

# **New York State Announces Opening of \$9.6 Million Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center in Buffalo**

***BestSelf Behavioral Health Opens 24/7 Facility Providing Stabilization Services for New Yorkers Experiencing a Behavioral Health Crisis***

***Western New York's First Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center to Provide Alternative to Unnecessary Emergency Room Visits***

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The state Office of Mental Health today announced the opening of a new facility to provide urgent treatment to New Yorkers experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis and avoid unnecessary emergency room visits. Licensed in partnership with the Office of Addiction Services and Supports, the BestResponse Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center in Buffalo was developed with \$9.6 million in state funding to provide urgent behavioral health care services to help stabilize individuals and connect them to other community-based services and supports.

“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. “BestResponse 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, represents Governor Hochul’s continued focus on providing greater access to mental health care for all New Yorkers.”

BestResponse will operate 24-hours per day and seven days per week, providing screenings, counseling, medication support, therapeutic interventions, peer support, ongoing observation, care collaboration, and discharge planning –all delivered in a welcoming, trauma-informed setting. The new facility will also coordinate with local mobile crisis providers, and law enforcement, as well as community treatment and support services.

“Crisis stabilization centers ensure people can get immediate help and support whenever they need it, day or night,” OASAS Commissioner Dr. Chinazo Cunningham said. “These programs create a critical connection for individuals experiencing a substance use or mental health crisis, offering timely, lifesaving care close to home. This approach has already shown success in other parts of the state, and we are pleased to see it expand to Western New York.”

Located at 430 Niagara St., BestResponse is dually certified by OMH and OASAS to provide an expertly staffed, effective, and cost-efficient alternative to often-stressful hospital emergency departments. The facility was developed in partnership with Erie County Medical Center, Crisis Services of Western New York, the Crisis to Care Collaborative, and local emergency responders to address a critical gap in the region's behavioral health system.

"BestResponse reflects our commitment to meeting people with compassion in their most vulnerable moments," BestSelf Behavioral Health CEO Elizabeth Woike said. "This center ensures individuals and families have access to timely, appropriate care when they need it most, without facing a crisis alone." OMH awarded BestSelf \$7 million in ongoing operating funding, \$1.6 million for start-up costs and \$1 million in capital funding to develop the center, which will serve Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany counties. The funding was part of OMH's overall investment of \$75 million to develop 12 intensive crisis stabilization centers statewide.

BestResponse is the fifth intensive crisis stabilization center to open, joining Helio Health Crisis Stabilization Center in Syracuse, the Champlain Valley Family Center in Plattsburgh, CN Guidance & Counseling Services in Hicksville, and the Family Service League in Hauppauge. Supportive crisis stabilization centers are operated by People USA in Poughkeepsie and Upstate Caring Partners Inc. in Utica.

In addition to utilizing these centers, New Yorkers experiencing or who know someone experiencing a behavioral health issue may also contact the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which connects them to trained crisis counselors 24/7 to help those thinking about suicide, struggling with substance use, a mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. New York 988 call centers received nearly 49,000 calls in December alone, making it the most-active 988 service in the nation.

Likewise, New Yorkers struggling with an addiction, or whose loved ones are struggling, can find help and hope by calling the state's toll-free, 24-hour, 7-day-a-week HOPELine at 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369) or by texting HOPENY (Short Code 467369). Find available addiction treatment including crisis/detox, inpatient, residential, or outpatient care on the OASAS website.

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