

HOT

Valley Health celebrates new Behavioral Health Pavilion

By JACK PARRY The Winchester Star

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The Behavioral Health Pavilion on the Winchester Medical Center campus was officially opened on Tuesday with a dedication ceremony and ribbon cutting. The new facility will expand access to mental health services in the Winchester community. The new pavilion is located at 1834 Purpose Drive.

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A ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the opening of the Valley Health Behavioral Health Pavilion on the Winchester Medical Center campus was held Tuesday afternoon.

The state-of-the-art, \$20.9 million facility, located at 1834 Purpose Drive, aims to expand access to mental health services in the community. It will serve as the hospital's home for outpatient behavioral health services, which have been offered at scattered locations throughout the area, and provide more space for adults and adolescents ages 5-17 to receive individual and group therapy and counseling, substance use disorder treatment, and crisis and behavioral health support services.

The Behavioral Health Pavilion, which officially opens its doors on Monday, Oct. 26, also will house a digital health center with telehealth abilities to better connect community medical practices with Valley Health for faster access to mental health care.

While giving a tour of the new facility, Amanda Dondero, a licensed social worker and supervisor of child adolescent mental health for Valley Health's outpatient behavioral health program, said she can't wait to utilize the three adolescent group therapy rooms that can accommodate up to 10 patients each.

"I'm used to working in a room that can't even fit a table, and our kids use clipboards for group [therapy]," Dondero said. "I cannot wait for them to see this."

The facility features two separated but similar-looking halves — one for adolescent care and the other for adult care. Each section has individual counseling rooms, three rooms for vitals, and multi-purpose therapeutic spaces in addition to group therapy rooms.

In the back, there are 24 cubicles and group working spaces will give staff a place to work together with plenty of natural light, she noted.

Dr. Louis Nardelli, a psychiatrist on the behavioral health team for Valley Health, said the 26,200 square-foot facility will enable psychiatrists, psychologists, and therapists to work more collaboratively under one designated mental health services roof.

"The pavilion provides the environment and resources to strengthen that team-based approach, while allowing us to extend our expertise to the Valley Health System and to the surrounding community," Nardelli said.

Valley Health President and Chief Executive Officer Mark Nantz added that the new behavioral health facility serves as a reminder that Valley Health and the community are committed to supporting mental health.

"Nearly every person gathered here knows someone whose life has been touched by a mental health challenge. That is why this pavilion matters so much. It says something clear and important to our community: Mental health is health," Nantz said.

Tonya Smith, Valley Health Chief Operating Officer and president of Winchester Medical Center, remarked on the amount of natural light in the building. She also read from a statement sent by U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.)

"As the need for accessible behavioral health services continues to grow across Virginia, this investment will help expand access to care, reduce barriers to treatment, and ensure more individuals and families can find support close to home," Kaine's statement read.

Funding the facility was supported by the Valley Health Foundation and the Stronger Together Campaign, a fundraising effort to raise \$20 million for mental health care, cardiovascular care, and mobile health care.

"It is proof of what a community can accomplish when we come together around a shared need, something that every single one of us has a story about," Smith said.

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