



## FAQs

### **What is the Behavioral Health Unit?**

It is a unit in the medical center for people suffering acute behavioral health crises and issues. It is staffed 24/7 by registered nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, therapists and other care providers.

### **When will this change take effect?**

The decision is effective immediately and will be phased in over the next sixty days to provide an orderly transition for patients and employees. Patients currently in observation or treatment in the BHU will be transitioned to outpatient services or other inpatient programs in our region as and when appropriate to ensure continuity of care and optimal health outcomes.

### **Where can patients go for mental health help?**

Tri-City's Outpatient Behavioral Health Services are provided nearby at 510 W. Vista Way in Vista Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. As part of the transition, hours for outpatient services will be extended to include additional clinic time from 5:00pm to 7:00pm on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings.

Services provided at Tri-City Outpatient Behavioral Health Services include intensive treatments for a full range of mental health issues. Care is provided by a multidisciplinary team of mental health professionals from psychiatrists to therapists and social workers.

### **How may this impact employees?**

Where possible, BHU and CSU employees will be transitioned to positions in Tri-City Medical Center's Outpatient Behavioral Health Services or elsewhere in the medical center, which is actively recruiting for approximately 200 open positions.

### **What kind of facility improvements were needed?**

Recent updates in regulation are focused on the environment of care and potential risks to patients in facilities. As standards have continued to be updated, Tri-City Medical Center's aging facilities put the medical center in a position that would require multi-million dollar structural modifications. Additionally, these improvements would necessitate the closing of the units for an extended period of time. This situation, coupled with a nationwide shortage of mental health professionals, combined to make transitioning to outpatient services the prudent course of action for the medical center and the community it serves.



### **What kind of staffing shortages have been impacting the BHU and CSU?**

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) operates 24/7 and must be staffed around the clock with psychiatrists who have prescribing authority and mental health professionals who are trained to deal with acute mental health issues. The United States is suffering from a nationwide shortage of these highly trained professionals, which has contributed to the operational challenges for countless hospitals, including Tri-City Medical Center.

### **What do I do if I'm experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis?**

Help is available. If you or a loved one is experiencing a life-threatening mental health crisis, please **call 911** immediately to receive emergency medical services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts or in emotional distress, please **call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** to speak to trained crisis workers 24 hours a day, seven days a week from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

To reach a Tri-City Medical Center Outpatient Behavioral Health Services mental health professional, please **call 760-940-5051** during business hours or leave a message after hours and someone will return your call.