

CRISIS NOW

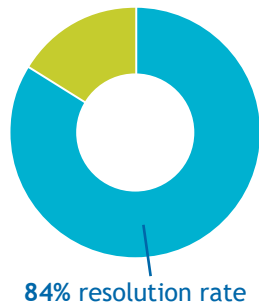
Implementing a Behavioral Health Crisis System of Care in Alaska

Implementation Update 13: April 2025

Community Updates

Fairbanks

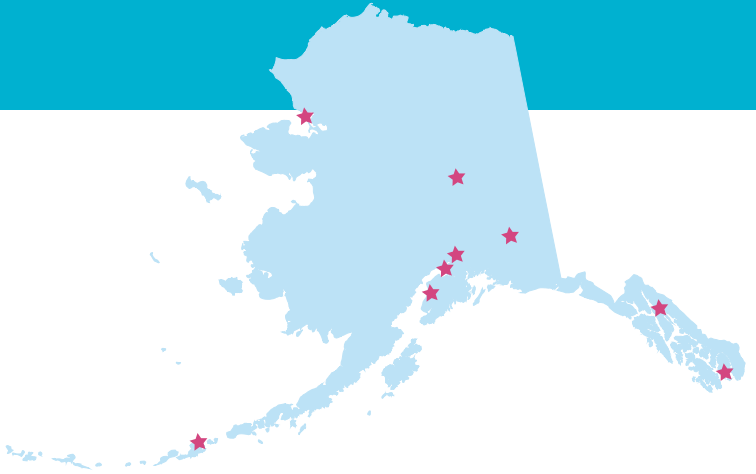
The Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) in Fairbanks received 800 dispatches in 2024, achieving a resolution rate of 84%. Only 2% of those calls needed additional law enforcement involvement. This demonstrates that the Crisis Now model is effective in diverting individuals away from non-essential law enforcement interaction and possible incarceration. The MCT is continuing to experience increased call volume into 2025, with over 31% higher caller volume in the last quarter compared to the previous year.



The Crisis Now coordinator continues to work to support a future Crisis Stabilization Center in Interior Alaska which will be operated by Alaska Behavioral Health. The coordinator is also assisting the Fairbanks Police Department with their efforts funded by the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Promoting Access to Crisis Teams grant. This initiative includes a fully CIT-trained police force and the addition of a peer support specialist to help individuals in need. The City of Fairbanks has also brought on a Community Paramedic through the Fire Department and is making progress on initiatives to reestablish the Emergency Service Patrol program.

Ketchikan

Over the past three years, Ketchikan has increased efforts to improve behavioral health crisis-related work. With community needs assessments in hand, community members and leadership started taking steps towards positive changes. Partnerships have been key to bridging the gaps in the continuum of care that were identified during assessments. Many partners have helped to create a stronger, more coordinated behavioral



health crisis response system, including: The Ketchikan Wellness Coalition, Ketchikan Police Department, City of Ketchikan, Ketchikan Fire Department, Ketchikan Indian Community, PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center, Public Health Center, Residential Youth Center, Community Connections, Gateway Borough School District, Women in Safe Homes, and the Department of Justice. Our state and federal partners have provided essential funding, consulting, networking and information sharing that has been instrumental to this work. The Ketchikan community is thankful for the following learning opportunities and trainings that have helped to provide a better system of care: Peer Support, Mental Health First Aid, Narcan, Critical Incident Stress Management, De-escalation, Question Persuade and Refer Suicide Prevention, Icelandic Prevention Model, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, and others.

All of the collaboration and coordination efforts over the past few years are now paying off. For example, the Ketchikan Police Department which oversees the Ketchikan Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) is in the process of a dispatch upgrade to become E911 capable. They are also ensuring the integration of 988 into the new E911 training so dispatchers can utilize this essential service.

Another example of effort into action is that of the recently launched Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) program within the Ketchikan Fire Department. After

a year and a half of assessing and planning, the MIH program was launched in June of 2024. The MIH program offers crisis-related services aimed at preventing future crisis events and connecting people to treatment and supports. Health-related social needs are often the root causes of stressors that can increase the risk of a crisis. The MIH program places emphasis on follow-up services, care coordination, critical service intersections, and crisis systems development. MIH is a data-driven, effective, efficient, and equitable service that is now recognized as an essential service by the City of Ketchikan.

A focus on improving behavioral health crisis efforts for youth has also been in full swing. Residential Youth Care has expanded their scope of care to crisis stabilization and outpatient therapy and are leading the SeaLevel project with a steering committee and youth advisory board to create a welcoming place for young people to access a network of resources. SeaLevel is a free drop-in center where 15-21-year-olds can feel supported through building trusting relationships and by creating connections to each other and to the community. To additionally serve the youth of Ketchikan, Community Connections has implemented a program that focuses on stabilization. They offer a specialized home when therapeutic foster care requires crisis care that does not meet criteria for involuntary treatment.

