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The Steiner Kelting Mental Wellness Facility is owned by Carver County and run by People Incorporated Mental Health Services.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TONY NELSON



'HOPE AND SOLUTIONS'

Mental wellness facility opens in Carver County

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The Steiner Kelting Mental Wellness facility recently opened its doors to patients in north-west Chaska.

The facility, at 9120 Shady Oak Drive, a voluntary alternative to hospitalization, is owned by Carver County and operated by People Incorporated Mental Health Services. It provides 24/7 mental health services to people who are transitioning from the hospital and are no longer in need of inpatient care, said Jessica Hill, the director of operations for People Incorporated.

"We really saw this as a really unique opportunity to be able to serve those needing this kind of care, right here in our own community," said Rod Franks, Carver County director of Health and Human Services.

People Incorporated has been providing mental health services for over 50 years in the metro area. The organization serves around 11,000 clients annually and has around 60 programs, Hill said.

Up to 12 patients, who are assessed to be safe to be in the community, can be served at a time. The facility offers both

short-term stays, one to 10 days, or long-term care, from 60 to 90 days. Patients receive referrals to the facility through their primary health care provider, mental health care provider or hospital.

As simplistic as it sounds, "that mix of short-term and long-term care, that is something that hasn't been done before," Hill said. "It's something that we've been conceptualizing for around two years and we're excited to make that a reality."

Located on the corner of Lake Bavaria, the facility lends patients a peaceful setting. The city of Chaska donated the land to Ridgeview Medical Center in 2008. Marie Steiner Kelting Hospice Home operated on the property until 2017.

After closing, Ridgeview worked with Carver County to convert the space into a mental health facility. The county expanded and renovated the facility from 2019-21 with the aid of \$1.25 million in state bonding.

COMMUNITY CARE

The wellness facility offers a service that didn't previously exist in the area, Franks said. For people that didn't require hospital care but couldn't be served in their home, there wasn't a nearby place for them to go, he said.

People in need of care would have to go to Mankato or to the Twin Cities.

"Think about how that disrupts families, disrupts employment for people to get the service they need," Franks said.

The facility provides services for people who are struggling with their mental health. It's a safe place where they can go to stabilize their issues and begin their path for wellness "to be integrated back into their homes and community as quickly as possible," Franks said.

According to Franks, the facility fills a much needed gap in the county's "mental health continuum of care." The county already provides a range of services. Those services range from outpatient services to mental health case management to a partnership with Ridgeview Medical Center to provide hospital level care.

"The one piece that was missing was this middle piece, and this facility kind of completes that whole continuum of care," Franks said.

PROGRAMMING

The facility offers full assessments and treatment planning by mental health professionals. Patients can participate in

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VOLUME 160, ISSUE 4

swnewsmedia

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