



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH**
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

Contacts:

Jill Shannon
jshannon@starsinc.com
(949) 330-3316

Imee Perius
iperius@dmh.lacounty.gov
(213) 738-3700

July 29, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Antelope Valley 24/7 Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center Will Serve County Residents Experiencing a Mental Health Crisis

LANCASTER, CA – The High Desert Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center (BHUCC), located at 415 East Avenue I in Lancaster, is now open 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help address the massive surge in demand for rapid mental health treatment due to the COVID pandemic. This BHUCC is operated by Star View Behavioral Health on behalf of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) and is open to individuals ages 13 and older who are experiencing psychiatric crises. The new 9,900 square-foot center is located adjacent to the High Desert Regional Health Center.

“The opening of this short-term treatment facility comes at a critical time. It is providing essential, urgent mental health and substance use disorder services to those who need it for crises, and that need has only grown during the course of the pandemic,” said LACDMH Director Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D. “The fact that an individual in a time of dire need can walk into a clinic at any time of day and receive services will not only help those getting care but will also enhance the overall wellbeing of the Antelope Valley region and its communities. The provider, Star View Behavioral Health, is already proving to be an impressive partner in pursuing our mutual goal of providing care to the most vulnerable.”

The 24/7 center is funded by LACDMH and is the first of its kind to serve Antelope Valley communities. L.A. County 5th District Supervisor Kathryn Barger spearheaded efforts to launch this center and worked closely with local Lancaster and Palmdale officials and LACDMH.

“I am so pleased to open the High Desert Mental Health Urgent Care Center to serve youth and adults with critical mental health assessments, interventions, and medication support,” said Supervisor Kathryn Barger. “Through our partnership with our operator, Star View Behavioral Health and the Department of Mental Health, we are working together to ensure patients and their families are supported and connected during times of crises.”

By expanding access to around-the-clock care for those experiencing a mental health crisis, the BHUCC will also alleviate the impact on hospital emergency rooms that are not equipped to deal with mental health-related issues and will help its patients avoid costly inpatient hospitalization. Services are provided without regard to ability to pay, primarily through Medi-Cal and County funds.

Many individuals are experiencing heightened mental health issues due to COVID and the stress of economic uncertainty. In fact, calls to LACDMH's Help Line increased more than 35% in 2020, compared to 2019. A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report of U.S. adults showed 41.5% of respondents have faced mental health challenges and increased anxiety or depression related to COVID-19. In addition, law enforcement officers are facing the challenging and time-consuming task of responding to mental health-related calls and accompanying individuals to hospital emergency rooms. The BHUCC works with law enforcement teams and Mental Evaluation Teams, a collaboration between LACDMH and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, to address this issue and to also ease the burden on overcrowded hospitals.

The program serves clients on an involuntary basis (individuals who qualify under a 5150 or 5585 psychiatric hold) as well as a voluntary basis. Voluntary clients are seen in a Crisis Walk-In Center (CWIC) section of the BHUCC where patients can be evaluated and receive services to help them stabilize. In addition to the CWIC, the BHUCC features one unit for up to six adolescents and a separate area for up to 12 adults. Patients may stay up to 24 hours and will be seen by a psychiatrist, nurse, therapist, and peer workers, as needed. Transportation is provided back to the client's community when needed.

Services also include case management and linkage to recovery-oriented community-based resources including those for co-occurring substance use disorders, housing, and other mental health services. These services will help patients avoid crises and achieve lasting wellbeing.

For more information, contact (661) 522-6770 or visit <https://www.starsinc.com/bhucc-highdesert/>

###

About Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

As the nation's largest public mental health department, we ensure access to care and treatment for our most vulnerable residents in a region with more than 10 million people. With an annual budget approaching \$3B and a committed staff of 6,000, LACDMH embodies a "heart-forward" approach to supporting hope, recovery and wellbeing across the County. For more information on LACDMH, visit dmh.lacounty.gov or follow @LACDMH on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

About Star View

Star View Behavioral Health has served Los Angeles County for over 30 years. Star View is an agency of Stars Behavioral Health Group, a statewide provider of mental health, child welfare, special education and other social services since 1988. The company serves more than 30,000 children, adults, and families annually. www.starsinc.com.