

Answers to Questions Submitted by The Charlotte Observer

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* How well do you think CMC-Randolph has done serving the needs of the county's mentally ill?

CMC-Randolph is a long-term valued partner with Mecklenburg County and provides high quality services for consumers. CMC-Randolph is accredited by the Joint Commission, which means that it meets the highest standards set for the industry. The Mecklenburg County Office of Strategic Improvement completed a Program Review of CMC-R and scored them as "Successful" with an 82% rating. The partnership between CMC-R and Area Mental Health has created a system for the county that is unparalleled in the State. Mecklenburg County is the only county in North Carolina that provides inpatient psychiatric beds for the stabilization and treatment of the acutely mentally ill. The psychiatric emergency department is the only dedicated psychiatric emergency service in the region.

* What challenges do you think the hospital and the county now face as they try to serve the most severely ill mental health patients?

An increased demand for services by residents of Mecklenburg County and their families; insufficient funding from the State to address our local needs, and an insufficient number of State hospital beds to address the care for acute mental illness.

Currently there are five State psychiatric hospitals. The State plans to replace two of the existing facilities but does not currently plan on increasing the total number of beds. The State is not increasing the number of beds because current best practice thinking is that the majority of psychiatric patients can be stabilized and treated within a community setting on an outpatient basis.

* What are the most pressing needs of the county and hospital as they attempt to cope with increasing demand for services?

Per capita funding from the State for all mental health services.

* What steps does the county plan to take to meet those needs?

Continue to work closely with Leza Wainwright the Director of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Disabilities Services at the State and her successor when named. Continue to partner with CMC-R to meet the mental health needs of Mecklenburg County residents.