

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **The Child Center & PeaceHealth Partner to Connect Youth in Crisis to Mental Health Resources**

As the effects of COVID-19 continue to be felt across Lane County, [The Child Center \(TCC\)](#) and [PeaceHealth](#) are partnering to provide support and resources to children, youth, and their families during mental health crises. As part of a program spearheaded by OHA and OHSU, The Child Center applied for and received a grant to establish a Crisis and Transition Services (CATS) program in Lane County. By partnering with PeaceHealth, TCC will respond when children and youth head to an emergency department at the hospital due to mental health concerns and/or crisis.

“We know that families and youth often access area emergency departments for help when a child is experiencing mental health distress.” says Bill Wellard, Executive Director of TCC. “Many studies show that children and youth experiencing mental health crises benefit most from direct connection to mental health services specialized for them that will continue past the point of an emergent need.” The CATS program offers another option for both the emergency departments and families by creating a more direct avenue to connect children and youth to specialized, immediate care for mental health intervention and support.

Studies show that over the last few years, [cases of children and youth heading to emergency departments for mental health concerns are rising](#). PeaceHealth has seen a similar increase in youth accessing the emergency departments at RiverBend and University District for mental health concerns since the beginning of the pandemic, with an average of 38 youth per month. As Alicia Beymer, Chief Administrative Officer for PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center, University District and Cottage Grove Community Medical Center, noted, “This collaboration aligns closely with PeaceHealth’s Mission by immediately connecting each youth and their family to compassionate and specialized mental health services that meet the individual needs of youth experiencing mental health crisis. We are so grateful for our partnership with The Child Center and their commitment to this very critical work.” The CATS program officially launches March 15th, 2021, and will provide assistance to the emergency departments at the RiverBend and University District PeaceHealth locations.

A behavioral/mental health crisis for a child or teen may look like violence towards self or others, severe depression, aggressive or uncontrolled behavior, or other mental or behavioral health issues that cause immediate concern for the safety of the child, youth, or family members. If you are concerned about your child and need immediate assistance, please reach out to the 24/7 Crisis Response Program which is at 1-888-989-9990. We encourage families to call this crisis line in times of mental health crisis.