

# UNH To Lead Development of New Children's Behavioral Health Resource Center

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## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

DURHAM, N.H.— The New Hampshire Executive Council has approved a \$4.3 million contract over three years to the University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability (IOD) to develop a new Children's Behavioral Health Resource Center (CBHRC). Working in collaboration with other institutions, family groups, providers and youth and families, the CBHRC will strengthen the network of behavioral health supports for children across the state.

“We have a wonderful opportunity to create a system of supports to respond to youth and families in crisis and to help them find hope so they can move on and live their best lives,” said JoAnne Malloy, research associate professor and co-director of the CBHRC. “This can only happen, though, if we stand up and sustain research-based practices that are provided at the right time, matched to the youth’s and family’s need, and in the right amount. We’re excited and honored to be part of the transformation of the New Hampshire children’s system of care.”

The new center is designed to help address the current shortage of resources by improving the capacity of providers, educators and agencies to deliver high-quality, research-based practices across the state. The CBHRC will focus on providing evidence-based training, technical assistance, easy-to-access information about strengths-based and youth-centered practices and approaches to best address the behavioral health needs of children up to the age of 21 years.

Many children and young adults in the state of New Hampshire have significant mental health needs that are not sufficiently being met by the current system. Without proper support, many youth are ending up in more vulnerable circumstances, including emergency rooms and psychiatric care waiting lists. Prior to the pandemic, there was already a shortage of providers, educators and direct support professionals to adequately support children's growing and complex behavioral health needs. Over the last year and a half, the demand for these services has increased significantly, exacerbating an already overstretched network.

The CBHRC is a collaboration between the IOD and UNH’s Institute for Health Policy and Practice (IHPP), the Behavioral Health Improvement Institute (BHII) at Keene State College, and the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College.

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