



VAHHS has recently started to collect point-in-time data on patients stuck in emergency departments waiting admission to psychiatric inpatient units—also called patient boarding. This data collection effort is a work and progress and may change over time as we refine data points or streamline collection efforts.

Hospitals report manually to VAHHS on patients awaiting placement as of each Thursday at noon. This point-in-time data is collated and shared with the Department of Mental Health and hospital representatives.

Patient boarding is when a person remains in the emergency department after it has been determined they need inpatient care but have not yet been transferred or admitted to a designated inpatient mental health unit.

As of Thursday, April 15th, at noon, 26 of the 201 emergency department beds reported to VAHHS by 12 hospitals were occupied by people waiting for psychiatric inpatient admission.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH – Six people waiting for admission to psychiatric inpatient care were children. Four children had been waiting between 1-6 days and two children had been waiting 7 or more days.

ADULTS – 20 people waiting for psychiatric inpatient admission in emergency department were adults. Nine had been waiting less than 1 day, 10 had been waiting for 1-6 days, and 1 adult had been waiting 7 or more days.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IMPACT – Six emergency departments had no patients waiting for psychiatric inpatient admission. For the six that did have patients waiting for psychiatric inpatient admission, patients waiting occupied anywhere from 8-25% of all ED beds, with five hospitals reporting 19-25% of their total ED beds were occupied by mental health patients awaiting admission.

Some hospitals also reported information on patients who had recently left the emergency department earlier in the week before the point-in-time survey:

- One critical access hospital had an adolescent awaiting admission for 9 days before leaving Wednesday afternoon.
- One acute care hospital had 8 patients waiting for admission—five of whom were involuntary, three who were adolescents—earlier in the week. One adolescent left after 14 days in the ED.
- One critical access hospital had 4 patients waiting for admission—two of whom were involuntary—earlier in the week. One involuntary patient stayed 1 day, other 2 days. One patient was currently boarding Friday morning.
- One acute care hospital had two youth patients who more than 7 days that were discharged Thursday morning before the point-in-time count.

