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### **Boston Medical Center Announces TEAM UP Program Expansion to Address Rising Mental Health Crisis Among Children**

BOSTON – Boston Medical Center today announced the launch of the Transforming and Expanding Access to Mental Health Care in Urban Pediatrics (TEAM UP) Scaling and Sustainability Center to combat the rising mental health crisis among children. BMC’s TEAM UP, which began in 2015 and is now the standard of care in seven pediatric clinics, will expand to reach 126,000 children in 29 clinics in the next four years.

In Massachusetts, one in five children and adolescents has a [behavioral health condition](#), but it can take years to receive a diagnosis and treatment due to stigma, workforce shortages, and social factors that prevent timely care. By integrating behavioral healthcare into pediatric clinics in community health centers, TEAM UP removes barriers to care for patients in historically marginalized communities. More than 74% of the program’s patients identify as racial or ethnic minorities, and 67% live at or below the poverty level.

The TEAM UP expansion comes after multiple studies showing that the model’s approach to early identification, intervention and treatment is making a meaningful difference, improving child health and reducing clinician burnout. Patients are connected with behavioral health services within their pediatric medical home – often on the same day a concern is identified. Over a 12-month period, children receiving mental health services in TEAM UP health centers experienced significant improvement in mental health symptoms, health-related quality of life, and school-related functioning, including fewer missed school days. To date, 40,000 patients have been served through the initiative.

“Mental health is a crucial component to overall health, and TEAM UP’s integrated approach is breaking down barriers to care to reach children in communities where the need is significant,” said Alastair Bell, MD, MBA, President & CEO of Boston Medical Center Health System. “The expansion of this new model of care is an important step in driving more equitable health outcomes in the Commonwealth.”

BMC’s TEAM UP supports pediatric primary care practices with clinical training, implementation support, and technical assistance. Services are delivered on site at practices by a team that includes primary care providers, behavioral health clinicians, and community health workers, many multilingual and representing the cultural diversity of the children they serve.

“The pediatric care we provide at our health center has been transformed by the invaluable support of TEAM UP,” said Jocelyn Guggenheim, RN, MS, CPNP, chief operating officer at South Boston Community Health Center and a primary care provider. “We now have a fully integrated behavioral health model, and our primary care physicians are trained to diagnose and treat a variety of pediatric mental health conditions.”

“Early identification and treatment of behavioral health conditions is essential for children to be healthy today and thriving adults in the years to come,” said Marylou Sudders, former Secretary of Health and Human Services for the Commonwealth and TEAM UP Scientific Advisory Board member. “We see the lasting effects of undiagnosed, untreated mental illness and believe this innovative model of care will truly make a difference for children and their families.”

Anchor funding for the TEAM UP Center was provided by [the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation](#) and [The Klarman Family Foundation](#).

To learn more or support the expansion of this critical program, visit [teamupforchildren.org](http://teamupforchildren.org).