

Early Intervention Support Service- The Wellness HUB

Description

It is the mission of the Wellness HUB, an Early Intervention Support Services (EISS) Program, to provide the highest quality of mental health services to any adult age 18 or older who resides, works, or attends school or prefers to participate in treatment in Sussex County and is experiencing exacerbated symptoms of mental illness. The Wellness HUB is designed as a “living room” to provide the most comfort to the visitors, their friends and family when in a crisis. Consumers can walk in during any of the extended office hours, including normal off hours for traditional outpatient clinics. The Wellness Hub functions as a mental health urgent care clinic that offers immediate access to crisis intervention services without having to rely on hospital emergency departments. The Wellness HUB provides immediate access to outreach, assessment, medication monitoring, therapy, and support with few barriers to participating in our treatment.

The main goal of the Wellness HUB is to provide immediate support to avoid the need for psychiatric hospitalization. Our mental health urgent care is designed to provide immediate and wrap-around support to those reporting exacerbated mental health symptoms. We understand that “crisis” can look and feel different for everyone and we work to design an individualized treatment plan for each person who walks in our doors.

Wellness HUB Services include crisis prevention and counseling, psychiatric assessment and medication management, short-term therapy, family/couples counseling, substance use counseling, linkage and referral to community resources, peer support, and transportation. The philosophy of our mental health urgent care is to immediately provide support and treatment to those who are in need; regardless of their ability to pay, access to transportation and any other barriers in their way. We offer a comfortable, calm, and inviting environment to help people on their way to recovery.

Personnel

The Wellness HUB operates with a team of clinical and case management staff under the direction of a Program Director and Program Coordinator. The clinical team includes a part-time Psychiatrist, part-time Advanced Practice Nurses (APN), and licensed therapists. The Case Management team includes Case Managers, BA-level Substance Use Specialists, and Peer Support Specialists with lived mental health and substance use experience. The teams work closely together to ensure that all of our consumers’ needs are met. There is also an administrative assistant providing support to the “living room” and interns at different levels of education.

Caseload

Of the 825 walk-ins served at the Wellness HUB in FY2026, 560 consumers were provided emergency Psychiatric Evaluation, Medication Management, Crisis Counseling, and Case Management for a period of thirty days or more. Consumers who walk in for care and are not opened, for a variety of reasons, are assisted with walk-in case management, crisis care and immediate linkage to an appropriate community program. We found in this fiscal year, that some walk-ins were only looking for immediate support to curb their crisis and were not in need of the full spectrum of services provided at the HUB.

The Wellness HUB is located in Newton, NJ, in the county of Sussex. Most parts of Sussex County, New Jersey are considered rural. To that end, the consumers in Sussex County are dealing with a number of barriers to receiving treatment. This includes a vast lack of resources, lack of employment opportunities, and housing resources, as well as no access to transportation services. Regarding treatment, the County of Sussex has one hospital with limited outpatient mental health, Acute Partial/Intensive Outpatient, and one community partial care provider. Waitlists for outpatient treatment for those covered by Medicaid can be as long as a 90-day wait. The Wellness HUB is able to assist those awaiting their needed treatment and bridge the gap of care.

Demographics

Of the 825 walk-ins at the Wellness HUB, 85% identified as White/Caucasian, 6% as Black/African American, 1% as Asian, and 8% as other. Ethnicity breakdown included 85% non-Hispanic and 15% Hispanic/Latino(a)(x), and of those identifying as Hispanic, 6 consumers seen were non-English speakers, who were treated at the Wellness HUB with help from the Language Line. The Wellness HUB consumers identify as 44% Male, 52% Female, and 4% Gender Non-Conforming or transgender.

Of those served in FY2026, 30% were under the age of 30 and 17% were over the age of 60. The outliers include 24 consumers 18 and 19 years old and 7 consumers were 80 years old or older. Our youngest consumer was 18 years old, and our oldest was 89 years old.

The Wellness HUB is a grant funded program that is contracted to treat all consumers regardless of their ability to pay. We have found in the past year a significant number of consumers that have no insurance coverage, who are not eligible for Medicaid due to income limits but who also report an inability to pay for their own insurance coverage. This makes it difficult for the consumers to engage in treatment post-Wellness HUB treatment.

Of the 825 walk-ins at the Wellness HUB, 89% resided in Sussex County. The other 11% resided in surrounding Morris County, Warren County, Other NJ Counties, and out of state in Pennsylvania and New York. The Wellness HUB turns no consumers away from the HUB regardless of their insurance coverage, ability to pay, immigration status, or county/state of residency.

Performance Outcomes

The Wellness HUB participates in the agency-wide Quality Assurance (QA) program which conducts monthly meetings and collects data on the utilization, quality, and effectiveness of services and treatment provided by each MHA program.

