



Taylor Knopf <tknopf@northcarolinahealthnews.org>

media question

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To: Taylor Knopf <tknopf@northcarolinahealthnews.org>
Cc: "Brown, Ashley" <Ashley.Brown@atriumhealth.org>

Fri, Apr 21, 2023 at 2:27 PM

Hi Taylor. Unfortunately, we weren't able to line up an interview for you, but you can use the statement below. Please attribute to Atrium Health and use in its entirety in the online version of your story.

Thank you.
Kate

In recent years, a brighter light has shone on the demand for behavioral health services for a growing population of individuals needing this type of specialty care. Because of a lack of resources outside of the walls of our hospitals, behavioral health hospitals and emergency rooms are out of space – to the point of it being a crisis. Too often, behavioral health patients are ready to be discharged – only to have nowhere to go, and hospitals are forced to house them until a bed opens in a residential type facility or a parent or guardian picks them up.

Where other systems across the country have cut their funding and support for behavioral health services, Atrium Health has continued to invest in this important community benefit. In fact, Atrium Health invests, on average, \$65 million annually in behavioral health services, including school-based virtual care, access to virtual care, 24/7 crisis intervention and mental health first aid training for the community to help identify, understand and respond to the growing need for mental health and addiction services in our region.

There are rare instances when, as a last resort, we need to engage the North Carolina Department of Social Services to intervene to help connect families with social and community resources. We recognize this may create challenges for some families, but it is a necessary step in some cases to ensure those patients in immediate need have support in accessing resources and services.

Kate Gaier (She, Her, Hers)

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