

EmblemHealth partners with psychiatric urgent-care provider

EmblemHealth, a nonprofit insurer that provides coverage for city workers, has started offering psychiatric services and group therapy for municipal employees through a new partnership between its behavioral health benefits manager, Beacon Health Options, and Long Island's Mindful Urgent Care.

The partnership, announced Tuesday, provides 330,000 city workers covered by EmblemHealth with access to Mindful's virtual and in-person psychiatric care, including same-day appointments. Its services include a 12-week outpatient program to stabilize individuals who are experiencing an acute mental health crisis but fall short of the criteria to be admitted to an inpatient program. After that, patients can continue monthly check-ins with a psychiatrist to monitor their response to medication.

Mindful provides care at seven locations in New York and one in New Jersey, all of which are staffed by two psychiatric nurse practitioners and a supervising board-certified psychiatrist. It also offers virtual group therapy sessions.

Since the insurer made Mindful's care available late last month, 10 members have used it.

CEO Dr. Tamir Aldad said Mindful caters to patients with urgent mental health needs that cannot wait weeks for an appointment with a psychiatrist. Those patients might otherwise end up in the emergency room or harm themselves or others, Aldad said. Mindful enables them to instead immediately access prescription medication and long-term care.

Within the partnership, that might mean frontline city workers who have PTSD, anxiety or depression related to the pandemic, Aldad said.

"It's a real risk that there is no access to immediate care," he said.

Under the partnership, Mindful bills the insurer using a fee-for-service model. Aldad declined to disclose its rates.

Mindful started in 2018 and has raised about \$1.4 million in seed funding, Aldad said. It expects to close a Series A financing round in coming weeks.