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Addiction center branches into mental health

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Retreat Premier Addiction Center's Ephrata addiction center is accepting patients in need of mental health services.

Filling a gap in mental health services between acute psychiatric treatment and therapy, an Ephrata-based drug addiction treatment center is branching out from its substance abuse services.

Retreat Premier Addiction Treatment Centers announced it has received the licensure needed to offer both residential and outpatient mental health

services at its Lancaster County facilities and will be changing its name to Retreat Behavioral Health to reflect that inclusion.

The decision to add the treatment of mental health disorders to the center's services grew naturally out of its work with sufferers of substance abuse, said Peter Schorr, president and CEO of the center.

"Many of our patients battle entrenched mental health disorders, too, which are often at the heart of their addiction," Schorr said. "It's important to treat both simultaneously, to give them the best chance of maintaining long-term recovery."

It took two years to prepare for the additional services and in that time the center has increased its staff size from about 300 employees to 450. The center has also updated its residential facility, allowing for 35 mental health beds and 100 beds for patients with substance abuse disorder.

The need is high for a middle ground between acute psychiatric inpatient care, focused on individuals in crisis, and one-on-one therapy, Kenneth Kosza, the center's COO, said. The center's residential treatment maintains some of the structure found in inpatient treatment but acts as a buffer for patients before moving back into society.

"(Our patients) aren't suicidal but they need more time in a safe environment," Kosza said. "There is a big gap of what to do with these folks after they go to the acute psychiatric hospitals. Often times they have to go from really restricted environments to loose environments."

The center's outpatient facility will also take mental health cases and Kosza says he expects to see a significant increase in those services by individuals from the local community who can walk in regularly to speak with therapists and have no need for a residential bed.