

# Exploring the Effects of Pediatric Mental Health Boarding on Adolescents, Their Families and Health Care Providers

## Date:

May 2024

[Download Material](#)

There has been a nearly 200% increase in emergency department visits for mental health emergencies by children and adolescents over the past decade. This issue impacts not only the children and adolescents who are awaiting psychiatric treatment, but also the clinicians who care for them and the caregivers who support them.

Clinicians are challenged by the demand for mental health services that outpaces available resources, leading to prolonged waiting periods for definitive mental health treatment, including “boarding”—that is, waiting in a medical hospital until mental health treatment is available. Adolescents find themselves in medical settings that are not designed to treat mental health concerns, and caregivers are often left navigating a complex and fragmented mental health care system, all of which contribute to heightened levels of stress and helplessness.

This *Research at a Glance* highlights three studies that sought to understand the experiences and perspectives of those involved in the boarding process: the adolescents who are hospitalized, the caregivers who support them, and the clinicians who provide care. The goal of this research was to identify the main challenges and areas for improvement in the care and management of mental health boarding in acute care settings.

## Authors:

Worsley D, Bowden C, Doupnik S

## Topics

[Health Care Delivery & Quality](#)

## Related Content

[Expert Q&A: Evaluating New Tools to Address Youth Suicide in Primary Care](#)

[Examining Hospitals' Role in Preventing Youth Suicide](#)

[Impact of Mental Health Boarding on Clinicians at a Children's Hospital: A Qualitative Analysis](#)

[Adolescent, Parent and Provider Perceptions of a Predictive Algorithm to Identify Adolescent Suicide Risk in Primary Care](#)

[Characteristics, Disposition, and Outcomes of Children Hospitalized for Mental Health Boarding at a Children's Hospital](#)

["Treat Them Like a Human Being...They are Somebody's Somebody": Providers' Perspectives on Treating Patients in the Emergency Department After Self-injurious Behavior](#)