

Solutions Case Study

Community Lacking Access to Behavioral Healthcare Services Turns to National Partner to Develop a Continuum of Mental Health and Wellbeing Care

INTRO

WakeMed Health is a 970-bed private, not-for-profit healthcare system in Wake County, North Carolina. Today, WakeMed offers a broad spectrum of medical services to its community, including three hospitals and three freestanding emergency departments. At this time, it does not operate any inpatient psychiatric services, though its mental health & wellbeing division, equipped with experienced psychiatrists and support staff, treats a high volume of patients with behavioral conditions on medical floors and within emergency services.

PROBLEM

WakeMed released a request for proposals to assist with the development of behavioral health services to address current and growing needs in its community. While its service area includes over 500 behavioral health beds, only a small fraction of these are able to accommodate the diverse needs of the medical center, prompting patients to rely heavily on emergency departments for care. Proposal respondents were asked to describe preferred models for the development of a comprehensive behavioral health continuum of care, the focal point of which would be a psychiatric hospital.

HOW SHEPPARD PRATT SOLUTIONS ENGAGED

In its response, Sheppard Pratt Solutions emphasized the need for a complete continuum of care, with the new inpatient facility acting as a hub for addressing the most acute behavioral needs of the community while simultaneously providing triage and access to crisis services, ambulatory programs, and engaged referrals to community services. Solutions highlighted the need to treat all patients in the community, regardless of payor type, as well as developing a facility that could serve as a hallmark of effective behavioral healthcare. Sheppard Pratt's leadership and Solutions consultants would contribute ongoing expertise to clinical program considerations, facility design, operational best practices, strategic consulting, and clinical staffing. For governance, Solutions proposed a joint operating model in which a governing board would be established to oversee key workstreams and project deliverables throughout building design, construction, and ongoing operations. WakeMed selected Sheppard Pratt Solutions as the ideal partner for this project given the strength of its proposal.

RESULTS

Following approval of WakeMed's CON application, WakeMed partnered with Sheppard Pratt Solutions to provide planning and start-up services for its new whole health campus, which will also include a separate acute care hospital, both of which are slated to open in 2027.

