



Long Island launches Community Crisis Center for mental health emergencies

Jeffrey Friedman//March 12, 2026//

The Blueprint:

- [CN Guidance and Counseling Services](#) launched a [Community Crisis Center](#) in [Hicksville, Long Island](#).
- The center offers 24/7 rapid screening, psychiatric evaluation, and short-term stabilization for mental [health](#) and substance use crises.
- [New York State](#) and [Nassau County](#) jointly funded the center to improve [behavioral health](#) access.

- The center serves children as young as five and adults, providing care outside traditional [emergency rooms](#).

For many individuals seeking help for [mental health](#) or substance use conditions, the journey to care often begins with frustration and disappointment. Long waits, complicated systems and a lack of immediate access are common experiences on Long Island. National data show delays of weeks—sometimes more than a month—between someone’s first outreach and their first behavioral health appointment. On Long Island, struggling residents report such barriers when mustering the will/courage and seeking a provider.

Because of access-hurdles, many people in crisis inevitably turn to hospital emergency rooms for care. Yet our local ERs are overburdened and not designed for people in a mental health or substance use emergency. This often leaves desperate individuals waiting hours before they are evaluated, only to be discharged without a clear plan for ongoing treatment: The unfortunate result of a system never built to meet the volume or complexity of today’s behavioral health needs.

To help address this issue, CN Guidance and Counseling Services recently launched a Community Crisis Center (CCC) in Hicksville. It is part of a statewide effort to create dedicated, walk-in crisis stabilization centers. These centers offer something our communities have needed for a long time—immediate access to care when a person is ready for help.

Open around the clock, every day of the year, the CCC provides rapid screening, psychiatric evaluation, short-term stabilization, therapeutic interventions, medication management for mental health and substance use needs, onsite detox support and coordinated transitions to ongoing care. Children as young as five and adults of any age can receive person-centered care in a setting without the stress and delays of a traditional emergency department.

Creating a center like this is not simple. It requires specialized staff, robust clinical training, and a facility designed for safety, support and immediate treatment. These investments are significant and are precisely why New York State had not previously opened centers of this kind. But meaningful change often requires bold action, and our state and county partners stepped up.

New York State and Nassau County jointly provided the critical funding that made this center on Long Island a reality. Their investments reflect a shared understanding: Mental health and substance use services are part of essential healthcare. When leaders put resources behind that belief, it not only saves lives, it strengthens families and communities, reduces avoidable ER visits (and costs), and ensures that people in crisis can access support in the right place at the right time.

The collaboration behind our Community Crisis Center demonstrates what is possible when government and community organizations work together toward a common goal. This partnership helped shift the momentum around mental health and substance use treatment from one of delays and stigma to a new reality of appropriate urgency, access and compassion.

As a [nonprofit](#) behavioral health organization that has served Long Islanders for decades, we see every day the power of timely support. The launch of this center signals a new chapter. One where people no longer need to navigate their darkest moments alone. A chapter where help waits for them instead of the other way around.

Jeffrey Friedman has led CN Guidance and Counseling Services as CEO since October 2013.

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