



## News Release

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### **NEW PARTNERSHIP SENDS MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, VIRTUALLY, ALONGSIDE OFFICERS**

GENESEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN—Genesee Health System and the Grand Blanc Township Police Department are pleased to announce a new partnership designed to provide the best possible service to individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis. Officers and Sergeants in the field now have access to iPads that give direct, virtual access to mental health professionals, via GHS’s Behavioral Health Urgent Care department.

Officers are routinely dispatched to calls where someone is undergoing a mental health crisis. In the past, the officers, along with EMS, would evaluate the individual and send them to an area hospital for treatment. Now, officers will ask the person if they would like to speak virtually with a mental health professional. If so, the officer will contact Genesee Health System and have them to speak with a trained professional via the iPad. These conversations can better evaluate the type of services needed for the individual and provides officers with another tool that can access mental health care professionals immediately on the scene.

“The Grand Blanc Township Police Department is excited to partner with Genesee Health System on the virtual Behavioral Health Urgent Care program,” says Police Chief Ronald Wiles. “Officers are frequently called to incidents involving community members who are in need of behavioral health assistance, however the people are not sure where to go for help. This program will allow police officers to provide immediate assistance by placing the person in direct virtual contact with certified mental health professionals. The program not only assists those people who are in need of help but the program will also help our officers by reducing the need for further law enforcement response.”

“We could not be more pleased to get this program up and running with the Grand Blanc Township Police Department,” added Jennifer McCarty, LMSW, Director of Clinical Services Project Management at Genesee Health System. “We know that encounters with persons undergoing a mental health crisis can be challenging and perhaps dangerous for all involved. With mental health professionals available virtually on the scene, we have more opportunity to help the individual with needed services and supports. We are also available to provide consultation to officers as needed. Training and iPads have been provided by a COVID emergency response grant through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and SAMHSA. This access to care is one of many ways GHS is recognizing the mental health needs in Genesee County and working to close the funding gap to meet those needs.”

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