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**MAYOR ADAMS OPENS NEW, INNOVATIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FACILITY  
FOR NEW YORKERS EXPERIENCING MENTAL ILLNESS**

*Bronx Support and Connection Center Will Provide Alternative to Avoidable Emergency Room Visits or Criminal Justice Interventions for People With Mental Health or Substance Use Needs*

*City's B-HEARD Program to Refer Patients to Center for Mental Health Services*

**NEW YORK** — New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan today announced the opening of the Bronx Support and Connection Center (SCC) — a short-term treatment and stabilization program that offers services for people experiencing mental health or substance use needs. The facility offers New Yorkers with an alternative to avoidable emergency room visits and criminal justice interventions. The SCC will also serve patients referred by the city's recently expanded Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (B-HEARD) program.

"New Yorkers struggling with mental health and substance use deserve compassion and support, not a revolving door of emergency room and criminal justice interventions," said **Mayor Adams**. "We are tackling the mental health crisis in our city with innovation and urgency to reach people where they are and provide them the resources they need. In partnership with the newly expanded B-HEARD initiative and the NYPD, New Yorkers in crisis will find support

and a path to a more stable life at the Bronx Support and Connection Center, yet another example of our investments in the upstream mental health, safety solutions that will allow all New Yorkers to thrive.”

“If you are living with mental health or substance, use needs or if you know someone who is, the city has another hub of support for you in the Bronx,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**. “The center announced today will provide a range of immediate and stabilizing services that will help people on their pathway to recovery. Thank you to our partners in this multiagency effort to reach people where they are and, in a time, when they need support.”

“We know that New Yorkers experiencing mental health crises need more and better on ramps to care and need transitional environments in which to stabilize and connect with people and resources,” said **DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan**. “Support and Connection Centers create the immediate stability and establish the links that help break the cycle of housing instability, justice system involvement, and emergency room visits that too many people with ongoing mental health or substance use challenges experience. These centers are a vital part of the rehabilitative social infrastructure we are investing in to support people facing significant mental health challenges to find connection, compassion, and holistic care on their journey of recovery and crisis prevention.”

“The Bronx Support and Connection Center will serve as a critical pathway to long-term stability and community-based supports for fellow New Yorkers who are in greatest need,” said **Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner of Mental Hygiene Dr. Michael McRae**.

“For the first time in this city’s history, these centers operating in conjunction with B-HEARD teams allow New Yorkers experiencing a mental health crisis to be served in their community with options for behavioral health care that were not previously part of the traditional emergency response” said **Jason Hansman and Tina Chiu, co-acting directors, Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health (OCMH)**. “We are proud to partner with DOHMH, the New York City Fire Department, NYC Health + Hospitals, and the New York City Police Department to support the city’s commitment to treating mental health emergencies as a public health issue.”

“The FDNY is proud to support the opening of the Bronx Support and Connection Center,” said **New York City Fire Department (FDNY) Acting Commissioner Laura Kavanagh**. “Our

B-HEARD response units focus on de-escalation and support, and the Bronx SCC will allow the neediest Bronx residents to receive the long-term care they require.”

“This center will be a neighborhood resource to connect individuals in this community with comprehensive behavioral health services,” said **New York City Police Department (NYPD) Chief of Interagency Operations Terri Tobin**. “We look forward to this new opportunity to continue our collaboration with the health care community in ensuring New Yorkers receive the right type of care.”

“The Harlem Support and Connection Center has been an essential partner to the B-HEARD initiative,” said **Charles Barron, MD, deputy chief medical officer, Office of Behavioral Health, NYC Health + Hospitals**. “It provides a safe place for community members to go, helping avoid unnecessary transports to the emergency room. We look forward to partnering with the Bronx Support and Connection Center to provide the needed care in the community.”

Referrals to the Bronx SCC can come from NYPD’s 47<sup>th</sup> Precinct and the B-HEARD teams that operate in the South Bronx. B-HEARD teams up EMTs/paramedics from FDNY’s Emergency Medical Services and mental health professionals from NYC Health + Hospitals to respond to certain emergency mental health calls as the city’s health-centered approach to 911 mental health calls. Mayor Adams previously [announced B-HEARD’s expansion to six new precincts in North Manhattan and the South Bronx](#), more than doubling the precincts covered to 11.

The Bronx SCC will offer robust clinical services provided by Samaritan Daytop Village, a nonprofit health and human services provider with programs throughout the five boroughs. SCC services will include screening and assessments, counseling services, short-term case management, links to ongoing health and social care, medically supervised substance withdrawal services, access to naloxone, psychiatric services, peer support, and primary care. Additionally, referred individuals can access other services, such as food, showers, laundry, and limited overnight stays. Stays at the center can range from hours to days, depending on the needs of the community member.

The Bronx SCC will serve as a sister site to the East Harlem SCC, which opened in February 2020 and reopened in October 2020 after a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From reopening in October 2020 to March 2022, community members have been brought to the East Harlem SCC 318 times. Many of these referrals have come from B-HEARD teams. From July

2021 to March 2022, community members have returned on their own for services after their first stay 166 times.

The Support and Connection Center program model was developed by DOHMH in consultation with partner agencies and with feedback from members of the community and experts. The Bronx SCC can currently serve 17 community members at any given time and will ramp up to serving 25 community members at a time once fully operational. The program is voluntary.

The Bronx Support and Connection Center began serving New Yorkers on Monday, July 11. Together with the East Harlen SCC, the two centers will cost about \$11 million annually.

Drop-off diversion centers with similar models have proven to be successful in Los Angeles; San Antonio; Phoenix; Kansas City; Missouri, and Dutchess County, New York.

"The Bronx Support and Connection Center is an important collaborative effort to address one of New York City's most pressing health issues," said **Mitchell Netburn, president & CEO of Samaritan Daytop Village**. "Instead of a jail cell or an emergency room, community members with mental health and/or substance use issues will be able to immediately receive a full range of services at this Center. Our unique combination of clinical programs, peer support, and primary care will be a new experience for many individuals brought to the Center. Our open-door policy is designed to encourage them to return, stabilize, and begin their journey to health and wellness."

"There was a need for robust clinical wraparound services in our borough before COVID-19 and this has only been exacerbated by the pandemic," said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. "Equitable access to mental, emotional, and physical care that is attuned to a patient's unique needs should be a human right and the grand opening of the Bronx Support and Connection Center is the first step to ensuring that right is guaranteed to all Bronxites. I want to thank Mayor Eric Adams and Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan for their leadership and for prioritizing health services for our most vulnerable residents in our borough and our city."

"Mental health is one of the most urgent issues facing our community," said **New York State Senator Jamaal Bailey**. "The opening of this center in my district is another step in the right direction to connect individuals in crisis to the vital supports, services, and resources they need to live independently and with dignity. Far too often, individuals experiencing mental health and

substance needs don't receive the services and care they deserve. Diversion centers like Bronx Support and Connection Center provide an alternative to emergency room visits and unnecessary criminal justice interventions. I want to thank Mayor Adams, Commissioner Dr. Vasan, and the Administration for this vital investment in our communities."

"The Bronx Support and Connection Center (SCC) is an innovative approach to improving public safety by intervening and helping on two core issues, mental health and substance use needs," said **New York City Council Member Oswald Feliz**. "We have been moving to recognize that issues of public health cannot continue to be criminalized at the cost of increased incarceration rates among the poor and communities of color such as those found in my district. I am excited to see the work that the SCC will do for the people of the Bronx and look forward to working with them to help our most vulnerable. I thank the Mayor, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and all those involved in tirelessly fighting to improve the lives of all New Yorkers."

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