988.
- Constructing a forensic psychiatric hospital adjacent to New Hampshire Hospital that is on track to open in 2026.
- Increasing Designated Receiving Facility capacity with 5 new beds to open in late 2024.
- Selecting a new clinical care provider at Hampstead Hospital and Residential Treatment Center.
- Amending NH's substance use disorder and Institutions for Mental Disease Medicaid waiver to include community re-entry for people with behavioral health needs who are close to release from the state prison and county jails.

Goal 7: Strengthen Integration of Peers and Natural Supports

As workforce challenges persist, DHHS recognizes the role of families and peers in supporting people with mental health conditions. The Department has:

- Expanded training and consultation services for peer support agency leadership and boards to strengthen financial sustainability and governance.
- Expanded youth peer support services within the FAST Forward program, with over 100 youth enrolled through July 2024.
- Expanded family peer support within the FAST Forward program.
- Increased requirements to integrate peers throughout the continuum of care in contract provisions in all adult mental health contracts.
- Increased the number of Certified Peer Support Specialists, from 57 in 2020 to 270 in 2024.

Goal 8: Infuse Resources to Stabilize & Grow the System

The Department has leveraged federal and state funds to maintain services while standing up new, innovative programs to support the mental health system, including:

- The State budget (2024/25), which included significant funding to increase behavioral health Medicaid rates.
- Federal Medicaid authority for additional funding for mobile crisis services.
- SAMHSA grant funding to support the CCBHC model of care.
- Capital funding for new DRF beds, crisis stabilization services, and 12 community residences beds.

Goal 9: Leverage Strong Leadership, Strategic Advocacy & Grassroots Support

Leaders at the community, stakeholder, and provider levels have joined executive and legislative leadership to continue their unwavering support for mental health services. This collective action has resulted in:

- Mission Zero, which was launched in 2023 to address emergency room boarding by focusing on strategic priorities.
- Partnership between Dover Youth to Youth and the NH Liquor Commission's Division of Enforcement, which banned the targeted marketing of alcoholic drinks to minors.
- Strategic direction of the State Suicide Prevention Plan in the next 5-year plan (2025-2030).
- Ongoing convening of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Mental Illness, the Corrections system, and the Governor's Statewide Oversight Commission on Mental Health Workforce Development.
- The Council of State Governments Justice Center's high utilizer assessment project with jails, state prison, and behavioral health providers.
- Ongoing convening of the Children's System of Care Advisory Committee.

Goal 10: Cultivate & Maintain a High-Quality Workforce

The Department has worked with legislators and educational institutions to expand the mental health workforce, through such endeavors as:

- Senate Bill 207 (2024), which enables qualified clinicians from other states to practice in NH, promoting interstate mobility and addressing workforce shortages.
- House Bill 1190 (2024), the adoption of the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, to promote mobility and address workforce shortages by mutually recognizing licenses from other member states.
- Project ECHO, which focuses on the integration of mental health and recovery peer workforce. Two cohorts ran in 2024.
- A new peer certification program, which began accepting enrollment in Jan. 2024; 47 peers have completed certification.
- New NH Rapid Response Mobile Crisis Responder Training Program; first training cohort started in August 2024.
- $5M in ARPA Home and Community-Based Services funds to support direct care staff at Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs).
- A new bachelor-level cooperative learning Community Mental Health degree program at participating colleges (2023); 15 students are currently enrolled and working at CMHCs.
- The State Loan Repayment Program, which supports clinicians at CMHCs.
- The Children's Behavioral Health Resource Center, which provides technical assistance and training to promote the successful implementation of evidence-based programs.
- Investment in statewide training for CPP providers and co-occurring disorder training/consultation for mental health and substance use providers.