Wellness HUB's performance indicators measure overall consumer satisfaction, access to immediate care, and quality of care. During this fiscal year, 100% of consumers surveyed were satisfied with their treatment at the Wellness HUB. 98% of walk-ins were offered an appointment with a psychiatric provider within 24 hours of walking in for treatment. There is no wait for care at the Wellness HUB, with an average wait time of zero days. We work to assist our consumers in engaging in immediate counseling and medication evaluation to avoid the need for psychiatric screening at the hospital for a higher level of care or need for inpatient psychiatric care.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

MHAEM is continuously refining services based on consumer input. This is received through various methods, including the annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey. Thirty-four (34) Wellness HUB consumers were surveyed during our survey period.

Of the consumers surveyed, 100% of consumers selected Strongly Agree or Agree that they were satisfied with services at the HUB. 100% of consumers felt initial services were received in a timely manner. 100% of consumers felt HUB staff were respectful of their cultural background. 100% of consumers felt appointments were scheduled for convenient times and days. 83% of consumers felt their case manager was available to assist them with needed linkages and referrals, 90% of consumers felt the treatment team worked collaboratively to provide the best treatment. 92% of consumers felt they have made progress in dealing with their identified problems. 95% of consumers would recommend this service to another. Those surveyed responded to two open-ended questions as follows: (1) How has the Wellness HUB improved your life? and (2) Additional comments.

- The Wellness HUB has been wonderful source of resources for me to manage my life and this stage of things. I am very appreciative for the HUB.
- Excellent therapist. Easy to talk to.
- Gave me all the resources to improve my mental health.
- Gave me a free outlet as a poor person.
- Calm approach. They have listened to my input.
- It has helped me overcome trauma, manage depression and to bring my family out of homelessness
- Treatment has helped me recognize what is going on both physically and mentally.
- It has helped me navigate life through a more relaxed and positive way
- All the staff was excellent to work with. Elisa was great at her job but she was also very caring and committed to my wellbeing. Helping with both short- and long-term care.
- Very friendly, caring staff.
- Everyone is wonderful. The most help I've had in years. I'll be sad when my stupid insurance runs out. So, thanks to everyone who has helped me. 10 Star Review!!
- Jodie has been wonderful helping me each step of the way.

Program Highlights

The Wellness HUB's biggest achievement in FY2026 is being able to support 825 consumers with acute mental health and substance use needs with immediate support. To this end, the Wellness HUB was recognized by our funder, the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, as one of the top-performing Early Intervention Support Services (EISS) in the state. With respect to our contract expectations, we are one of the only EISS programs providing treatment as soon as consumers walk through our doors, 100% of the time, with access to a mental health professional and prescriber within 24 hours of making contact with the Wellness HUB.

The Wellness HUB Director was a participant in the county of Sussex's first Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) in five years. Through the CIT training, more than 30 police officers were able to be educated on the programs available in Sussex County, and techniques for addressing, in real time, individuals struggling with mental health and substance use challenges.

Wellness HUB staff participated in health fairs at Project Self-Sufficiency, Sussex County Community College, and local schools. We participated in Overdose Awareness Night and the CFPC Annual Recovery “Changing the face of Addiction” Walk, showing support of local agencies and our consumers in sustained recovery, as well as, attending Sussex Vo-Tech’s Game of Life to provide mental health resourcing to a group of graduating students.

Advocacy Activities

Advocacy at the Wellness HUB means that the HUB is not just providing treatment and support to those in need but being a vocal and steady member of the Sussex County community. The Wellness HUB Director is the chair of the PAC/PACADA meetings, a monthly meeting where mental health and substance use providers come together to ensure we are providing quality care. The Director also serves on the Sussex County Overdose Fatality Review Committee, in an effort to reduce stigma and lower the number of Sussex residents lost to an accidental overdose.

FY 2027 Goals

With four years of service under our belt, we would like to expand our scope in the next fiscal year. When we first opened our doors in August 2022, we never expected to see as many consumers in Sussex County consistently year after year. Within this fiscal year, the Wellness HUB will expand its outreach to the Sussex community. The Wellness HUB will place a strong focus on increasing community awareness and expanding outreach to the residents of Sussex County. The goal is to ensure that more residents, especially those affected by mental health challenges, substance use recovery, and related life stressors know about the HUB’s services, feel welcomed, and feel encouraged to take part. This goal will not only address getting those into mental health services but also reduce mental health and substance use stigma in our communities.

In addition, FY2027, will bring an expansion of Wellness HUB services to include the addition of Saturday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm walk-in hours including an additional part-time therapist and APN. This addition is scheduled to start in July 2026.