

MIND SPRINGS HEALTH • WEST SPRINGS HOSPITAL



ADVOCATE

MISSION

- It is our mission to provide access to quality mental health and substance abuse services, enhancing recovery and resilience in individuals, families and communities.

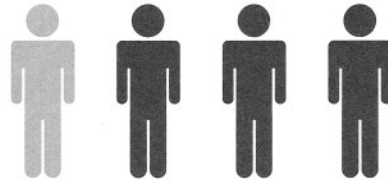
VALUES

- Strength created through local partnerships, with collaboration and education
- Integrity and accountability in all we do
- Outcomes driven
- Responsible financial stewardship
- Leadership in physical and behavioral health care integration
- Culture of Trauma Informed Care
- Focus on exceptional customer service

24/7 TOLL-FREE
MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS LINE
1.888.207.4004

A toll-free call to our crisis line instantly puts an individual in direct touch with a trained clinician who listens, assists, evaluates and connects the caller to the most effective mental health services in averting or managing a mental health crisis. Our crisis line serves 10 Western Slope counties from Summit to Mesa, and is staffed by trained clinicians 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

A Mother's Mission



1 in 4 people
in the U.S. today affected
by mental health issues

The sixteen-year-old son of Ragenal L. was in crisis. West Springs Hospital, the only psychiatric hospital on the western slope, was at full, 32-bed capacity. "We weren't sure when or if he'd get a bed," said Ragenal, who is a hundred percent disabled and has already lost two family members to completed suicide. "We prayed that we'd get it here in Grand Junction, but we really didn't know where he'd go."

To make sure her son was safe, they were housed temporarily in a small room overnight at West Springs Hospital. The next day a bed opened up in Pueblo, Colorado, and a transportation company was hired to make the long drive to that psychiatric bed. Needing to accompany him, Ragenal had only an hour to pack for what was expected to be a week-long stay.

"I followed the transport car for six hours straight," said Ragenal, with a trembling voice. "I was afraid to lose them. I didn't want to lose my son. I didn't even want to pull over for the bathroom. I don't know how I made the drive. I cried the whole way there."

By the time her son was checked into the new facility, it was eleven o'clock at night and nearly 24 hours had passed.

"I didn't know where I was, where to go or where to stay," she said. "I knew nobody there. It's disorienting. You don't know what you're supposed to do and your whole support system is clear over there hundreds of miles away."

It took seven days to stabilize her son, and Ragenal remained in Pueblo with him until then. Most days while her son was in treatment, she was

CONTINUED INSIDE...





Where to Turn?

A dire mental health crisis is playing out in communities all across America. A shortage of psychiatric inpatient beds is leaving individuals in crisis and their families in desperate and often dangerous situations with nowhere to turn. 60 Minutes recently reported on this crisis, which has been building since the 1960s when many of the country's psychiatric hospitals began to close. The idea was that patients would be better served in local community health centers, but many of these other facilities were never built.

Today, the number of inpatient psychiatric beds available nationwide has dropped from more than half a million beds to fewer than 100,000. Here in Colorado, the situation is especially grim on the

self-referral. Timely access is critical because of the level of monitoring, stabilization, and specialized psychiatric expertise that can be provided around-the-clock by board-certified staff. That allows for patient assessment, diagnosis, and treatment as well as creation of a detailed discharge plan to ensure patients' the tools and collaborative team needed for the continuum of care post-discharge.

West Springs Hospital, the only psychiatric hospital between Salt Lake City and Denver, has only 32 beds. Almost daily, the waiting list is sometimes six deep with individuals hoping for a spot to free up.

Not all patients can be housed with a roommate, so the juggling of bed configurations is a frustrating and non-stop process.

"For instance, if you have a 9-year-old female, you can't put anyone else in there except another 8 to



Available Inpatient Psychiatric Beds Per Population:

National Average: 16 beds per 100,000 population

Colorado Average: 10 beds per 100,000 population

Western Slope Average: West Springs Hospital's 32 Psychiatric Beds = 6 beds available per 100,000 people

Western Slope. With only six beds available per 100,000 people, the Western Slope falls far below both state and national averages. The result is a constant and chronic shortage of beds for people in serious need of psychiatric help.

"Outpatient services do a great job keeping people from getting to a point where they need a psychiatric bed," says Kim Boe, Vice President of West Springs Hospital. "At the time someone is referred to a psychiatric bed, they are in desperate need of safety and the intensive services that they receive in the hospital. What that means is that they are at imminent risk of hurting themselves or others. They are at a dangerous point when they're referred to us, and it's hard to not have a bed available."

People are referred to an inpatient psychiatric bed from a variety of sources, including emergency rooms & clinics, law enforcement, or sometimes by

10-year-old female, so essentially that other bed in the room becomes unusable," says Boe. "On any given day, we'll have far more referrals than we have beds to offer."

