



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BestSelf Opens Western New York's First 24-Hour Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center

BUFFALO, NY – BestSelf Behavioral Health today announced the opening of the BestResponse Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center, a first-of-its-kind, 24/7 facility in Western New York designed to support people of all ages experiencing mental health and substance use crises. Located at 430 Niagara Street in Buffalo, the center will begin accepting clients tomorrow, Thursday, January 22, and will serve residents across all five counties of Western New York.

BestResponse offers a calm, supportive environment where clients can stay for up to **23 hours and 59 minutes** and receive immediate care from trained professionals. Services include counseling, medication support, and connection to follow-up care; all delivered in a welcoming, trauma-informed setting that meets people where they are during a crisis.

"BestResponse reflects our commitment to meeting people with compassion in their most vulnerable moments," said **Elizabeth Woike, CEO of BestSelf Behavioral Health**. "This center ensures individuals and families have access to timely, appropriate care when they need it most, without facing a crisis alone."

The center was created to address a critical gap in the region's behavioral health system and was developed through close collaboration with regional partners. These include county mental health departments across Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany counties; ECMC; Crisis Services of Western New York; the Crisis to Care Collaborative; BryLin Hospital; Value Network; local emergency responders; law enforcement partners; and the dedicated staff of BestSelf Behavioral Health.

People experiencing a behavioral health crisis often turn to hospital emergency departments, where long wait times and limited placement options can delay care. BestResponse serves as a hospital diversion option, providing a faster, more person-centered pathway to stabilization and connection to the appropriate level of care, while helping reduce unnecessary psychiatric hospitalizations and inpatient stays.

BestResponse is one of only a handful of intensive crisis stabilization centers operating across New York State. Funding for the center was awarded to BestSelf through a highly competitive request-for-proposals process, reflecting both the significant need in Western New York and BestSelf's strong track record of delivering innovative, community-based behavioral health care.

The development of BestResponse was made possible through New York State's commitment to strengthening community-based crisis services, championed by New York State and Governor Kathy Hochul. "Intensive crisis stabilization centers provide a place where people experiencing a behavioral health crisis can access high-quality treatment so they can avoid unnecessary emergency room visits and hospitalization and successfully connect with services that can help them recover in their community," Office of Mental Health Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan said. "BestSelf represents our ongoing efforts to expand these facilities across our state so that individuals can get specialized treatment in a welcoming and healing environment that will support their recovery journey. This center, like others funded by the state, represent Governor Hochul's continued focus on providing greater access to mental health care for all New Yorkers."

BestSelf is also profoundly grateful to the **Patrick Lee Foundation** for its leadership and generous support. As a key philanthropic partner, the Foundation's investment helped bring BestResponse to life and reflects a shared commitment to expanding access to crisis care for individuals, families, and communities across Western New York.

Deputy Erie County Executive **Lisa Chimera** emphasized the importance of strong local partnerships in expanding access to crisis care across the region. "This new facility fills a critical gap in our mental and behavioral health system while helping ease pressure on inpatient care and local hospitals," Chimera said. "Erie County is fortunate to have partners who are committed to person-centered crisis care, and we look forward to continued collaboration to ensure people receive the right care at the right time."

For more information about the BestResponse Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center, visit **BestSelfWNY.org**. The center is located at **430 Niagara Street in Buffalo** and serves individuals across all five counties of Western New York.

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BestSelf Behavioral Health, Inc. is the largest community-based behavioral health organization serving children and adults with mental health and substance use disorders in WNY. We provide easy access to a full continuum of person-centered, trauma-informed behavioral health treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery services. BestSelf has an annual budget of \$94 million and serves more than 41,000 children and adults in 70+ locations in Western New York.