

DAILY FREEMAN

Kingston Hospital's Mental Health Unit Construction Complete, Company Says



Work done on the future Behavioral Health Unit at HealthAlliance Hospital in Kingston, N.Y., on Tuesday morning, May 28, 2024. (Tania Barricklo/Daily Freeman).

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KINGSTON, N.Y. — Construction is completed on a 20-bed behavioral health unit at HealthAlliance Hospital, according to the facility's owner.

Westchester Medical Center Health Network said physical construction of the 20,000 square-foot facility is done.

"HealthAlliance Hospital's Behavioral Health unit construction is complete," the network said in a statement on Friday when asked for an update. "We are now in the process of outfitting the unit with specialized furniture, fixtures and equipment."

In addition, the statement said that the company is "actively recruiting for the behavioral health workforce in all disciplines."

[In May](#), officials had said the opening was planned for the beginning of 2025.

“The timeframe remains unchanged,” the statement said. “We intend to open the new unit as soon as we have successfully recruited and onboarded this specialized team and have received the necessary New York State approvals.”

“We deeply appreciate the support and understanding of our patients, community, elected officials, state and local leaders, and our dedicated workforce as we approach the opening of this new unit,” the company said.

HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley is the operator of HealthAlliance Hospital.

Meaghan Weygant, vice president for operations at HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley, said in May during a tour of the facility that the new \$7 million unit has undergone a “massive” renovation to a space which, at one time, had housed an in-patient facility, Weygant said.

The renovations included 20 new 150-square-foot rooms – complete with shared bathrooms, semi-private ones, overall new plumbing, and wheelchair-accessible restrooms – for patients, and assorted more for physicians, clinicians and others.

Weygant described it as “down to the studs and built back up” with original polished-up tiled floors still in place.

The work also included all new wiring, a nurse station and dining room as well as a quiet space and a 350-square-foot activities area.

It is expected that the unit will wind up employing 40 people, including two psychiatric, nurse practitioners and registered nurses, Weygant said.

The general contractor is Empire General Contracting in Tuckahoe.

Westchester Medical Center Health Network, the parent company of HealthAlliance Hospital, had said in November that the construction started in September to pave the way for an in-patient mental health unit and was expected to be open [by the middle of 2024](#), two years after [officials had promised its return](#) to the Mary’s Avenue facility.

[In May 2022](#), after a two-year fight over the hospital’s elimination of 60 mental health beds, officials announced in a press conference that WMCHHealth had agreed to return 20 inpatient beds to its Mary’s Avenue campus.

The announcement to bring inpatient mental health beds back to Mary’s Avenue campus came two years after WMCHHealth eliminated its 60-bed inpatient mental health unit to accommodate what was expected to be a surge in demand for hospital beds stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there was never a need for the additional beds, WMCHHealth did not reopen its inpatient facility in Kingston, a move that infuriated community leaders and elected officials who had pressured the state to force WMCHHealth to reinstate those beds.

On Dec. 14, 2022, the [new HealthAlliance Hospital on Mary’s Avenue opened](#) on the grounds of the former Benedictine Hospital.

The second phase of the Ulster County Healthcare Advancement Plan is expected to turn HealthAlliance Hospital on Broadway, formerly Kingston Hospital, into a walkable health village. The completion of the health village has been set for 2025.