Goal 11: Improve Technology & Infrastructure Capacity

The State's efforts in care coordination are supported by technology and infrastructure improvements, which has resulted in:

- A new contract to support a closed loop referral system.
- Creation of a network of providers and organizations to support residents using PointClickCare software for improved communication and coordination.
- New workflows for NH Rapid Response services, connecting individuals in crisis with ongoing care via a closed loop referral platform and dispatching software.
- Streamlined care coordination and program functioning to enhance data capacity.
- Additional staff capacity at the DHHS Division for Behavioral Health in 2024-2025.

Goal 12: Expand Meaningful Quality Assurance & Monitoring

The Department is responsible for overseeing the quality of services provided. This oversight includes actions such as:

- Initiating a children's behavioral health System of Care assessment (2024).
- House Bill 1573 (2024), which increases the quality and oversight requirements of children's residential programs.
- Actively evaluating the crisis system transformation with support from a contracted vendor, reviewing and implementing system improvements.
- Process improvement work to align NH's two 988 Lifeline Centers to improve in-state answer rates and ensure a consistent caller experience.
- Partnership with the national Crisis Text Line to ensure NH has access to state-level text volume, utilization, and trend data in SFY 2023-2024.
- Annual evaluation of the Children's System of Care to ensure quality of implementation and evaluate ongoing needs, gaps, and improvements.

DHHS Mission Zero: Mobilizing Collective Action

Led by a multi-stakeholder, multi-sector steering committee and workgroups, Mission Zero is bringing together the entire mental health system to eliminate the hospital emergency department (ED) boarding challenge for good by simultaneously addressing its three drivers:

Front Door Issues: people in crisis go to the ED because they have been unable to get the right level of care in the community to address their psychosocial needs and/or immediate psychological crisis OR because they don't know where else to go.

Inpatient Supply & Coordination Issues: people with acute psychiatric needs are unable to be transferred to an appropriate inpatient bed due to a shortage or system fragmentation of such beds.

Back Door Issues: people are exceeding medically necessary stays in inpatient psychiatric facilities due to a lack of the right levels of support they need to be discharged safely, thus preventing new admissions to the inpatient facility.

DHHS has identified 6 priority interventions with the greatest impact and viability that align with ongoing implementation of the State's 10-Year Mental Health Plan, which provides the foundation upon which the work of Mission Zero will advance:



