



Responding to the Crisis in Pediatric Mental Health: A Community Commitment to a System of Care



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S®
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

The crisis in pediatric behavioral health has become increasingly clear over the last decade, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even before the pandemic, approximately 1 in 5 children had a mental illness, but less than half of the estimated 7.7 million children who needed services received them from a mental health provider.

2013 patients: 1,706 → **2019 patients: 5,488**
= **221% increase**

With the opening of the Big Lots Behavioral Health Pavilion in 2020, America's largest treatment and research center on a pediatric medical campus, Nationwide Children's system of care became fully operationalized, building on previous years of work.

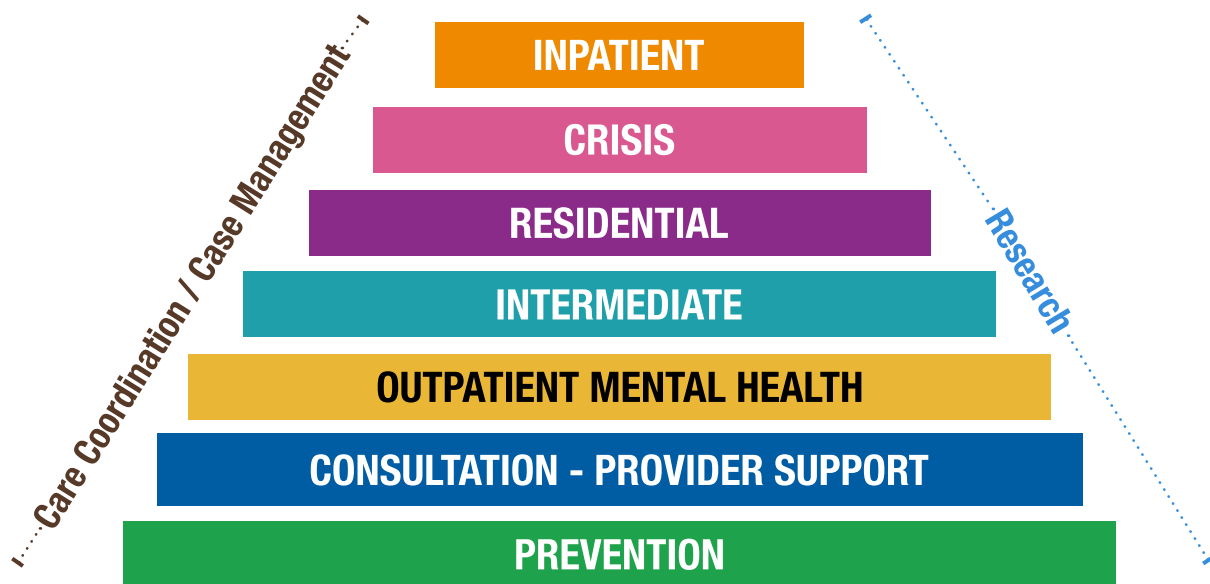
Our Reach: 34 counties in Ohio, with a population that is 73% urban and 27% rural.





“Our community work is intentionally designed to support local providers and agencies to address more mental health conditions at less-intensive levels, then refer to us when its necessary. That increases capacity to help children at every level. We believe this comprehensive approach will ultimately reduce Emergency Department use for crisis patients and reduce readmissions to the highest levels of care.” - David Axelson, MD, Chief of Psychiatry, Medical Director, Big Lots Behavioral Health Services

Model of Response



Nationwide Children’s conceptualizes the community-wide system of care as a pyramid – the more intensive the level of care, the higher the level on the pyramid. Nearly all children can benefit from basic prevention programs, while only a relative few will need inpatient services. Each child, however, can receive the level of care they need.

System of Care



Prevention: The foundation of the system is reaching as many children as possible where they are – in schools, preschools and their communities. Teachers and staff members are trained to implement self-regulation and crisis recognition programs; families and caregivers learn strategies to help with parenting; students learn skills that will help them throughout their lives.

- **Signs of Suicide®.** Evidence-based, suicide prevention program. Rolled out in 173 schools to 51,000 students since 2015, resulting in 2,645 treatment referrals.
- **PAX Good Behavior Game®.** Evidence-based self-management program for elementary school students, impacting more than 680 classrooms since 2018.
- **Ohio Preschool Expulsion Prevention Partnership.** Training, classroom consultations and hotline services provided across a 16-county region. Additional parenting programs and child/parent therapy are available.
- **Positive Parenting Program (Triple P).** The program provides support for parents to prevent family problems before they happen and encourages strategies to help children reach their full potential.
- **On Our Sleeves®.** A national movement powered by Nationwide Children's to break the stigmas surrounding children's mental health, with a goal of providing free educational resources to every community in the United States and connecting people who need help to their local resources.



Consultation-Provider Support: Nationwide Children's works to connect its Behavioral Health experts with providers to improve their ability to manage common pediatric mental health concerns. Within the hospital, Psychiatry and Pediatric Psychology Neuropsychology are fully integrated into the care of patients across all pediatric medical sub-specialties.

