



HELENA PEDIATRIC CLINIC, P.C.



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**St. Peter's Health and Intermountain Partner to Serve High-Risk Youth in Response to Unprecedented Increases in Youth Behavioral Health Admissions**

**HELENA, MONTANA** – Standing together to serve Helena-area youth and families, St. Peter's Health and Intermountain have entered into an innovative partnership to increase the level of care for youth who are hospitalized for critical behavioral health issues, such as suicidal ideation, suicide attempt or major depression.

The partnership was forged in response to the increasing number of youth being admitted to the St. Peter's Health Regional Medical Center due to critical behavioral issues. "In 2010, seven youth with a critical behavioral health crisis were admitted to St. Peter's or put under observation status. In 2017, that number was 147. This increase is both staggering and saddening," said Dr. Shelly Harkins, St. Peter's Health Chief Medical Officer.

Through this partnership, a licensed mental health clinician from Intermountain will join the St. Peter's Health treatment team to directly serve youth while admitted to St. Peter's for behavioral health crises. The treatment team includes nursing staff, as well as physicians from Helena Pediatric Clinic and Partners in Pediatrics.

"We are very excited to be able to partner with St. Peter's to better serve kids and youth who are in crisis," said Intermountain's Chief Executive Officer Jim FitzGerald. "This is an example of the direction in which healthcare is moving. Integrated systems of care provide much better access for the patient, a more holistic, multidisciplinary lens to meet that patient's needs, and a more efficient and effective delivery of limited resources. We are hopeful that these organizations with a common goal to meet a critical community need can pioneer something special that will make our families and community healthier and stronger."

St. Peter's Health already has a partnership in place with the Crisis Response Team (CRT) from the Western Mental Health Alliance. The CRT stands ready 24/7 to help patients – both adult and pediatric – while they are in the acute stage of their crisis in the Emergency Department. St. Peter's also works closely with Shodair Children's Hospital to place patients in need of acute crisis stabilization.

The partnership with Intermountain fills a gap by enabling pediatric patients to continue receiving the appropriate behavioral health treatment throughout their acute care inpatient stay. According to Harkins, "not all pediatric patients that present with a behavioral health crisis are admitted to the hospital. It's our goal to connect patients and their families with the appropriate resources or residential care facility as quickly as possible. This partnership with Intermountain really allows us to deliver a higher state of care, for mind and body, for pediatric patients at St. Peter's Health."

Intermountain and St. Peter's Health are also members of the Lewis and Clark Suicide Prevention Coalition, which includes diverse community stakeholders who work together to increase access to mental health services and improve community awareness about suicide and suicide prevention activities.

Intermountain offers free screenings for emotional distress and/or at-risk behaviors for students attending the Helena Middle Schools and High Schools. Parents are encouraged to have their children screened regularly, or any time they have concerns, by requesting a screening through the schools. The National Suicide Prevention hotline is available 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255.

### **St. Peter's Health**

St. Peter's is a system of health care services including a 99-bed acute care hospital, physician clinics, cancer treatment center, 24-bed behavioral health unit, urgent care clinics, home health and hospice care, dialysis center, and ambulance services. St. Peter's serves the Helena region and southwest Montana counties of Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson, Meagher and Powell, with a combined population of approximately 97,000 residents. The mission of St. Peter's is to partner with patients, the community and medical staff to provide exceptional and compassionate healthcare. For more information, visit [sphealth.org](http://sphealth.org).

### **Intermountain**

Intermountain is a child, youth, and family provider of mental health and substance use services, including inpatient treatment for forty emotionally distressed children, outpatient therapy, co-occurring services for substance use assessments and treatment, school-based day treatment and comprehensive school and community treatment (CSCT), psychiatric medication management, home support services, therapeutic foster care and adoption services, case management, occupational therapy, and psychological evaluations. Intermountain serves nearly 1,000 children, youth, and families daily throughout its services across Western Montana. The mission of Intermountain is healing through healthy relationships, and its vision is relational and emotional health through transformative, integrated care.