10-Year MH Plan



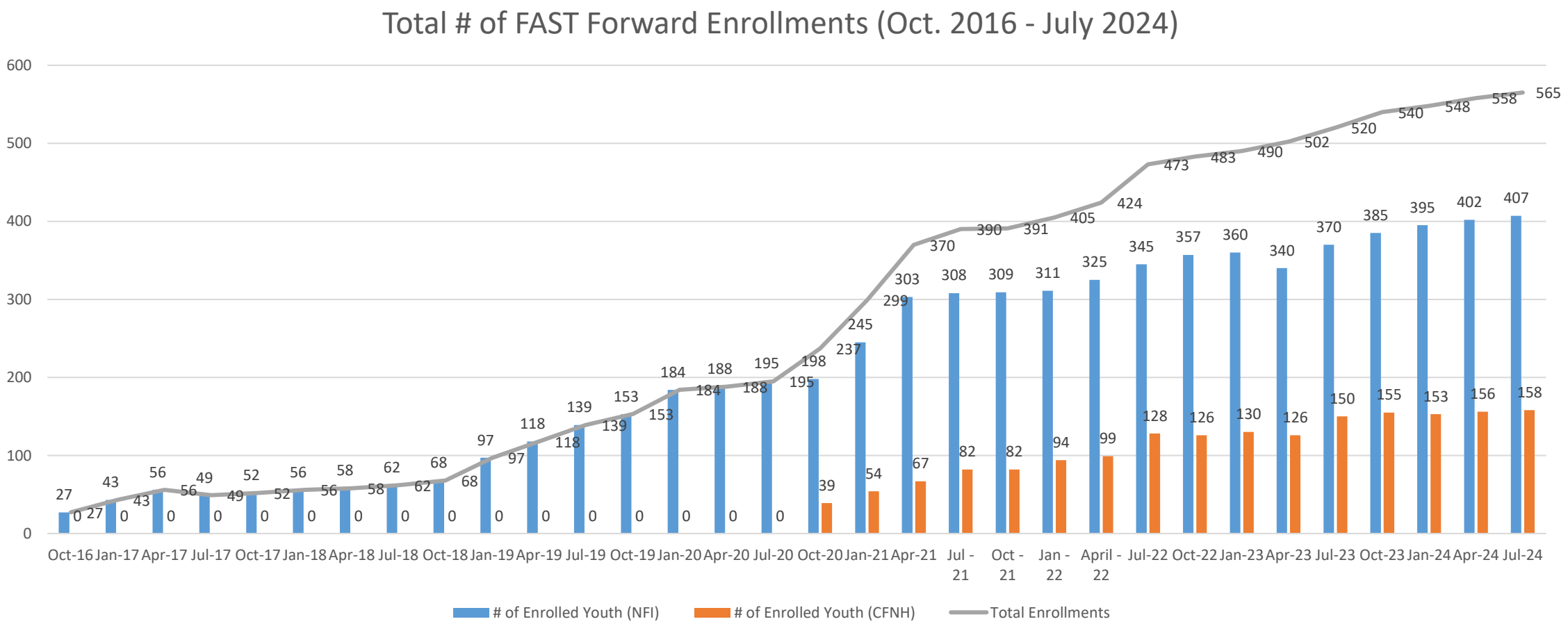
Mission Zero

Mission Zero Priorities

Expansion of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC)	CCBHC model is transforming community mental health across the U.S., expanding access and integration of services to reach more people while utilizing more sustainable, alternative payment models.	• **Progress:** $1M federal planning grant received, contracts approved for 9 CMHCs to engage in planning efforts. • NAMI NH facilitating stakeholder engagement and Brandeis University assisting with certification standards and quality metrics. Two CCBHCs granted provisional certification. • NH selected to participate in the 4-year federal CCBHC Medicaid Demonstration Program.	• **Goal:** By October 2024, expect application for provisional certification from third CMHC (West Central). • Two CCBHCs (Greater Nashua and Manchester) accepting new patients by Spring 2025.
Community-Based Crisis Stabilization Centers	Complementing the crisis phone/text and mobile team services, these walk-in centers serve as in-person access points to BH services and alternatives to hospitals/EDs/jails, providing 23.5 hr. sub-acute care and referrals to community resources.	• **Progress**: Contracts with 2 CMHCs approved (SFY24 $1.47M & SFY25 $1.47M); receiving TA from SAMHSA to assist with the model development; received additional allocation of $5M total in SFY24/25 budget. • CLM currently operating, seeing about 40-70 patients/month via walk-in crisis service. Procurement in development for crisis stabilization expansion beyond first two centers.	• **Goal:** Second Crisis Stabilization Center (Lakes Region MH) to open in Fall 2024. • Additional Stabilization Centers expected to launch in early 2025
Care Traffic Control	Centralized coordination and oversight of all adult IEA referrals submitted for inpatient mental health treatment to ensure timely care in the right place.	• **Progress**: Initial launch 1/16/24. NHH CTC team is staffed 24/7 as of 5/1/2024. • Multi-organization task group has developed and implemented a process for all Involuntary Inpatient referrals to come through NHH. • Daily huddles with DRFs are ongoing. Multiple KPIs have been determined and data is being collected to inform process improvement and system impact.	• **Goal:** Continued information system improvements underway to create workflow efficiencies and more accurate data via NHH EHR solutions. • Two statewide education sessions with provider community completed in Q2 2024. Additional sessions are being scheduled. • Launch of Mission Zero public dashboard to be completed by Q3 will provide increased transparency.
Expansions in Designated Receiving Facility (DRF) Beds	Renovations on two NHH units; partner with SolutionHealth on 144-bed BH facility in Londonderry; partner with Dartmouth Health to open 5 DRF bed unit.	• **Progress:** $16 million total allocated for new DRF projects, contracts approved, implementation underway. • 12 beds added at NHH in Spring 2024 • Londonderry project received initial approval from town council and expects to close by Sept. 2024	• **Goal:** NHH to reach full census of 184 by end of 2024. • Dartmouth accepting admissions by end of 2024. • Londonderry facility accepting admissions by early 2026.
Expansions in Care in Step-Down and Less Restrictive Settings	Create residential program for individuals with co-occurring BH issues, intellectual disability, complex medical needs and facilitate a successful transition to the community.	• **Progress**: Over $10 million allocated through SFY 25. Two 5-bed specialty residential properties in Newport are accepting patients for move-in. Identified third property but sale fell through; pursuing a property in Boscawen. • Fiscal approval for Riverbend 12-bed facility capital project. • 14 patients with nursing home level of need placed in Strafford County.	• **Goal**: 16 patients with nursing home level of need placed by Dec. 2024. • Two 5-bed programs to be at full occupancy by October 2024. • Final 5-bed property secured by November 2024. • NFI Pathways full capacity by Q3 2024. • 12 new specialty residential beds in Concord in Q2 2025.
Landlord Incentives to Expand Places to Remain Stably Housed	Transition individuals with SMI to apartments; work with rental property owners, landlords, municipalities to mitigate risks, provide permanent, supportive housing.	• **Progress**: Funds allocated (SFY24 $1M & SFY25 $400K) and contract approved. 5 NHH hospital patients have been discharged to apartments with landlord incentives as of this date. 6 more with completed applications pending approval.	• **Goal:** 25 patients moved to stable housing by Q4 2024.

