

# **The Psychiatric Bed Crisis in the US:**

Understanding the Problem and Moving Toward Solutions

## **Section 2**

### Definition of Psychiatric Beds

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This section provides a set of common definitions describing settings and services where individuals receive mental health treatment and that may involve residential services and/or beds. The availability of these services impacts the overall total number of inpatient beds a community would need because often these services are an alternative to inpatient care. Because of the prominent role states have had with planning for deinstitutionalization over the last 60 years, community services have evolved into many different types of services that are not necessarily standardized.

- **Inpatient Psychiatric Hospital Bed:** A bed where individuals with mental illness receive 24/7 psychiatrically supervised care primarily for symptoms of psychiatric illness with ancillary supports for co-occurring medical conditions. An individual that is hospitalized in such a bed is also referred to as a patient or an inpatient.
- **State Psychiatric Hospital Bed:** A bed in a state-owned psychiatric inpatient facility licensed as or deemed a hospital that provides primarily inpatient psychiatric care to individuals with mental illness from a specific geographic area and/or statewide.
  - **Local Government Psychiatric Hospital Bed:** A bed in a local government (city or county) owned psychiatric inpatient facility licensed as or deemed a hospital that provides primarily inpatient psychiatric care to individuals with mental illness from a specific geographic area.
- **General Medical Hospital Psychiatric Bed:** A bed in a licensed general hospital (public or private) that provides inpatient mental health services in at least one separate psychiatric living unit. This unit must have specifically allocated staff and space (beds) for the treatment of persons with mental illness. The unit may be located in the hospital itself or in a separate building, either adjacent or more remote, and is owned by the hospital.
- **Private Psychiatric Hospital Bed:** A bed in a facility operated as a private psychiatric hospital licensed by the state that primarily provides 24-hour psychiatric inpatient care to persons with mental illness. Private psychiatric hospitals include for-profit and not-for-profit facilities.
- **Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) Inpatient Bed:** A psychiatric inpatient bed in a facility that meets applicable licensing or certification requirements for CMHCs in the state in which it is located.
- **Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) or other VA Health Care Facility Psychiatric Inpatient Bed:** A psychiatric inpatient bed in a facility operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.



- **Medical/Psychiatric Unit Bed:** A bed in a general hospital inpatient unit that provides simultaneous hospital level of care for both medical and psychiatric conditions.
- **Child/Adolescent Psychiatric Hospital Bed:** Any of the above categories where the bed is specifically designated for children or youth under the age of 21.
- **Scatter Hospital Bed:** Non-dedicated psychiatric beds used in medical hospital settings for persons who have psychiatric symptoms that would otherwise be treated in dedicated psychiatric hospital beds for their psychiatric conditions.
- **Forensic or Court Ordered Psychiatric Stay:** A bed in a state hospital that is used for individuals ordered for admission either for assessment for competency to stand trial or because of adjudication that the person is not guilty by reason of insanity. This may also include individuals with sexual offenses that are court ordered to confinement.

This report primarily focuses on beds that serve non-forensic populations with a primary mental health diagnosis (rather than forensic populations or a primary substance use disorder diagnosis). However, as noted in Section 6 on developing models, the authors recognize the overlap between these services and the dynamics at play between the different types of inpatient services (e.g., changing capacities within one part of the system will affect other parts of the system).