

# Care Campus Has 'No Wrong Door' Policy for Those in Need

**The Rapid City, S.D., facility, which houses several social service operations in one location, connects people with mental health treatment and reduces jail intakes for misdemeanor offenses.**

By Amber Widgery | September 26, 2023

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South Dakotans working at the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice have taken teamwork to heart.

Officials from Rapid City and surrounding Pennington County joined the health care company Behavior Management Systems and the state of South Dakota to create a continuum of care and pathways away from justice-system involvement. The effort is changing Rapid City and improving lives.

In July, legislators and legislative staff from nine states toured several of the county's programs—dubbed “big visions for small communities”—to learn about their benefits.

The group's first stop was the [Care Campus](#), a repurposed college building located across from the courthouse and jail in downtown Rapid City, where people can access myriad social services in one location. The 70,000-square-foot, 164-bed facility provides safe places for detox, residential care, and connections to treatment and services for substance use disorders and other mental health conditions.

**“When you share a coffee pot and a bathroom, you tend to get along, work closer, share goals and get a lot done in a day.”**

—Brian Mueller, Pennington County sheriff

Law enforcement officers can take people to the Care Campus in lieu of arresting them for nuisance crimes such as trespassing, with an easy-to-use entry point. Officers can return to their duties more quickly and health care professionals can help clients access treatment options.

In addition to serving the Rapid City Police Department and coordinating with the department's Quality of Life Unit, the Care Campus also houses the county sheriff's Safe Solutions program for people whose treatment needs are best served outside of the jail.

With its network of interconnected services accessible in one location, the Care Campus has a "no wrong door" policy to connect clients with treatment and reduce the use of incarceration for minor offenses, a benefit to the clients and taxpayers alike.

"Annually, significant financial resources are allocated toward individuals cycling through the criminal justice system due to their struggles with substance use disorders and behavioral health needs," says Barry Tice, director of Pennington County Human Services. "Think of all the public defenders' time, court time, police officer time, district attorneys' time saved, and most of all lives saved, by having this Care Campus."

In the five years the Care Campus has been open, Pennington County Jail intakes for class 2 misdemeanors such as disorderly conduct and possession of drug paraphernalia have decreased by 70%, according to officials.

## One Location, Many Connections

The group's next stop was Pivot Point, a recently opened crisis stabilization center just across the street from the Care Campus. Pivot Point is the first facility of its kind in the state, according to Amy Iverson, CEO of Behavior Management Systems, which operates the service. Pivot Point "can care for people who are experiencing a mental health crisis for up to five to seven days to help them stabilize, stay in the community and be connected to community resources versus having to leave and go to other inpatient facilities," she says.

Having more time to help people stabilize is what sets Pivot Point apart from many similar facilities across the country, which often can care for clients for only 23 hours. The facility is also integrated into the larger continuum of care, giving it more connections to community-based services and resources.

Finally, the group visited [OneHeart](#), a transitional housing center located next to the Care Campus on the site of a former community college. The visitors toured OneHeart's on-campus child care operation and learned about the numerous community partners located on-site to engage with residents more easily. The partner organizations provide financial literacy classes, educational opportunities and additional recovery support, among other services.

A Native Leadership Circle comprising community members guided the cultural aspects of the campus, where the majority of guests identify as Native American.

A ceremony house and an “inipi,” or sweat lodge, were recently added to the campus under the guidance of a Lakota elder, Wayne Weston. The inipi ceremony is said to cleanse the body, mind and spirit through the use of steam and prayer, something that guests can incorporate into their stay if they choose.

The policymakers also met with local officials, including Pennington County Sheriff Brian Mueller, who talked about a new program called **IGNITE**, which stands for Individual Growth Naturally and Intentionally Through Education. The programming relies on strong community support to help people incarcerated in the jail learn new skills, get a job and maintain stability when they reenter the community.

Mueller said his office and the police department have integrated facilities and staff, leading to greater efficiency and cooperation on various projects. This benefits the community and makes for better use of taxpayer dollars, he says, adding that “when you share a coffee pot and a bathroom, you tend to get along, work closer, share goals and get a lot done in a day.”

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