Fast Forward Data through July 2024

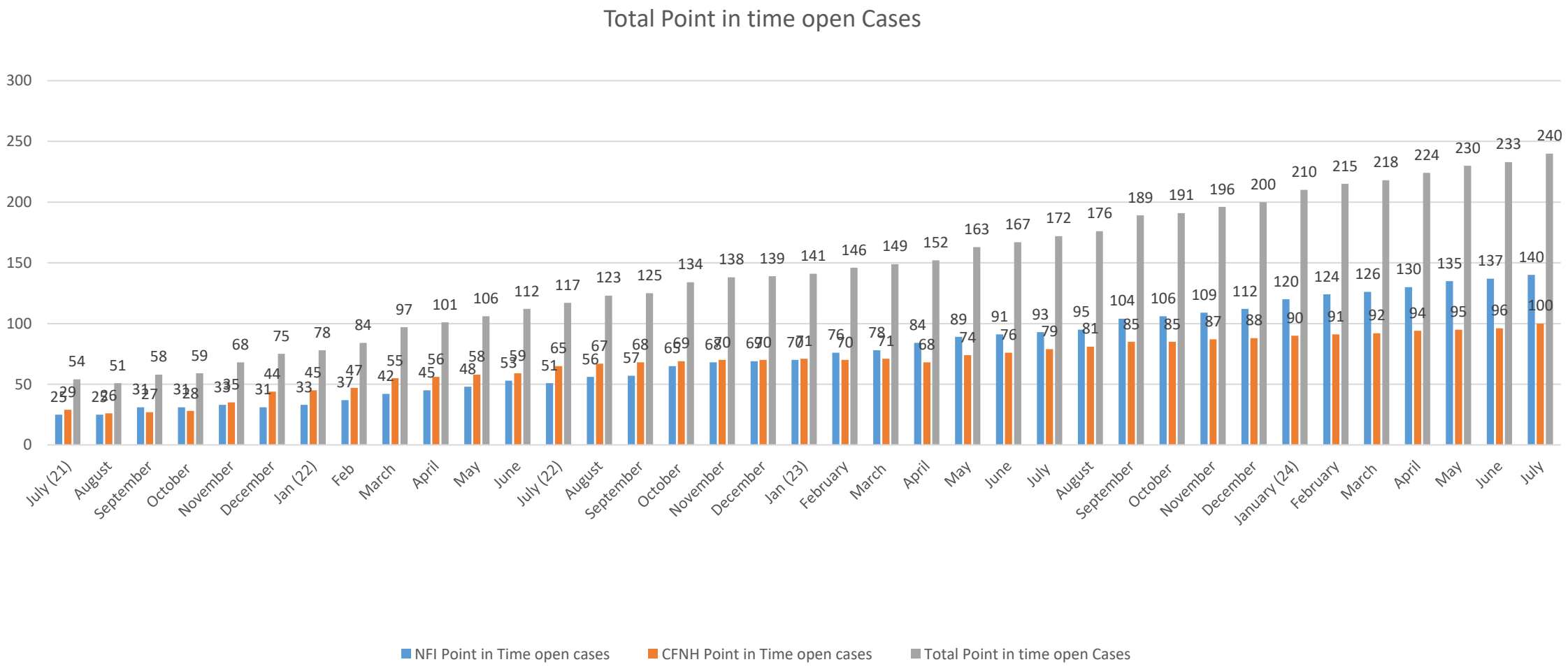
Total youth served through Fast Forward since SFY 2016: **1511**



