



# St. Luke's Warren Campus Behavioral Health Unit Closure

Updated 12/30/2014

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. What will happen to people in our community who need inpatient behavioral health care?**

The inpatient Behavioral Health Unit at St. Luke's Warren Campus was closed on December 1, 2014. We have transfer agreements in place with New Jersey hospitals such as St. Clare's Medical Center, Bergen Regional Medical Center, Carrier Clinic and Summit Oaks Medical Center. And we continue talking with other behavioral health providers to establish transfer relationships with them. We also have two inpatient units in Bethlehem and Quakertown, Pennsylvania. All of these institutions have excellent behavioral health programs. Warren County patients, who require inpatient behavioral health care, will be transferred to the qualifying institution best suited to meet their needs.

### **2. If I have a psychiatric crisis, what services will be available from the SLW emergency department?**

As always, patients who come to the Emergency Department at St. Luke's Warren Campus with behavioral health issues are clinically assessed for both physical and mental health problems. After evaluation, patients receive care appropriate to their levels of need.

### **3. What happens if I need extended care and need to be admitted to the hospital?**

If hospitalization is recommended, our crisis workers will secure placement at a facility that is both appropriate for the patient's condition and consistent with the requirements of each patient's insurance coverage.

### **4. What if there are no beds immediately available?**

We are building a dedicated area within our Emergency Department for psychiatric patients that will be adjacent to our regular ED. The unit will contain safe, comfortable rooms for those occasions when patients must wait a day or two for admission to another facility. We will staff this section of the ED with appropriately trained nurses, physicians and other health professionals who will be able to provide patients with initial therapies and assessments that will expedite their treatments once they reach their destinations. Plans have already been submitted to the NJ Department of Health and are currently under review. In the interim, we will meet the needs of those patients in the ED as we have done in the past whenever our current inpatient unit has had no capacity for additional patients.

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**5. Are there different procedures for a person who is voluntarily or involuntarily hospitalized?**

Yes. The procedure for voluntary inpatient placement is managed as described above. In the case of involuntary hospitalization, placement is turned over to crisis workers from the Family Guidance Center of Warren County. These highly trained individuals find appropriate accommodations for involuntary psychiatric patients and provide support to both the patient and his or her family members.

**6. How long can I expect to wait in the emergency department for inpatient admission to another hospital?**

Since we are dependent on bed availability at other hospitals, the waiting times vary widely – from a few hours to more than a full day. Involuntary hospitalization usually takes longer to arrange and can result in longer waits in our ED.

**7. While waiting for inpatient admission at another hospital to be arranged, can my family wait along with me in the ED?**

Patient rooms in our ED can comfortably accommodate 1-2 visitors. Upon approval of a patient's ED physician, family members are welcome to visit with patients as they wait, however, visitors will not be permitted to stay with patients overnight.

**8. Will family members know where admitted patients are being taken?**

Yes, St. Luke's Warren has a Behavioral Health System Navigator, **Jim Seng, [James.Seng@sluhn.org](mailto:James.Seng@sluhn.org)** will work with patients and families to coordinate care between hospitals and outpatient programs in Warren County.

**9. Will my acute symptoms be treated in the ED while waiting for admission?**

Yes.

**10. Will I be able to get my medication while waiting in the ED?**

Yes. All medically necessary medications will be given.

**11. What about visits from family members?**

Family members are always welcome to visit patients at St. Luke's Warren, providing the patient's physician feels that such visits are appropriate. For patients being treated as inpatients in other facilities, we are exploring methods whereby family members will be able to "tele-visit" patients from a Skype location in our hospital when they cannot visit in person. If a family member is having difficulty making contact with a loved one who is being treated in another facility, please call Jim Seng, our Behavioral Health System Navigator, at 908-859-6801.

**12. Is transportation provided to and/or from the admitting hospital? Is there a cost for this transportation?**

Transportation to the admitting hospital is provided – most often by an EMS (Emergency Medical Squad) team – and is billed to your medical insurance company. For patients who originated in our ED and were transferred to another inpatient facility, St. Luke's Warren Hospital will provide transportation assistance upon discharge in cases of financial need. For more information about discharge transportation, please contact our Behavioral Health System Navigator, **Jim Seng, [James.Seng@sluhn.org](mailto:James.Seng@sluhn.org) or 908-859-6801.**

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**13. Will my advance directive medical and/or psychiatric be recognized if transferred?**

Yes.

**14. What if I don't have any insurance?**

St. Luke's Warren Hospital cares for all patients who come to us, regardless of their ability to pay. We are a non-profit institution. Our mission is now and has always been to care for the sick and injured regardless of a patient's ability to pay for health care.

**15. Are there special procedures if a patient presents with both mental illness and addiction issues?**

There are no special procedures for patients presenting with mental illness and addiction issues. All patients receive a physical exam and a behavioral health screening to determine what services and treatments are most appropriate.

**16. Will my doctor and/or therapist be contacted to alert them to the fact I'm in the ED?**

We will make every effort to contact your physician and therapist while you are in our ED.

**17. If I have child under 18 that is in a psychiatric emergency, can I come to the ED?**

Yes.

**18. What type of behavioral health clinicians will be available in the ED?**

Our behavioral health clinicians may include physicians, registered nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and trained crisis clinicians.

**19. What kinds of psychiatrist services are now available at SLW?**

We have a fully qualified psychiatrist on call at all times.

**20. What other psychiatric services are available in Warren County?**

The primary provider of comprehensive mental health and substance abuse treatment services in Warren County is the Family Guidance Center of Warren County, [www.familyguidancecenterofwc.org](http://www.familyguidancecenterofwc.org). Their 24-hour crisis line can be reached at 908-454-5141. There are also private practitioners in the mental health field who are available through physician referral.

**21. Why is the inpatient Behavioral Health Unit at St. Luke's Warren Hospital closing?**

The inpatient Behavioral Health Unit at St. Luke's Warren had been averaging less than half its capacity in patient volume for many years as more and more patients sought care outside of Warren County. In addition, our Unit was never equipped to accept involuntary patients or children and adolescents. We know that most of the behavioral health patients who come to our Emergency Department (ED) do not require inpatient care (over 85% of our behavioral health patients); they are treated and released. We want to provide care where patients' needs are the greatest – outpatient behavioral health services. Accordingly, we will continue these services. For more information about outpatient behavioral health services at St. Luke's Warren Campus, please call 908-859-6757.

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**22. What are the closest hospitals in NJ near SLW that do have an inpatient behavioral health unit?**

The two closest hospitals with inpatient behavioral health units are:

- Hunterdon Medical Center in Flemington, NJ
- Newton Memorial Hospital in Newton, NJ

In addition:

- St. Luke's University Hospital – Bethlehem in Bethlehem, PA
- St. Luke's Hospital – Quakertown Campus in Quakertown, PA

Farther away, but still within about an hour of Phillipsburg are:

- Bergen Pines County Hospital in Paramus, NJ
- Carrier Clinic in Belle Mead, NJ
- St. Clare's Hospital in Boonton, NJ
- Summit Oaks Hospital in Summit, NJ
- Princeton House in Princeton, NJ