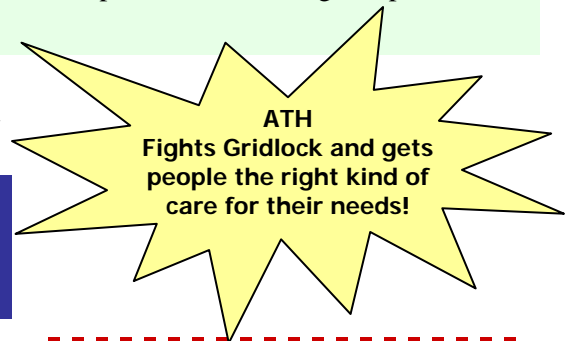


Out Of The Emergency Department And Into Treatment



Gridlock in Connecticut’s healthcare system contributes to lengthy waits in hospital emergency departments, particularly for people with mental health and/or substance use disorders who have encountered waits of days, and even weeks, in emergency rooms before receiving appropriate care placements. Individuals with mental health and/or substance use issues often seek help at the Emergency Departments when their natural supports are exhausted and other options are not available. DMHAS has implemented a number of initiatives in the past 24 months to fight the problem of gridlock. One such initiative, the *Alternatives to Hospitalization Project (ATH)*, assists persons receiving State Administered General Assistance who express suicidal thoughts upon arriving at the emergency room.

Data revealed that people were being unnecessarily referred to costly inpatient mental health units when they actually needed less costly and more appropriate substance use treatment.



A SIMPLE CONCEPT WITH FANTASTIC RESULTS:
Case managers assist hospitals in helping to make and sustain treatment connections and initiate contact with patients in the ED.

Since ATH started at Saint Francis and Hartford Hospital emergency departments in November 2005:

- **Over 425 interventions** were made at those hospital EDs.
- **49% were diverted** to a more appropriate, less costly level of care
- **78% were diverted to substance use treatment settings**, including residential detox, rehab or outpatient levels of care. An additional 3% accessed community-based sober or recovery houses.
- **Only 12% declined treatment** services.
- **98%** of individuals diverted had a **primary substance use disorder** as the identified focus for treatment

- NOW OPERATING**
- Bridgeport Hospital
 - Charlotte Hungerford
 - Hall Brooke Behavioral Health Services
 - St. Vincent’s Medical center
 - Hartford Hospital
 - John Dempsey Hospital
 - St. Francis Hospital & Medical Center
 - Waterbury Hospital
- COMING SOON!**
- Seven other hospitals are at various stages of weighing the utility of the approach and/or of designing the preliminary steps to implement the ATH strategy in their facility.



"The Alternative to Hospitalization collaborative with DMHAS, Capital Region, ABH and Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center has resulted in length of stays in more appropriate level of care for patients suffering from substance use disorders."

Surita Rao, MD, Chairman and Director, Behavioral Health, and Diane Achenbach-Zatorski, LCSW, Director, Social Services, Behavioral Health, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center

Given the favorable response in the Hartford area and the continuing gridlock throughout the state, DMHAS is expanding ATH statewide, beginning in large urban areas. Staffs from the DMHAS Regional Teams, local mobile crisis teams, and Advanced Behavioral Health are working collaboratively with hospitals throughout the state to introduce the project to many others looking for assistance in accessing care.