Improving behavioral health crisis efforts has also been a priority in Ketchikan's local hospital and treatment organizations. PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center (PHKMC) is a designated evaluation and stabilization facility for persons throughout southeast Alaska. PHKMC contracts with a remote psychiatric assessment service for those experiencing a behavioral health crisis. As part of the hospital remodel, a room designated for emergency psychiatric evaluations will be designed to be safer and more comfortable.

Recently, Ketchikan was without a community-based substance use and mental health clinic. In the past month True North Recovery has started offering residential substance use treatment and plans to provide crisis care response. SEARHC is now offering comprehensive addiction services (MAT and IOP) locally. The Ketchikan Tribal Business Corporation is working to bring mental health services to Ketchikan in the coming months.

All of these efforts mentioned continue to progress because behavioral health crisis-related work continues to be prioritized by our community members, local leaders, and state and federal partners.

Juneau

In addition to the Mobile Integrated Health (MIH), Emergency Services Patrol, and Sobering Center services that Capital City Fire and Rescue (CCFR) continue to provide, CCFR and Bartlett Regional Hospital (BRH) partnered at the end of 2024 to launch a Mobile Crisis Team (MCT). From January 1 to March 10, 2025, the MCT saw 69 unique individuals for a total of 77 crisis response events. 71% of these responses were resolved in place, meaning the individual did not require additional transportation or higher levels of care. CCFR and BRH continue to partner with the Juneau Police Department and other community organizations to evaluate processes related to dispatch and response. There is also an ongoing evaluation of how to expand MCT hours for more coverage throughout the week.



In 2024, the MIH team supported 289 individuals with 3,395 contacts of service. The top services provided during these contacts included medication management, appointment transportation and food and supply deliveries. The Sobering Center had 713 admissions in 2024, and the Emergency Services Patrol provided 3,055 transports to locations across Juneau.

Anchorage

The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) recently formed a Crisis Response Work Group whose main focus is to address the first two steps in the crisis continuum (Someone to Contact and Someone to Respond). This will help ensure that MOA emergency and crisis services provide the right level of care, at the right time, every time. The MOA is also working to optimize Safety Center services to provide additional crisis stabilization services when individuals need more support than the mobile crisis teams can provide as other providers continue to develop their crisis stabilization services.

Anchorage crisis and emergency response providers continue to meet and work together on how to deliver consistent, effective and safe care for individuals in crisis. These planning and collaborative efforts are in addition to baseline services emergency and behavioral health crisis services. To highlight just some of the behavioral health crisis-related services provided in 2024:

APD Dispatch: **371,866 calls** to 911, 311 or administrative lines

Police Department Mobile Intervention Team: **3,083 responses** to crisis calls

Fire Department Mobile Crisis Team: **4,164 responses** to crisis calls

Safety Patrol: **over 12,000 responses**

VOA's Rapid Response (youth-focused): **61 responses** to crisis calls (July through December)

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) continues to develop their future behavioral health facility near Tudor and Elmore roads. The facility will house crisis stabilization, short-term treatment, withdrawal management, adult outpatient, and medication assisted treatment services. SCF anticipates opening these new services in Spring 2026.

Providence's Crisis Stabilization Center construction remains paused.

Mat-Su

Congratulations to the Mat-Su CIT Coalition, which was certified at Gold level in 2024. Gold level certification recognizes an 'outstanding program that has met most of the best practice criteria for CIT programming. You can learn more about CIT program certification at [CIT International](#).

The Mat-Su Behavioral Health Crisis System of care continues to demonstrate robust coordination, collaboration, and service delivery. Below are service utilization highlights for the region in 2024.

Someone to Contact

Services like the 988 Lifeline and other behavioral health hotlines providing immediate, accessible support.



- Careline/988: **1,673 Mat-Su calls**
- VA crisis line: **146 Mat-Su calls**
- 911: **665 Mat-Su calls**
- DV/SA hotline: **685 calls**
- Mat-Su Health Services (MSHS) hotline: **582 calls**
- True North Recovery (TNR) Hopeline: **1,184 calls**

Someone to Respond

Services like mobile crisis teams deliver rapid, on-site interventions to de-escalate crisis and connect individuals to care and other community-based supports that provide crisis prevention and postvention care.



- Mobile Crisis Team: **540 visits**

A Safe Place for Help

Emergency and crisis stabilization services that support on-demand crisis care and crisis-related supports in a variety of community settings.



- Palmer Navigation Center: **317 visits**
- TNR Launchpad: **1,138 visits**
- MY House: **135 visits**
- Set Free Alaska, crisis residential: **138 admissions**
- MSRMC Behavioral Health Unit: **436 admissions**
- Behavioral health emergency department: **1,062 visits**
- MSHS walk-in crisis visits: **64 visits**
- DV/SA Shelter: **271 clients**

Support for extended wellbeing

Connectors (such as peer support workers, community health workers, and case managers) help individuals get primary care, behavioral health care, housing, transportation, food, and other essential supports.

