

Transforming Medicaid Behavioral Health with CCBHCs

Overview

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) help state Medicaid programs expand timely access to behavioral health care, strengthen crisis response, and sustain comprehensive services through a cost-based Prospective Payment System (PPS). This fact sheet summarizes the model's design, outcomes states are seeing, and practical considerations for durable statewide implementation.

Why it Matters for States

Behavioral health systems remain under pressure—wait times measured in weeks, fragmented crisis capacity, and payment models that often do not fund the full-service continuum (e.g., mobile crisis, peer supports, care coordination). CCBHCs are among the most comprehensive reform models available, with bipartisan support across multiple administrations and ongoing backing from CMS and SAMHSA. Multiple implementation pathways help states maintain continuity even as federal conditions shift.

Key National Data

- **3 million** people receive care through CCBHCs nationwide. ¹
- **33% increase** in people served after clinics became Medicaid-funded CCBHCs. ¹
- **87%** of CCBHCs offer medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder (OUD) (vs. **64%** of SUD facilities nationally). ¹
- **23% reduction** in all-cause hospitalizations (Nevada demonstration population). ²
- **11,000+** new behavioral health jobs created nationally. ¹

The CCBHC Model at a Glance

The CCBHC model expands access to comprehensive, coordinated behavioral health care—including crisis response and ongoing treatment—by requiring clinics to deliver (or formally partner to deliver) a full continuum of services with strong care coordination.

It is financed through a cost-based Prospective Payment System (PPS) rate that supports total cost per visit, and states can implement it through multiple federal or Medicaid pathways, including the federal demonstration, SAMHSA grants, and Medicaid authorities such as the 2024 CCBHC state plan option.

Why Mercer

Mercer has supported CCBHC implementation since 2014, with team members who have led state CCBHC programs and bring hands-on experience to every phase of model design and implementation. Using an integrated policy-and-finance approach, we help states pilot and sustain CCBHCs that expand access to comprehensive behavioral health services while remaining sufficiently funded over time.

References

¹ National Council for Mental Wellbeing. (2024). *CCBHC Impact Report*. The National Council for Mental Wellbeing. <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/resource/ccbhc-impact-report/>

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). (2024). *Evaluation of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) demonstration*. <https://aspe.hhs.gov>

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