



**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH and  
RECOVERY SERVICES (BHRS)  
Administration**

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### **Opening of Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit**

MERCED COUNTY, CA---Merced County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) in partnership with Central Star Behavioral Health is excited to announce the opening of the Merced Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU).

This new center will be the first facility of its kind in the county dedicated to serving children and youth experiencing psychiatric symptoms at a crisis level. The CSU addresses the widespread shortage of services for youth in crisis and will help them stabilize, preventing the need for hospitalization. *"This center will become a beacon of hope for many youth and families experiencing a mental health crisis,"* said Rodrigo Espinoza, Chairman of the Merced County Board of Supervisors.

The facility will provide voluntary short-term treatment for children and youth ages 5 to 17 experiencing a mental health crisis. During their stay of up to 24 hours, they will be supported to stabilize and safely transition back into the community.

*"This center has been a dream of many directors before me. I am so excited that Central Star was willing to partner with BHRS to make this dream a reality. The Merced Youth CSU will allow for culturally appropriate, trauma informed, crisis intervention services for youth in our community experiencing a variety of symptoms such as anxiety, depression, or acute stress. It's exciting to know that organizations are coming to together to help our youth find a safe place when in crisis,"* said Genevieve G. Valentine, Director of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services.

Kent Dunlap, CEO and President of Central Star, said *"We are so excited to be collaborating with Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services to open this program that is filling the gap for services for children and youth. This center will help children and youth experiencing elevated symptoms at the crisis level to stabilize so they can return home and avoid hospitalization -- typically with ongoing mental health treatment and linkage to other services and supports."*

Central Star Behavioral Health will be operating the new CSU and has previously worked with BHRS on other crisis intervention projects.

The new Merced Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit will be located at 300 East 15th Street Merced, CA 95341. You can obtain additional information at (209) 386-1092.

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