

## Crisis center opens in Onslow County

ELISE CLOUSER Aug 8, 2019

**JACKSONVILLE** — Officials last week announced the opening of the Dix Crisis Intervention Center, a 16-bed facility and collaboration between Carteret and Onslow counties, local hospitals and others to address the addiction and mental health needs of residents.

The crisis center, at 215 Memorial Drive in Jacksonville, opened its doors to patients July 29. According to a release, the facility will primarily serve adults with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders, including those in need of non-hospital medical detoxification.

The center is intended to provide emergency, short-term care, transferring patients to longer-term facilities or detox centers as necessary. Patients can be referred to the center by family and friends, law enforcement, hospitals, emergency medical services or they can self-refer.

Carteret Health Care and the county committed money to the new crisis center, along with Onslow and Craven counties, the city of Jacksonville and Onslow Memorial Hospital. CHC made an initial contribution of \$100,000, and the county pledged \$300,000.

“I think this is a very positive thing that will help serve patients in need of care for mental health, behavioral health and addiction,” CHC President Dick Brvenik said. “...This is really a major step forward for our region. I think it will benefit everyone, from the health care providers, to emergency departments, but most importantly, it will help the patient and their families.”

The entities that contributed funds to the crisis center will be represented by the Onslow Craven Carteret Oversight Committee for Mental Health/Substance Abuse, which is comprised of representatives of each organization. Commissioner Jimmy Farrington will represent Carteret County on the board.

Mr. Brvenik said the center is not only a positive for the patients and their families it will help treat and rehabilitate, but it will also relieve some of the pressure on local emergency departments. He said people in crisis often turn to emergency departments for care, costing money and resources, but a facility like the Dix Crisis Intervention Center is often better suited to their needs.

“This will help save money on the unnecessary use of emergency department resources, but more importantly, it will get people a more appropriate level of care for the care they need,” Mr. Brvenik said.

Day-to-day operations of the Dix Crisis Intervention Center will be handled by RI International, a global organization that offers services in crisis, health, recovery and consulting. Trillium Health Resources, the regional managed care organization that oversees mental health services in eastern North Carolina, will oversee the center.

“We are proud to be part of a community, including our neighboring counties, that pulls together to accomplish something so important. The collaborative efforts that launched this center are inspiring. Dix Crisis plays a vital role in the crisis continuum in our county,” Assistant Onslow County Manager Sheri Slater said in a release announcing the opening of the facility.

Opening the facility was a task nearly three years in the making. In 2017, Senate Bill 257 allocated up to \$2 million for renovation of the building and furnishings for the center, which Jacksonville already owned.

Trillium published a request for proposals in April 2018 to solicit providers interested in operating the facility and made the award to RI International in August of last year.

“The Dix Crisis Intervention Center is a state of the art facility that will serve thousands of individuals in psychiatric distress each year,” RI International CEO and President David Covington said. “Services are founded on the Crisis Now model which is nationally recognized as a best practice for a community in supporting those in crisis. It offers the right targeted care at the right times and will divert hundreds away from unnecessary visits at Emergency Departments. We are proud to partner with Trillium Health Resources and the OCCOC on this well-needed program. Their work on building a strong coalition of support has been amazing.”

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