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## BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2024

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2023



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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

# Cherokee Mental Health Institute

## Background

The Cherokee Mental Health Institute (MHI), operated by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), provides acute psychiatric care for adults who need mental health treatment. The Cherokee MHI is licensed as a hospital and is also accredited by the Joint Commission (formerly known as the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations). After the MHI opened on August 15, 1902, treatment in the early years at the facility included working on the farm and other jobs within the hospital, as well as hydrotherapy and massage. In the 1950s, with the advent of psychiatric medication and the recruitment of qualified professionals, the emphasis at the MHI began shifting to treatment, rather than housing individuals. With the change in philosophy, the population decreased from more than 1,000 individuals in 1960 to approximately 330 individuals in 1969. For FY 2021, the General Assembly provided funding for 36 beds at the Cherokee MHI. Prior to 2023, the Cherokee MHI provided acute psychiatric care for both children and adults. In 2023, the General Assembly designated the Cherokee MHI for specialized treatment and security of adults ordered into the custody of the State, while transferring the treatment of youths to the State MHI located in Independence.

## Populations Served

The Cherokee MHI provides services for adults and includes 36 adult psychiatric beds.

The most common diagnoses for the adults served at the Cherokee MHI are schizoaffective disorder, depression and other mood disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, and intermittent explosive disorder. In many cases, individuals have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder.

When the Cherokee MHI provided care for youths prior to FY 2023, the most common diagnoses for children and adolescents served were oppositional defiant and conduct disorders, depression and other mood disorders, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders.

The majority of individuals admitted at the Cherokee MHI are committed involuntarily by the court because they are a danger to themselves or others. Other admissions include individuals who have committed a crime and are at the MHI for an evaluation to determine if they are competent to stand trial and individuals found not guilty of a crime by reason of insanity.

## Treatment Services Provided

There are a variety of both subacute- and acute-care treatment services provided at the Cherokee MHI, including:

- Counseling
- Psychotropic medication

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## More Information

HHS Cherokee MHI: [hhs.iowa.gov/mhds/mental-health/in-patient/mental-health-institutes/cherokee](https://hhs.iowa.gov/mhds/mental-health/in-patient/mental-health-institutes/cherokee)  
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- Psychiatric rehabilitation classes
- Leisure skills development
- Recreational activities
- Discharge planning

Individuals have their own personalized treatment plans based on individual assets and needs, including physical, psychological, educational/vocational, and social/cultural needs. There is a wide variety of therapies available in addition to psychotherapy, including recreational therapy, music therapy, and creative arts. Patients at the MHI have a number of rights and privileges designed to safeguard personal dignity and respect cultural, psychosocial, and spiritual values.

**Funding**

The Cherokee MHI is funded 89.0% by General Fund appropriations; 8.0% by third-party payments such as Medicaid, Medicare, or private insurance; and 3.0% by federal funds.

**Related Statutes and Administrative Rules**

Iowa Code chapter [226](#)

Iowa Administrative Code 441—[28](#) and [29](#)

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