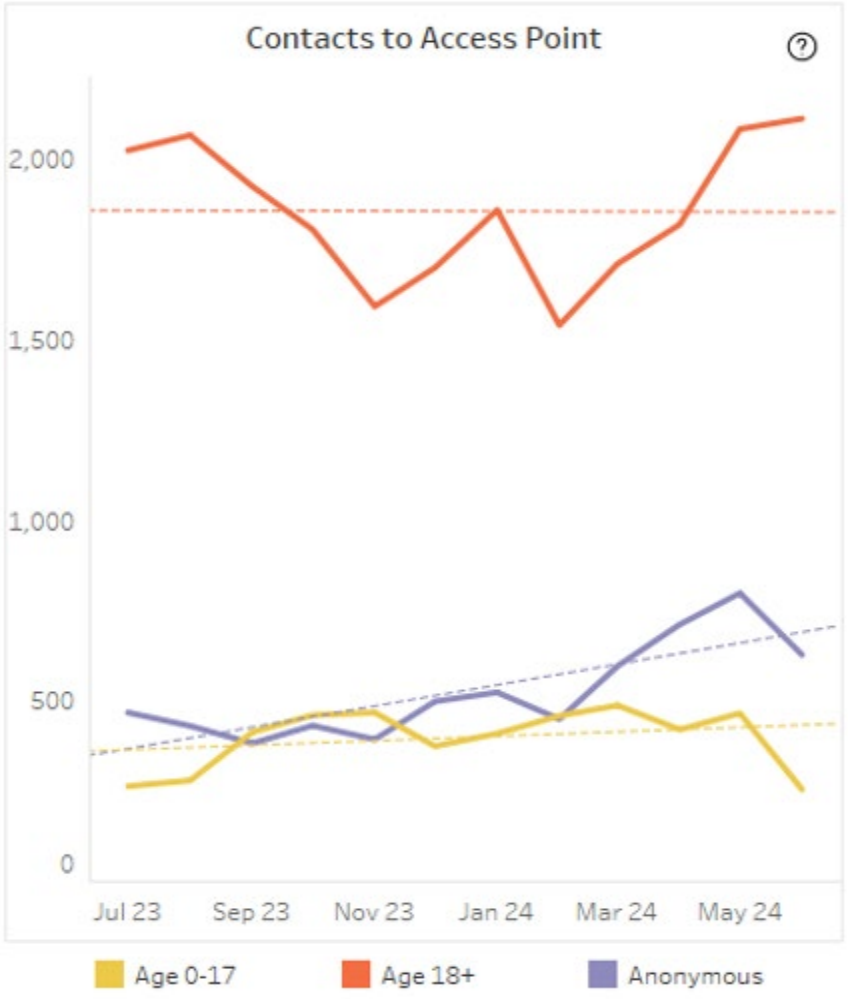
NEW HAMPSHIRE DHHS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Transitional Residential Enhance Care Coordination (TRECC) Data