- **Project ECHO.** A learning collaborative that allows providers to present cases to experts at Nationwide Children's via videoconference and learn from each other. Topics include ADHD, autism, depression, anxiety and trauma, among others. There were 100 ECHO sessions and 2,341 attendees in 2020.
- **Behavioral Health Treatment Insights and Provider Support (BH-TIPS).** A virtual Behavioral Health consultation service for community-based providers, newly launched in 2021. Providers schedule 15-minute appointments with Nationwide Children's psychiatrists for support and insight.



On Our Sleeves®

- A movement started by Nationwide Children's Hospital on World Mental Health Day 2018 to break stigmas around children's mental health and educate families and advocates.
- The mission is to provide free educational resources to every community in America.
- Education content has reached all 50 states and more than 2 million people.
- The *On Our Sleeves* Alliance, composed of corporations, youth and parent-serving organizations, health care organizations, education partners and individual champions, represents the diverse and powerful voices committed to breaking the silence surrounding children's mental health and taking action.

Learn more at
OnOurSleeves.org

- **Prescribing Recommendations/Guidelines.** Nationwide Children's accountable care organization, Partners For Kids®, issues quarterly updates that take into account medication efficacy and medical plan coverages to help primary care providers make appropriate prescriptions.



Outpatient Mental Health: Specialty Behavioral Health services that often occur through the Big Lots Behavioral Health Pavilion at Nationwide Children's but may be delivered in the community, by Nationwide Children's providers, as well. Outpatient services are offered at more than 15 Nationwide Children's locations, including Primary Care Centers, and at more than 50 schools in the central Ohio region. The Child Development Center and Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders provides evidence-based assessment and care for the broad range of needs that children with autism and their families have in the outpatient setting. Telehealth represented a crucial new strategy in 2020, with more than 160,000 visits completed in nine months.



Intermediate: Specialty Behavioral Health services that include home-based intensive treatment, intensive outpatient treatment and partial hospitalization. Intensive models of care for children with autism include Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention and Complex Behavior services, both of which use the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis to address symptoms and improve functioning. These services are delivered by Nationwide Children's for pediatric patients throughout the region.

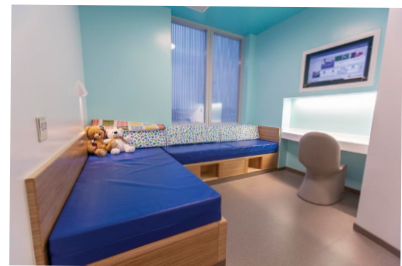


Residential: A number of central Ohio agencies have expertise in residential programs, and Nationwide Children's primary role at this level of care is using our integrated system to connect children and their families with those agencies.



Crisis: Short-term services that are designed for observation, triage and stabilization.

- **Psychiatric Crisis Department.** An Emergency Department specifically designed to triage, assess and treat patients in Behavioral Health crisis. After opening in March 2020, it saw 4,535 visits over the next nine months.
- **Acute Crisis Response Program.** Offers consultation and assistance when patients and families are experiencing a psychiatric crisis within Nationwide Children's continuum of care. It fields referrals from the Nationwide Children's-led Franklin County Youth Psychiatric Crisis Line, or refers families to the Critical Assessment and Treatment Program that helps patients and families in crisis that can be managed outside of the Crisis Department.



2014	2020
1,378 visits in the 9 months of the Psychiatric Emergency Evaluation Center	4,535 total visits in the renamed Psychiatric Crisis Department, in first 9 months of opening
19,000+ Total unique Behavioral Health patients	41,000+ Total unique Behavioral Health patients
150,000+ Total Behavioral Health outpatient visits	258,000+ Total Behavioral Health outpatient visits



Inpatient: Inpatient services offer the highest level of mental health care, sometimes going beyond the shorter duration of crisis services, though inpatient services are closely tied to crisis services.

- **Inpatient Psychiatric Units:** Nationwide Children's is currently staffing 30 inpatient psychiatric beds across three specially designed units, including one for children with neurobehavioral disorders.
- **The Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit (YCSU)** is a unique feature of inpatient services. This 16-bed unit allows for 4 hours per day of intensive therapy, usually over the course of 3-5 days, with a 1:2 therapist-to-patient ratio. Primary goals are stabilization, linkage to ongoing care and safety planning. A study published in *Child and Adolescent Mental Health* showed that the YCSU is a promising alternative to lengthy hospitalization. Findings also revealed significant reductions in suicidal ideation at the three-month follow-up.

In addition, there are two aspects of the system that help bind the levels together, integrate the system of care and expand its impact:

Care Coordination/Case Management: Children may move up and down the levels or need a number of services that exist within a single level. Much about this can be confusing or difficult to manage for a family, especially if they face other challenges. Care coordinators and case managers work with providers and the families on everything from scheduling to community support linkage.

