



UPSTATE
FOUNDATION

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILD & ADOLESCENT Mental Health



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Eating Disorders

BACKGROUND

Rates and severity of eating disorders in adolescents spiked dramatically during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the rate of hospitalization in Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital more than doubling. Many of these patients and families find that their insurance does not cover required treatment, such as specialized dietitians and therapists, or that the few local providers are full, leaving families no local options for outpatient care, support and prevention.

Eating disorders are serious, chronic, misunderstood, and potentially fatal illnesses, with dramatic effects on an adolescent's physical and psychological health, along with significant effects on the whole family. These disorders are common, increasing in prevalence, and may affect people of any age, weight, gender, cultural background or socioeconomic group. Recovery is possible, but requires



a specialized therapy and support both within the hospital and after hospitalization. Early treatment, involving a multidisciplinary team with a family-centered approach, is essential for the best outcome. The treatment team should include a specialized registered dietician, specialized therapist, psychiatrist and medical doctor, as well as the patient's family, and often other preventive and supportive professionals such as recovery coaches, occupational therapists, or group therapist. Unfortunately, local patients and families face

long waits for care, insurance coverage gaps and a lack of qualified local providers. Local patients with eating disorders currently wait six months for care, and often need to travel to Rochester, downstate or out-of-state to access care.

LOCAL GAPS

Parents need support with transportation, insurance coverage (especially for visits with a qualified registered dietician), seeking residential or partial hospital programs, and with family meal planning. Patients younger than 14, or those with public insurance, are often unable to access residential or partial hospital program care. Even for patients fortunate enough to have insurance coverage, there are no local residential or partial hospital care programs for adolescents with eating disorders. There is a shortage of trained medical providers and resources are needed for nurses, doctors and dietitians to provide specialized, evidence-based care.

CRITICAL SHORT-TERM NEEDS

To reach those in need with timely, high quality, personalized care, education and prevention

- Parent-peer navigator to help patients access care
- Family support program with peer mentor
- Specialized registered dietician to serve outpatients and inpatients
- Specialized therapist with training in Family Based Therapy
- Specialized social worker to advocate for families and connect patients to care locally or in Rochester, downstate or out-of-state when needed
- Specialized training for nurses, resident doctors, social workers and others