



IMPACT BRIEF | MAY 2026

Merakey Mental Health Walk-In Clinic

Behavioral health urgent care: Bridging the gap in Mental Health Services

MERAKEY MENTAL HEALTH WALK-IN CLINIC

The Merakey Mental Health Walk-In Clinic represents a transformative approach to addressing critical gaps in the mental health service continuum. This innovative behavioral health urgent care model provides low-barrier, same-day access to comprehensive behavioral health services.

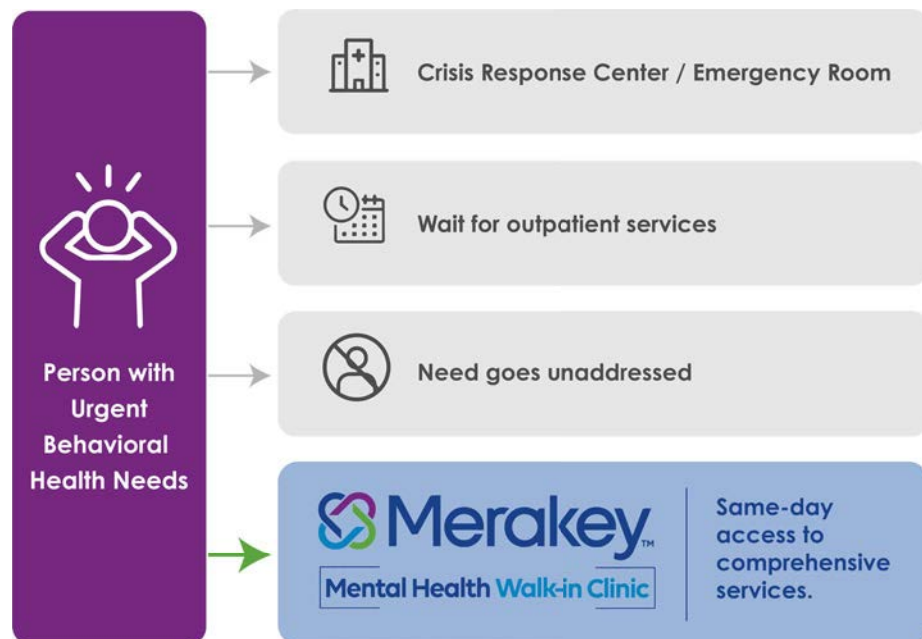
Even in a robust behavioral health service system, with a continuum from outpatient and community-based services through crisis services and inpatient care, limited access to same-day care results in delayed, unmet or exacerbated behavioral health needs and an increased reliance on overburdened and inadequately equipped emergency departments and crisis services.



The Walk-in Clinic provides accessible same-day mental health care within the continuum of services.

The Merakey Mental Health Walk-In Clinic in Philadelphia is open 7 days a week and offers individualized, integrated services designed to address immediate needs, resolve emerging

crises and provide connection to ongoing services and supports. Services include rapid assessment, brief therapy, psychiatric consultation, onsite medication administration, peer support, case management, care coordination, and warm hand-offs when needed - all within a healing-centered physical environment designed to support emotion regulation and recovery.



With the Walk-In Clinic, individuals with urgent behavioral health needs have a timely, accessible alternative to relying on crisis services, navigating outpatient appointment delays, or going without care altogether. In the absence of this option, many people turn to crisis services to address needs that are urgent but not emergent—an approach that is both burdensome for individuals and contributes to unnecessary demand on already strained crisis systems. The Walk-In Clinic addresses this gap by providing same-day, comprehensive services that meet immediate needs while preserving crisis system capacity for individuals with higher-acuity concerns.

Equipped to respond to a range of non-emergent clinical presentations, the Walk-In Clinic addresses needs that could otherwise result in unnecessary escalation to higher-intensity, more costly services. It frees up crisis response and emergency services to address the crises for which they are designed.

THE CLINIC IN ACTION

The following data describes the services offered by the Merakey Mental Health Walk-In Clinic since it opened its doors in September 2024 through October 2025. The data included in this report are de-identified, aggregate data collected in the electronic health records during the provision of clinical services.

COMPREHENSIVE CARE IN A SINGLE VISIT

The Walk-In Clinic offers services that extend beyond psychiatric evaluation and crisis intervention offered in crisis systems. Individuals receive comprehensive, individualized services delivered by a team, including peers, therapists, case managers, nurses, and psychiatry professionals.



Rapid Assessment

Rapid assessment to understand the individual's presenting concerns, unique needs and identify the services and resources that will best support them



Peer Support & Brief Therapy

Peer support and brief therapeutic interventions to assist individuals in emotional distress



Crisis Assessments & Coordinated Referrals

Crisis assessments and coordinated referrals for individuals whose needs require higher levels of care, including crisis or inpatient services



Psychiatric Consultation & Medication Support

Psychiatric consultation, including **bridge prescriptions** to address lapses in needed psychiatric medications and **onsite medication administration** - particularly critical for transient populations



Psychiatric Evaluations

Psychiatric evaluations to determine need for intensive services ensuring individuals are connected to appropriate levels of ongoing care



Case Management & Care Coordination

Case management and care coordination to facilitate connections to ongoing mental health services and resources addressing health related social needs

HIGH DEMAND FOR SERVICES

The high volume and increasing demand for Merakey's Mental Health Walk In Clinic services demonstrates that it is filling a critical service gap as Philadelphia's first and only adult behavioral health urgent care.



