

## State: Albany County Plans to Close Children's Mental Health Clinic Due to Staffing Issues

The clinic, which offers emergency appointments to children 5 to 18, has only one part-time clinician, the state said

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Albany County's Children's Mental Health Clinic at 260 South Pearl Street is seen on Thursday. The state Office of Mental Health says the county plans to close the clinic. (Lori Van Buren/Times Union)

ALBANY — Facing long-standing staffing issues, Albany County intends to close its Children's Mental Health Clinic, the state Office of Mental Health confirmed Thursday.

The county informed OMH last year it intended to file for a closure of the clinic, which has operated since 2004, according to the state agency.

The clinic, located on South Pearl Street, conducts emergency appointments for children aged 5 to 18, as well as scheduled appointments and consultations to assess a child's need for referral to therapy or other services, according to the county's website. It also

offers outpatient therapy, consultation, and medication management and prescriptions.

As of mid-December, the clinic was staffed by one part-time employee who served three families, according to OMH. It is no longer accepting new patients. OMH said it offered to help with recruitment and will be working the county to avoid any lapse in care for the families.

A county spokeswoman has not returned calls for comment. A call to the clinic earlier this week has not been returned.

Last summer, the county launched a street psychiatry program to build off its existing behavioral health resources — funded in part by the city of Albany's police department budget in recognition of the city's homeless population.

Thursday's news follows an announcement from Albany nonprofit Center for Disability Services that it was ending its psychiatry services.

It also comes as Gov. Kathy Hochul has announced efforts to combat the youth behavioral health crisis in the state and the Trump administration has sought to strip \$12 million in funding in children's health programs.