Total youth served through TRECC from 7.1.21 through 7.31.24: **393**



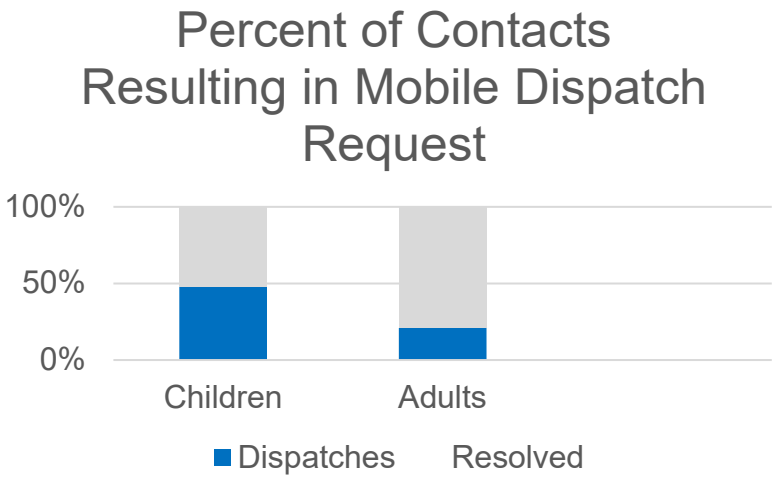
Rapid Response Access Point Data for SFY 2024 (7/1/23-6/30/24)



Contacts to Access Point
33,315

Unique People Served
9,451

Mobile Dispatch Requests
6,475



CASE STUDY

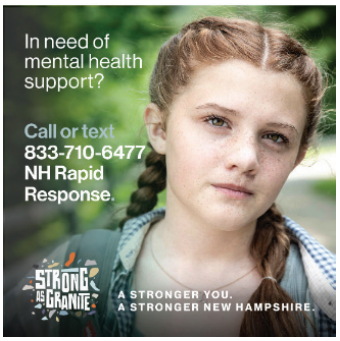
New Hampshire's "Strong as Granite" Campaign

In September 2023, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services launched their "Strong as Granite" campaign to educate residents about behavioral health services available to them across the state.

The campaign's name, Strong as Granite, evokes the spirit of self-sufficiency that New Hampshire residents have long embraced. Messages focus on strength, resiliency, and hope, and direct audiences to state and national resources available 24/7. Working with the Office of Governor Christopher T. Sununu and NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) the campaign launched during National Suicide Prevention week. "New Hampshire has worked to rebuild our mental health system from the ground up, with an emphasis on providing Granite Staters support when and where they need them," said Governor Chris Sununu. "The Strong as Granite campaign provides yet another set of tools to quickly access resources in a time of need."



When people call the Rapid Response number, operators can deploy mobile crisis teams through the state's 10 mental health centers. This is part of what's called the "crisis now model," which has three pillars: someone to call, someone to respond, and somewhere to go.









New Hampshire uses ads in a targeted fashion, depending on public health data trends in various regions. For example, a billboard in Manchester, New Hampshire targets women between 30 and 40 to call 211, given that rates of overdose among women in that age group are among some of the highest in the state.

The campaign is meant to be broad and upstream, so people can call early and often and do not need to wait until a time of crisis.



In addition to the campaign imagery, New Hampshire residents shared lived experiences for both mental health and substance use challenges. Shared storytelling is empowering for people who have experienced significant challenges in their lives. By sharing their stories, they also help others find inspiration, hope, and connection.