2,828

Individuals Served



3,793

Total Visits



54%

Increase in Service Volume*

*Comparing first quarter (Sep – Nov 2024) to most recent quarter (Aug-Oct 2025)

PROVIDING CARE TO PEOPLE IN NEED

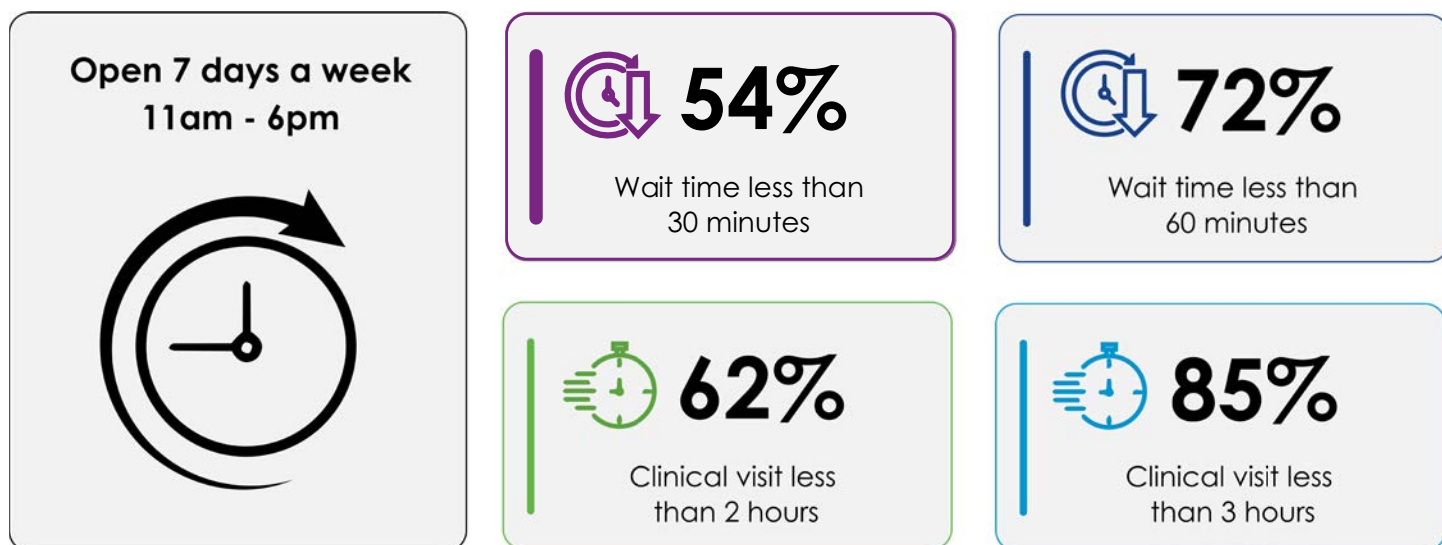
The Merakey Mental Health Walk-In Clinic is meeting the needs of individuals who often face barriers to accessing behavioral health services and experience high levels of health-related social needs.



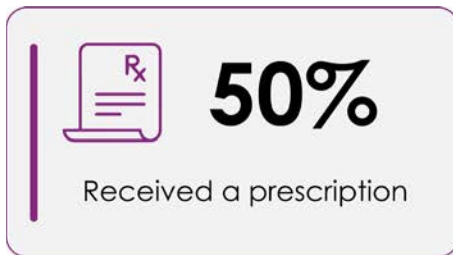
*Identified as Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Hispanic or Latino

RAPID ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Individuals are seen faster than an emergency room visit for mental health concerns and receive an array of services, including access to psychiatry services, that would require multiple, time-consuming appointments and wait-times to access separately.



Individuals receive comprehensive service, including psychiatry, therapeutic interventions, peer support and care coordination in a single appointment. **All clients (100%) had access to peer support services and received aftercare planning during the appointment.** Of the individuals seen at the Walk-In Clinic during the study period:



*2275 individuals rated Subjective Units of Distress on a 10 point scale at intake and discharge. Average SUD of 5.10 (SD = 2.96) at intake. Average of 2.35 (SD = 2.07) at discharge (paired t-test; 95 percent CI: 2.62, 2.88, $p < .001$, $DF = 2,274$)

RECEIVING SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY - NOT EMERGENCY ROOMS

Merakey Mental Health Walk-In Clinic provides a welcoming, supportive alternative to the stress of emergency rooms and crisis services

of the 3,793 visits to the Walk-In Clinic had needs that could be met by the Clinic and did not require referrals to crisis service or higher levels of care. This includes 427 individuals who presented in acute distress and required a crisis assessment, demonstrating the clinic's ability to safely de-escalate and provide services onsite.

For the 56 individuals who were assessed to have more acute needs, the clinic provided one-to-one support and facilitated **warm-hand offs to crisis or inpatient services.**

Individuals who received services at the clinic reported **significant reductions in distress*** from the start to the end of the visit on a self-reported measure.



BRIDGING THE GAP THROUGH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH URGENT CARE

The Merakey Mental Health Walk-In Clinic in Philadelphia is filling a critical need within the behavioral health service continuum. It serves as an off-ramp from crisis and emergency services, simultaneously reducing pressure on overburdened systems while improving the experience for individuals seeking care. In the first year, the Clinic served nearly 3,000 individuals across more than 3,700 visits, delivering same-day, comprehensive care to a population that has few timely options beyond emergency rooms, crisis services, or going without support. The data shows that individuals, including those who arrived in acute distress, could be safely stabilized and served within the community, avoiding costly and disruptive escalations to higher levels of care. Measurable reductions in self-reported distress, high rates of psychiatric medication access, and robust follow-up outreach reflect a model that addresses immediate needs while supporting longer-term recovery.