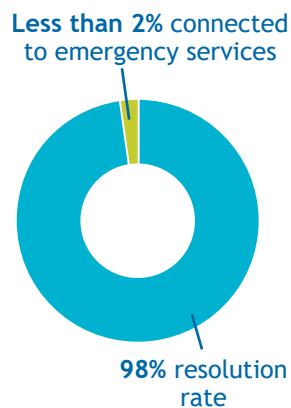


- Drug Endangered Children Program: **52 caregivers with 63 children accepted services**
- HUMS/LINKS: **72 clients**
- Alaska Youth & Family Network: **90 clients**

Someone to Contact

In 2024, national wireless providers (e.g. T-Mobile, AT&T, Verizon) began to implement a Federal Communications Commission's rule for georouting all wireless calls to 988 and in January 2025, this critical milestone was met. This now means that when someone in Alaska calls 988 their call will be automatically routed based on their location, instead of their area code. All 988 calls made within the state of Alaska will now automatically route to Careline, which operates the state's 988 contact center.

Careline already answers a high volume of contacts. In 2024, Careline staff answered almost 40,000 calls, texts or chats to 988 or the direct Careline number. Contacts included people who were in crisis or having suicidal ideation but also included people who are grieving, concerned about someone else, or just need someone to talk to. Of all these contacts, over 98% were resolved over the phone during skilled and caring response provided by staff. That means less than 2% of contacts resulted in Careline staff helping callers connect with emergency services dispatch.



Careline is committed to expanding pathways between the contact center and other crisis service providers. This includes piloting Mobile Crisis Team dispatch and exploring opportunities to engage with other communities involved in this space. Careline is also piloting a full-time position to provide wrap-around support for individuals who are high-utilizers of local emergency response services. This support would be for individuals who might benefit from the call center making regularly scheduled outbound phone calls to ensure individuals are following their care plans, keeping them out of crisis level care.

To learn more about 988 or Careline, go to health.alaska.gov/dbh or to carelinealaska.com

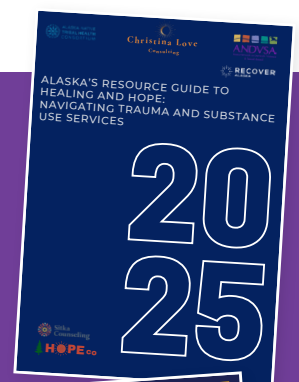
Careline is seeking passionate Alaskans to volunteer on the Carline Board of Directors.

To learn more, go to <https://carelinealaska.com/opportunities/>



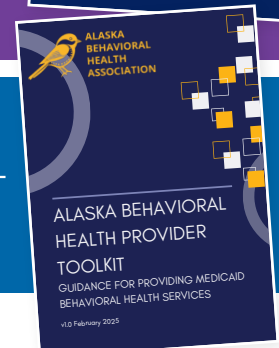
Alaska's Resource Guide to Healing and Hope: Navigating Trauma and Substance Use Services

This comprehensive resource is for individuals, families, advocates, and providers seeking to navigate the complex continuum of care in Alaska. Partners statewide developed this snapshot of essential services, outlined the various stages of support, and policy recommendations. By addressing the intersections of trauma, substance use, and mental health, this guide provides both practical information and promotes a holistic understanding of care- where safety and healing are prioritized at every step of the journey. You can find this resource guide at Recover Alaska's website <https://recovalaska.org/research-data/>





Behavioral Health Provider Toolkit


The Alaska Behavioral Health Association (ABHA) released their **Behavioral Health Provider Enrollment Toolkit** in February. This toolkit is intended as a resource for providers delivering Medicaid behavioral health services, and includes content on Medicaid regulation, billing, definitions and other resources. The toolkit is accessible without an ABHA membership.



Training and Education Resources

 **April 23-25, 2025**
[4th Annual Suicide Research Symposium \(virtual\)](#)

 **May 1-3, 2025**
[52nd Annual National Association for Rural Mental Health Conference](#)

 **May 13-15, 2025**
[Pathways to Recovery Conference](#)

Alaska Center for Rural Health and Health Workforce

A seven-module Workforce Empowerment & Engagement (WEE) training curriculum is available with modules offered both virtually and in-person. Trainings are designed for professionals, healthcare teams, community organizations, and leaders in the behavioral health crisis workforce seeking to improve workplace engagement, communication, and resilience.

This training is designed to support workplace well-being, enhance team dynamics, and provide practical tools for professionals navigating workforce challenges. The curriculum is designed to improve workforce retention by targeting areas of challenge for organizations who provide behavioral health crisis services.