Boe and her staff perform a constant dance daily in figuring out how to hospitalize everyone who needs to be. The staff looks closely at every case. "We ask questions like, who are they, where are they waiting, what's the clinical presentation, and why are they coming to us? We have to triage where the need is greatest, and it's very hard. If they're in a place that's unsafe, they move to the top of the list. We talk through all of these options."

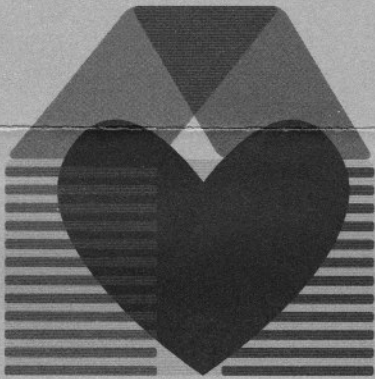
If no space is available, then hospital staff must come up with creative solutions, working hard to find a psychiatric bed somewhere else. The challenge is, that in Colorado there aren't enough beds anywhere else either.



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Mind Springs Health & West Springs Hospital have begun to advocate for more psychiatric beds at both a state and national level. Colorado Senators Michael Bennet and Mark Udall and State Representative Scott Tipton are all sympathetic to the plight, and supportive of researching options.

Solutions, such as adding more beds to current facilities, can't come soon enough for Boe and the patients she serves. "We're drawing people from all over, and they all need these beds. It's critical. We should be able to respond to everyone who needs us, and right now we can't." ■



Optimum Care for Patients

As the only psychiatric hospital on the western slope, West Springs Hospital's goal is to ensure a safe and secure therapeutic environment for our patients, where rapid stabilization of symptoms can be achieved so that they are safely able to continue their recovery out of the hospital with appropriate supports while living at home, where they really want to be.

West Springs Hospital's patient-centered philosophy has recently improved processes surrounding a patient's length of stay. Many factors come together to optimize, and minimize a hospital stay while ensuring the patients receive the appropriate care needed.

Preparation for a safe and effective discharge now commences at the point of admission, and a patient's discharge plans are an important part of their Treatment Plan.

Each patient has a Treatment Team charged with evaluating effectiveness of their custom plan on a daily basis. The plan, including any revisions or updates, is also reviewed directly with and contributed to by the patient as well. Whenever possible, family members and primary care providers are also encouraged to participate and/or contribute to the safe discharge plan. Issues, goals, progress and barriers to discharge are discussed, as well as patient preferences regarding follow-up outpatient care.

As a result of these process changes, West Springs Hospital has been able to return our patients to their families and loved ones an average of 3 days earlier than previously. The development of the 'Bridge Clinic' in providing services straddling between hospitalization and outpatient treatment is another reason for being able to successfully reduce length of hospital stays. ■

For more information on West Springs Hospital, please log onto WestSpringsHospital.org

on her own. Her husband remained behind at home to care for their animals and work.

"If we'd been able to stay in Grand Junction, I'd at least have had home and family and wouldn't have felt so lost. I was scared about the drive, and worried so much about where I was going to be and how we were going to pay for it. It's not like at home where you have a spouse and your family and dogs. You're just alone. You don't know what to do."

While Pueblo was a long way to go, Ragenia is grateful for the safety planning and efforts to get her son treatment when he needed it, wherever that may have been. "This whole system needs to be fixed. When we need help, it's not something you can wait on. That's scary. I don't want other kids and parents to have to go through this." ■

Mind Springs Health and West Springs Hospital are working on solutions. Look for more information on how you can help address the growing need for helping individuals and families in psychiatric crises online at:

MindSpringsHealth.org



WestSpringsHospital.org



Mind Springs Health Benefits from Breckenridge Charity Event



When a Breckenridge Ski Resort employee survey revealed a desire to build a better connection within the lift ticket scanning department, and the larger community, part of the solution was to create an annual charity dodgeball tournament. In its second year, the tournament chose Mind Springs Health as its beneficiary in order to highlight both mental health issues and a favorite local skier nicknamed "First Chair Joel."

"Joel was often the first person in line. He befriended the staff on all those early mornings when they were getting ready. He'd always chat them up," said Ed Tunna, Breckenridge's Ticket Scanning Assistant Manager. "We know he struggled with mental health issues, and so when he passed away this fall, we decided to dedicate the tournament to his memory. Choosing Mind Springs Health seemed a great way to do that."

With 14 teams of six drawn from all across the ski resort, the tournament grew exponentially in its second year. In addition to the registration fee, Breckenridge employees raised money with a raffle of coveted resort 'lost and found' items, as well as some unorthodox rules that allowed teams to bribe the officials for a competitive edge....!

"The charity event was definitely competitive, but we also aimed to have it be fun," Tunna said.

Mind Springs Health greatly thanks the Breckenridge Scan Team for a terrific event which raised over \$500. It will be directed towards crisis services in our Frisco office. ■

If your organization is interested in making Mind Springs Health the beneficiary of your event, please email Suzanne Sloan at ssloan@mindspringshealth.org