

Long Island nonprofits awarded \$450G each to activate mental health 'crisis' teams



John Jarvis, of CEC Healthcare, on Thursday at the group's Bethpage location. The organization has been awarded a \$450,000 grant for a youth treatment program. Credit: Newsday/Alejandra Villa Loarca
By Joshua Needelmanjoshua.needelman@newsday.com Updated May 12, 2025 12:45 pm

New York State has approved grants of \$450,000 apiece to two Long Island nonprofits that serve youth with severe mental health issues, part of a push to provide more intensive and preventive round-the-clock care in community settings.

The funding to CN Guidance and Counseling Services and CEC Healthcare allows them to establish Youth Assertive Community Treatment, or ACT teams — part of a model the state implemented in 2022. The idea is to

provide a clinic "on wheels," said John Jarvis, executive director of CEC, an organization that helps facilitate treatment and counseling for those with mental health issues.

The ACT teams offer education and counseling in the community — rather than in a hospital or inpatient setting.

The ACT program aims to treat youth between the ages of 10 and 21 who are "at risk of entering, or returning home from high intensity services, such as inpatient settings or residential services, through the use of a multi-disciplinary team," according to a [report from the state's Office of Mental Health](#). The patients have "significant psychiatric needs" and "are at risk of institutional level of care," according to the report.

WHAT NEWSDAY FOUND

- **New York State has awarded \$450,000 in mental health** grants to two Long Island nonprofits — CN Guidance and Counseling Services and CEC Healthcare — to establish Youth Assertive Community Treatment, or ACT, teams.
- **The program provides a fleet of services** to youth between the ages of 10 to 21 who have "significant psychiatric needs" and "are at risk of institutional level of care," according to the state's Office of Mental Health.
- **CN Guidance and Counseling**, of Hicksville, had an ACT team in place in Nassau County. It plans to expand services to Suffolk.

The teams will serve up to 36 people, according to a news release from Gov. Kathy Hochul's office. CEC provides various treatment services and has locations in Bethpage, Seaford, Glen Cove and Hauppauge.

"The goal will be to [serve kids struggling with their mental health](#), kind of bringing the services to them," Jarvis said. "[Especially coming out of COVID](#), we know there's been a lingering mental health impact, especially on the youth. Some of them lost a year or two of being in school."

The state [based the youth ACT program](#) on a model initially created for adults. The state's Office of Mental Health administers 20 teams across 27 counties

that provide youth and family therapy, medication management, family and peer supports and more, according to the release.



John Jarvis, CEO of CEC Healthcare which was just awarded a \$450,000 grant to establish a youth ACT Team. Thursday May 8, 2025, in Bethpage. Credit: Newsday/Alejandra Villa Loarca

"By adding teams statewide, we can help more young people and their families to access the care and support they can use to live and thrive within their community," Ann Sullivan, the office's commissioner, said in the release.

CN Guidance and Counseling, of Hicksville, plans to use the grant money to create a team serving young people in Suffolk County, CEO Jeffrey Friedman said in an interview. The group [already has an ACT team in Nassau](#) County, which has been "life saving" for children, he said.

Friedman said people who come through the program often struggle with making connections to family and friends, have poor attendance at school and are in and out of the hospital.

"The team wraps these services around the family, and then you start to see these kids staying out of the hospital, they're taking their medication, they're attending school on a regular basis," Friedman said. "Mental health issues — it's a family disease. It not only affects the individual, but it affects the family. To be able to provide that support to help the family out, it really is an amazing service."

Friedman said the Suffolk team will consist of a psychiatrist or nurse practitioner, a licensed mental health clinician, a youth or family peer advocate and a clinical support staffer.

Jeffrey Reynolds, president and CEO of the Family & Children's Association, in Garden City, said ACT teams can be a helpful resource for parents who might be hesitant to ask for help.

"The more portals of entry you can create, the better off families can be," Reynolds said in an interview. "The ACT team is really designed to bridge the gap from more high-intensity services."

Gov. Kathy Hochul said in a statement that the expansion of the program will "help provide more families with this critical support and the services they can rely on to bring their child home after inpatient care or from a residential facility."

"Children and youth living with mental illness sometimes require additional care to remain at home or return back into the community," Hochul said.