

# Background and Rationale for Diversion Center Development

## National Context

- SAMHSA's National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care established standard for person-centered, recovery-oriented crisis systems
- Federal 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline reinforced the need for community-based crisis alternatives
- The goal: create a “no wrong door” approach where anyone in crisis can access care – quickly and compassionately.

## Best practice for crisis continuums is to have:

- Someone to Contact (988, Montgomery County Crisis Center hotline)
- Someone to Respond: Mobile Crisis and Outreach Teams (MCOTs)
- **A Safe Place for Help: Crisis Stabilization Facilities (Diversion Center)**

Goal of County's Behavioral Health Coordinated Systems of Crisis Care: To provide the right care, at the right time, in the right setting.

# Why Crisis Stabilization Facilities such as the Diversion Center?

## Promotes dignity

- Align with national movement toward equitable, accessible, and humane behavioral health care
- Provide safe, therapeutic alternatives to emergency rooms and jails
- Treat behavioral health crises as health emergencies, not criminal acts - ensuring individuals in crisis are met by health professionals, not law enforcement alone

## Reduce costs and system strain

- Reducing unnecessary hospitalizations and arrests diverts from high-cost emergency and correctional settings

## Build trust

- Strengthen relationships between communities, providers, and public safety.

## Improve outcomes

- Increase capacity to stabilize individuals and link them to long-term care



# Diversion Center Update: Two-Site Model

## **Two-Site Model to meet lifespan and walk-in needs:**

1. Expansion of services at the **Montgomery County Crisis Center at 1301 Piccard Ave.**, Rockville
    - Already a community walk-in site
    - After renovations, will be crisis stabilization and diversion facility for minors and continue serving walk-ins across the lifespan
  2. Construction of facility at **1301 Seven Locks Rd.**, Rockville.
    - This facility will **remain focused on** providing an **alternative to incarceration for adults** (18+) with minor, non-violent offenses experiencing behavioral health issues.
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# Diversion Center Update: Two-Site Model

## **BOTH facilities will offer Behavioral Health Crisis Stabilization Center (BHCSC) services**

- Short-term intervention and stabilization to individuals experiencing a behavioral health emergency
- Designed to be least restrictive environment possible to divert individuals from emergency departments, hospitalization, and incarceration
- Must be open and staffed 24 hrs/day, 7 days/wk
- Maximum stay under 24 hrs
- Comprehensive care - services include:
  - Evaluation
  - Crisis de-escalation and stabilization
  - Observation
  - Safety and resource planning
  - Post-discharge care coordination

# Diversion Center Update: Two-Site Model

## *BHCSC Services, Continued*

### BHCSC Treatment components:

- Medication-assisted treatment may be provided when clinically appropriate.
- Registered nurse must initiate an in-person assessment within 60 minutes of arrival.
- Mental health professional must perform a crisis assessment at the earliest opportunity.

### Diverse crises addressed

- Manage a full range of behavioral health emergencies, including those related to mental illness, alcohol and substance abuse, and emotional distress.

### Emergency petitions

- Centers equipped to accept and provide services to individuals under an emergency petition

**@ Piccard** – 4 adult recliners, 4 child/adolescent beds

**@ Seven Locks** – 16 adult recliners focused on diversion from criminal justice system

# Diversion Center Update: Two-Site Model

BOTH facilities will also offer **Residential Crisis Services (RCS)** *for mental health* to adults

- Short-term, intensive services in a community-based, non-hospital setting
  - Provided to individuals experiencing, or at risk of, a psychiatric crisis that could impair their ability to function in the community.
  - Designed to prevent psychiatric inpatient admission, offer an alternative to inpatient admission, or shorten a hospital stay.
  - Offered in a structured environment with residential features and 24/7 staff
  - Services include medication management, counseling, skill-building groups, and help with creating recovery-related goals.
- **Multi-day, but still short-term**
- **@ Piccard** - 4 adult beds already in operation at Montgomery County Crisis Center
- **@ Seven Locks** – 16 adult beds focused on diversion from criminal justice system

# **Diversion Center Update: Two-Site Model**

## **Discharge planning begins at admission**

- Clients are discharged once clinically stable or referred to next level of care
- Release options include:
  - Return home or to safe housing
  - Connection to outpatient behavioral health services
  - Transfer to hospital or residential care if clinically indicated

## **Coordination of Care**

- All arrivals and discharges are coordinated and monitored
- Collaboration between public safety, health, and behavioral health systems ensures safety for all
- Consultation across sites to ensure appropriate referral direction and admissions at each facility

# Focus on Operations @ Seven Locks Site

- Available for pre-arrest diversion
- Residents must either be admitted involuntarily (via Emergency Evaluation Petition) to BHCSC services or otherwise be amenable to treatment; refusal after admission may result in transfer to Detention Center and charges applied.
- **No community referrals or self-presentations will be accepted** due to focus on diversion from criminal justice system
- **No walk-ins or walk-offs!** Clients referred AND transported in or out exclusively by:
  - Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD)
  - Fire and Rescue Services (MCFRS)
  - Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)
  - Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (DOCR)
  - Hospitals
- No unsupervised releases. All arrivals and discharges will be coordinated to ensure safety, privacy, and clinical appropriateness.



# Rationale for Facility Design Revisions



Maryland COMAR Regulations for BHCSC finalized in 2024



Lessons learned from behavioral health operators nationwide

SAMSHA 2025 updated Behavioral Health Coordinated Systems of Crisis Care guidelines



Ensuring facility designs not only meet compliance standards but also create a safe, trauma-informed, and healing environment that supports operational excellence and sustainability



Ensuring design is operational - every choice impacts safety, flow, and outcomes

# Key Drivers for Change

## Safety and Visibility

- Adjusted floor layouts allow for enhanced monitoring and rapid staff response, reducing risk for staff and residents

## Trauma-Informed Environment

- Open design to allow for living-room style spaces, natural light, and calm design elements that promote comfort and reduce agitation

## Operational Efficiency

- Relocated or repurposed rooms to improve accessibility, staff workflow, and daily operations

## Regulatory and Clinical Alignment

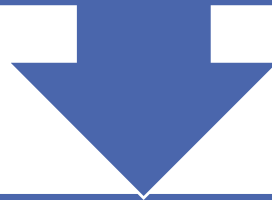
- All updates align with SAMHSA's Crisis Services Guidelines and Maryland COMAR standards

## Sustainability and Flexibility

- Design adjustments anticipate future programmatic needs and evolving best practices

# Impact

Updates result in a model crisis stabilization facility that is safe, efficient, and reflective of national best practices.



Reinforce Maryland and Montgomery County's commitment to delivering care that is compassionate, clinically sound, and operationally sustainable, setting a standard for other communities to follow.

# **We welcome your questions, feedback, and insights as we shape the future of Montgomery County's Behavioral Health Systems of Crisis Care**

Thank you!

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