

CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEMS

The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic fallout have had serious negative impacts on mental health and access to mental health services, further taxing an already overwhelmed crisis system. Individuals in crisis are more likely to encounter law enforcement than get connected to resources and care they need. Medicaid can play a valuable role in creating a better crisis system.



Calls to the National Helpline increased five-fold in the first month of the pandemic.

OPTIONS FOR STATE ACTION



CONNECT INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS WITH APPROPRIATE CARE

The Reality

- Mental health crises account for 1 in 10 calls to 911, but 911 emergency response is not built for mental health crises.
- The “988” National Suicide Hotline is coming in 2022, but many other state and other resources already exist.

Innovative Approach

- Leverage and support state crisis hotlines for Medicaid members.



ENSURE THE RIGHT RESPONDERS ARE DISPATCHED

The Reality

- Police are often the first and only responders to mental health crisis situations, despite typically having little training or expertise.
- Trained behavioral health professionals can often de-escalate and manage these situations more safely and effectively.

Innovative Approach

- Mobile crisis teams and co-responder models can help ensure the person in crisis gets the care they need, while preserving public safety resources.

OPTIONS FOR STATE ACTION [CONTINUED]



DEVELOP SPECIALIZED SETTINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS

The Reality

- 1 in 8 visits to hospital emergency departments is related to mental health or substance use disorders.
- While mental health professionals sometimes staff emergency departments, they are often the wrong setting for those experiencing a mental health crisis.

Innovative Approach

- Specialized settings can provide more appropriate care and relieve pressure on over-burdened emergency departments. Crisis diversion facilities and stabilization centers are two models that Medicaid programs can work with to ensure providers are enrolled and services are covered.



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ABOUT MEDICAID FORWARD

More than 77 million Americans – roughly one in every five – use Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to get the health care they need. With this broad reach, the programs will inherently be central to our recovery as a nation. Through Medicaid Forward, NAMD and its partners have identified concrete, actionable ways that state Medicaid administrators can and are creating a healthier, stronger American future.

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