Wisconsin Case Study: Supporting Youth Mental Health through Crisis Stabilization Facilities

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In 2017, Wisconsin passed legislation to establish Youth Crisis Stabilization Facilities (YCSFs) as a community-based residential treatment option for youth experiencing a mental health crisis. Defined by Wisconsin Statute 51.042, YCSFs are facilities with up to eight beds designed to de-escalate crises and prevent admission to more restrictive settings.

The goal of YCSFs is to provide youth and families with access to local crisis stabilization services, reducing reliance on costly inpatient care. In 2018, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) developed a toolkit with strategies for community-based crisis intervention. However, a 2019 DHS survey revealed significant gaps, with 21 counties lacking crisis stabilization options and 62% of counties reporting that the nearest facility was outside their jurisdiction.

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