

ARBOUR
COUNSELING SERVICES
Partial Hospitalization Programs

Media Contact:

Jennifer Grossman, LMHC, ET
Executive Director, Partial Hospital Programs
Phone: (978) 795-4212
Email: Jennifer.Grossman@uhsinc.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Opening of the Virtual Boarding Partial Hospitalization Program Pilot for
Emergency Room Departments in Massachusetts**

Eastern Massachusetts – April 4, 2022 – Arbour Counseling Services officially opened its Virtual Boarding Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) pilot in January 2022, providing specialized treatment specifically designed for the needs and challenges of individuals boarding in local Emergency Rooms (ER) awaiting placement. Like many issues, the problem of ER boarding, when individuals wait in emergency rooms for placement in behavioral health programs, has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the Commonwealth’s hospitals have seen a steady rise in the number of adolescents boarding throughout the state. According to data from the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP), the highest volume of youth boarders in Massachusetts are 13 to 18 years old. To meet this challenge, Arbour Counseling Services partnered with MBHP, Riverside Community Care behavioral health Emergency Services Program (ESP), and Milford Regional Medical Center to open a pilot **Virtual Boarding Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) for adolescents**.

Clients are determined to receive Community Based Acute Treatment (CBAT) or Inpatient level of care and are often contained in the Emergency Room (ER) until a bed is secured.

During the pilot, for example, an adolescent referred to the virtual PHP met criteria for inpatient level of care and was boarding in a hospital ER where nurses and other hospital personnel engaged in multiple daily behavioral management interventions, taking these nurses and hospital personnel away from the critical responsibilities to care for other patients. The adolescent was experiencing behavioral challenges while boarding in the ER. Upon referral, they quickly engaged in the pilot program and showed progress as reported by the ER staff as well as Emergency Services Provider (ESP). The adolescent was able to do well with the program and discharged with a plan to continue the virtual PHP to the next level of care.

Manny Oppong, Vice President of Service Integration, Riverside Community Care, reports, “of all the initiatives undertaken to mitigate the ER boarding problem and the lack of available inpatient beds, this is the most accessible, most effective treatment intervention by far. The fact that three entities came together quickly to establish this program speaks to our commitment to responding to the ER boarding problem with urgency.”

“The PHP program for ED boarders has been very effective and timely given the boarding issue throughout the Commonwealth,” said Bert A. Thurlo-Walsh, MM, RN, CPHQ, Vice President & Chief Quality Officer, Milford Regional Medical Center. “Working with the three entities has created a phenomenal program that has had positive outcomes on the adolescents that have been enrolled. The feedback from one adolescent was that it helped them develop new self-management and coping skills.”

“I was honored to be approached by MBHP/Beacon for this pilot,” says Jennifer Grossman, LMHC, ET, Executive Director of PHPs for Arbour Counseling Services. “Our partial hospital programs are receiving clients that have been boarding in the ER for weeks. I welcomed the opportunity to take what we have learned through operating virtual PHP over the last two years and develop an intervention that would provide immediate access and treatment to this population.”

The Virtual Boarding PHP Pilot Program includes many modalities such as Psychotherapy Groups, Psychoeducational Groups, Expressive Art Therapy Groups, along with case coordination; and are offered Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The next phase of the pilot will include collaborating with ERs and ESPs throughout Massachusetts as well as expanding to young adults ages 18 to 25.

About Arbour Counseling Services

Arbour Counseling Services offers programs for clients of all ages through an outpatient continuum of care. With multiple locations throughout Massachusetts, our dedicated team of clinicians and staff provide programs including Partial Hospitalization, Intensive Outpatient, Structured Outpatient Addictions and community-based support, in-home therapy and therapeutic mentoring. Learn more: <https://arbourhealth.com/> [Partial Hospitalization Program - Arbour Counseling \(arbourhealth.com\)](#)

Virtual Boarding Partial Hospital Program Pilot is currently accepting clients with MBHP and Beacon.

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