Research: The Center for Suicide Prevention and Research bridges our Behavioral Health services and Nationwide Children's Abigail Wexner Research Institute. Created in 2015 in response to the increasing rates of youth suicide, it has been heavily focused on implementation of the evidence-based Signs of Suicide program in our region of care, and it has also published nationally prominent studies on issues including racial suicide disparities and media coverage of suicide.

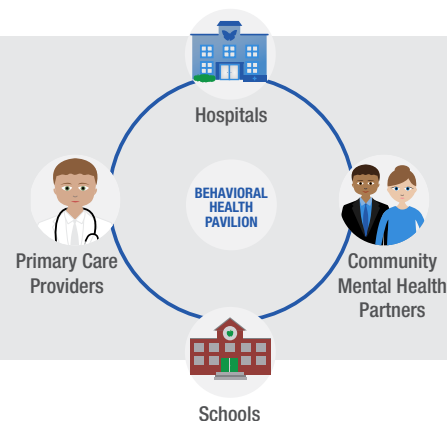
Nationwide Children's Autism Research Program focuses on identification, characterization, and genetics of autism as well as treatment efficacy and effectiveness studies. As a member of the Autism Care Network, Nationwide Children's is focused on research that leads to better autism care, delivered at scale and at speed, to improve health and quality of life for children with autism and their families throughout North America.

The Center for Biobehavioral Health integrates the study and practice of behavioral health with physical health specialties. Among the center's wide-ranging efforts are neuroimaging to assess cognitive deficits that increase risk of social and behavioral health issues in cancer survivors, children with brain injuries, children born preterm and many other pediatric populations; and the development of evidence-based guidelines to support the mental health of children and families diagnosed with complex physical illnesses.

Nationwide Children's is now working to harness its large system of care clinical services at every care level to inform research across other Behavioral Health disciplines.

The Pavilion as a "Hub"

The Behavioral Health Pavilion serves as a "hub" that reaches out to other "spokes" in the community, such as primary care providers, schools, hospitals and community mental health partners.



Inside the Big Lots Behavioral Health Pavilion

At nine stories and 386,000 square feet, it is the largest pediatric mental health research hospital in America, integrating acute services with intensive outpatient programs and prioritizing patient safety in a colorful, friendly environment.

For a video tour, visit NationwideChildrens.org/Pavilion



NINTH FLOOR:

- Gym
- Outdoor Play Deck

EIGHTH FLOOR:

- Inpatient Units

FIFTH FLOOR:

- Partial Hospitalization Program
- Ronald McDonald Family Room
- Courtyards

SECOND FLOOR:

- Mood and Anxiety Program
- Family Based Intensive Therapy (FBIT)
- Center for Suicide Prevention and Research
- Outpatient Psychiatry Clinic

LOWER FLOOR:

- Cafeteria
- Gift Shop
- Conference/Training Rooms

FIRST FLOOR:

- Psychiatric Crisis Department with Extended Observation Suite
- Critical Assessment and Treatment Clinic
- Sanctuary

SEVENTH FLOOR:

- Inpatient Units

THIRD FLOOR:

- Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit (YCSU)
- Behavioral Health Administrative Offices
- Faculty Offices

Considerations and Lessons Learned

Every community is different and needs to consider a system of pediatric behavioral health care that works best for them. Nationwide Children's learned lessons during its development process that could prove valuable for others.

Key questions to ask:

- **What will give us the most “bang for the buck”?** Many children need help, and with limited resources, it's important to address how the most children can receive services in the most appropriate way.
- **What will address the need at the “front doors”?** Many areas struggle to manage the increasing number of patients with mental health concerns who arrive in the Emergency Department, or to best triage patients who enter the system in other ways. It's crucial to appropriately manage those early/initial encounters.
- **How will staffing take place?** There is a workforce shortage at every level of mental health care. A plan for filling the positions that are necessary to provide services is critical.

Other Important Considerations:

- Measurement of outcomes – more patients is not necessarily better
 - Consider outcomes of:
 - Improving access
 - Reducing inpatient readmission rates
 - Decreasing the number of youth suicides
- Promote health equity as well as diversity and inclusion into all initiatives
- Ongoing and systematic training and retaining personnel
- Building culture during rapid growth
- Developing an academic and research mission
- Faculty burnout
- Leveraging technology
- Community partnerships
- Managing new service developments in the midst of continued growing demand

Nationwide Children's focused on several principles to help shape the system of care:

- Think systematically about the care continuum
- Prevention is part of the continuum
- Coordinating with community providers is critical
- Invite participation from a wide-range of stakeholders

The work at Nationwide Children's is far from over. But by having established this system of care, we are ready to handle what comes next – and learn and grow from it.

For more information and updates on behavioral health services at Nationwide Children's, sign up for PedsOnline, an e-newsletter developed specially for Behavioral Health professionals, at: NationwideChildrens.org/Pediatrics-Online