Please complete the [training request form](#) to inquire about personalized training opportunities. **This training is available now through June 30th, 2025 at no cost.** After this period live, tailored training options will shift to a fee-based model, with pricing based on selected modules. Online, self-paced courses will remain free indefinitely.

On-demand self-paced modules are also available for individual learners. The online, asynchronous formats are available on the [CACHE: Clearinghouse for Alaska's Continuing Health Education](#).

CE credits available for these sessions!

Explore the Training Series:

- **Addressing Burnout & Compassion Fatigue** - Tools to reduce stress and promote well-being.
- **An Intergenerational Workforce** - Learn to bridge generational gaps for a cohesive team.
- **Boundaries for Workplace Wellness** - Strategies for setting professional boundaries.
- **Defining Needs & Requests** - Improve clarity in workplace communication.
- **Exploring Communication in the Workplace** - Develop effective communication skills.
- **Exploring Healthy Conflict** - Navigate workplace conflicts productively.
- **Personalities & Work Styles** - Understand different work styles to enhance collaboration.

Training has been designed for and by the behavioral health crisis workforce across the State of Alaska and made possible through funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. This curriculum is the result of multiple listening sessions with behavioral health crisis providers to address the key needs, insights, and priorities of the workforce.

Coming Soon! Advanced Crisis Now Training (August 2025)

In addition to the WEE curriculum, we are excited to announce an **Advanced Crisis Now Training** series will launch in **August 2025** to support crisis response professionals with enhanced tools for de-escalation, crisis system coordination, and emergency intervention strategies. Stay tuned for more details!



UAA Alaska Center for Rural Health and Health Workforce
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE



CACHE
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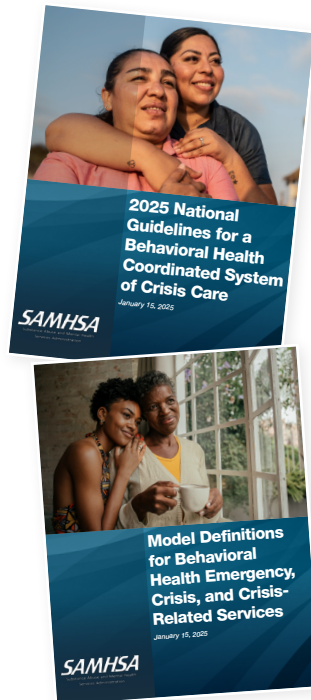
SAMHSA Spotlight: 2025 National Guidelines and Model Definitions

SAMHSA released updated materials to guide [behavioral health crisis and emergency care](#) in January 2025. These materials include the 2025 National Guidelines for a Behavioral Health Coordinated System of Crisis Care, 2025 Model Definitions for Behavioral Health Emergency, Crisis and Crisis-Related Services, and the Mobile Crisis Team Services: An Implementation Toolkit (Draft).

The [National Guidelines](#) and [Model Definitions](#) refine concepts originally published in 2020, to establish ‘seamless systems’ that offer “high quality behavioral health care for individuals at all levels of acuity that can support wellness, promote safety, and avoid unnecessary care in both healthcare and law- enforcement institutional settings.”

These updated documents incorporated feedback from national partners (and reflect changes with the transition to 988) regarding the core elements and key principles necessary to create behavioral health coordinated systems of care (BHCSCC). BHCSCCs are necessary to provide person-centered care to foster resilience, long-term recovery, reduce suicide and overdose death rates, and strengthen communities.

This 2025 National Guidelines and Model Definitions introduces expanded and nuanced recommendations for care service models and considerations for administrative oversight as well as evaluation and data collection essentials and much more.



Some highlighted updates from the 2025 National Guidelines include:

- Definitions for behavioral health crisis, emergency and crisis-related services (p.6)
- Updated core principles and essential service elements (pp.11-22)
- Refining the continuum of service delivery types for the three essential services to a behavioral health coordinated system of care. Also, notice the shift in language (Contact instead of Call, Safe Place for Help vs Place to Go).
 - Someone to Contact (pp. 24-35)
 - Someone to Respond (pp.35-46)
 - A Safe Place for Help (pp. 46-57)
- Strategic considerations for financing and fiscal sustainability (pp. 75-81)

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and partners statewide are currently reviewing the 2025 National Guidelines to understand where there are opportunities for alignment with these new standards and to take inspiration from innovative strategies.

Legislation & Advocacy Resources

It's legislative session time! If you are looking for resources to track legislation, consider signing up for [NAMI Alaska's weekly legislative update](#) or join the [Trust's Joint Advocacy Action Alert Network](#) for updates, information and alerts.

Some recent legislation or resolutions that may impact our state's crisis continuum of care include:

- HB 138: Behavioral health crisis surcharge & fund
- SCR2 - Support crisis care & Medicaid reform