

Massachusetts Psychosis Access and Triage Hub



2022-2023
**ANNUAL
REPORT**



M-PATH



A PROGRAM of
the brookline center

M-PATH'S FIRST YEAR: GROWTH AND PARTNERSHIPS

We are thrilled to let you know about the first year of M-PATH. We were able to open our doors in December 2022, less than a year after the Massachusetts Strategic Plan for Early Psychosis called for renewed efforts to meet the needs of young people and their families who are facing the challenge of early psychosis.

Research has indicated that the best approach to treating psychosis is to ensure that adolescents and young adults receive expert, quality mental health care early on in their experience of symptoms. Early intervention can have life-changing effects, helping individuals get back on track to identify and work towards goals they'd like to achieve. However, navigating the mental health care system, and particularly the early psychosis world, can be confusing and challenging. We set out to change that.

It has been an eventful year. We launched our service in late 2022, opened our website in March 2023, hired new staff throughout the spring and summer, and continued to expand what we are able to offer. We have heard from dozens of family members who remarked that they were surprised and relieved to receive a call back from us just hours after they reached out to us, often because we were the only people to do so. Parents have told us that even if we don't have all the answers, having a place to ask questions, share their stories, and receive validation has allowed them to feel less alone and adrift in the maze of mental health services.

We are particularly proud of our ability to offer the support of our family partner and young adult peer mentor. While information and advice from mental health experts is valuable, we know how meaningful and powerful it can be to talk to someone who has been through the experience herself with her own child and who can share the frustration, fear, confusion - and joy when progress is made. We are thrilled to have a young adult peer mentor joining the team who will be able to offer similar support directly to young adults struggling with feeling alone in their experiences and wondering if treatment is the right next step.

Much of our growth is thanks to the collaboration with many community stakeholders who have been supportive and enthusiastic about our program, opening their doors (virtually and sometimes in person!) to us so that we can ask them questions about what they're seeing in their clinics, schools, and hospitals, and learn what kinds of information would make them feel more confident about working with youth and young adults who are experiencing symptoms of psychosis. We've done over 25 trainings and presentations for community groups and have received a great deal of positive feedback. Many mental health providers feel unprepared to appropriately support individuals experiencing psychosis - we think that **psychosis-informed care** is the answer to this! We help providers gain a better understanding of what psychosis is and isn't and how to thoughtfully and empathically talk with clients about their experiences.

We want to thank all of you for your support and enthusiasm as we have launched M-PATH this year! In particular, we want to express our gratitude to the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, SAMHSA, the Sidney R. Baer Jr. Foundation, and other private foundations for their financial support which has made this program possible.

In the year ahead, we look forward to working with you and to hearing from you about how we can continue to improve the care of young people and their families who are facing the challenge of early psychosis.

Sincerely,

Emily Gagen, PhD
M-PATH Program Director

Henry White, MD
Senior Advisor for Innovation, Brookline Center



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A CALL TO ACTION

January
2022

THE MASSACHUSETTS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EARLY PSYCHOSIS (STEP) ISSUED A CALL TO ACTION.

“Rapid identification and access to specialized early psychosis services are associated with improved quality of life, cognitive functioning, participation in work and school, and treatment engagement, as well as reduced symptom severity and substance use. The World Health Organization recommends a delay of no more than 90 days between symptom presentation and specialized early-course psychosis treatment however, estimates across the US place the average delay in accessing treatment between one to three years.

*Simply put, intervention in this critical window is not only life-changing, but life-saving. Now is the time to address the challenges necessary to assure wide-spread availability of specialized services for individuals in the early course of psychosis.” - **MassSTEP 2022***

Importantly, about 1,100 new first episodes of psychosis occur for youth and young adults in Massachusetts yearly.¹ However, the path to care has substantially higher barriers for historically marginalized and underserved communities,² and clinicians often report feeling less experienced and confident working with individuals experiencing psychosis.³

In response to these community needs and MassSTEP, the MA Department of Mental Health granted funding to the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health to launch M-PATH.

1. Benson et al., 2022
2. Deluca et al., 2022
3. Kline et al., 2018

OUR RESPONSE

January
2023

THE MASSACHUSETTS PSYCHOSIS ACCESS AND TRIAGE HUB, M-PATH, BEGAN PROVIDING SERVICES

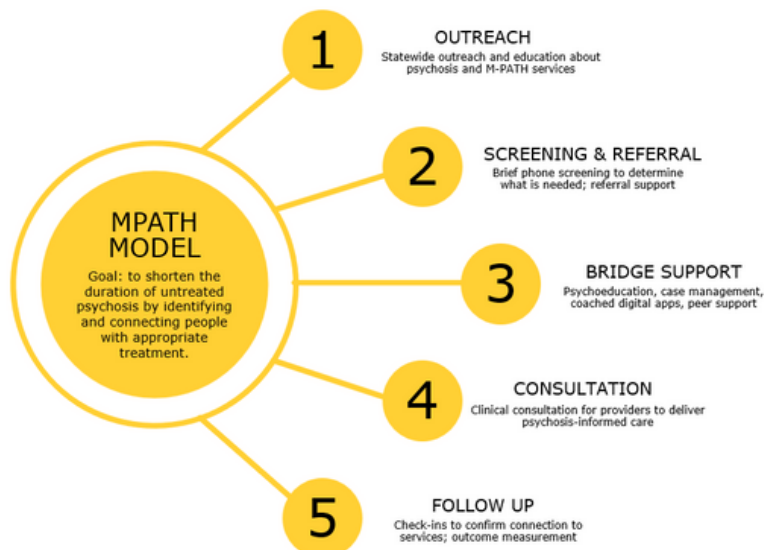
M-PATH seeks to serve youth and young adults with early psychosis, their families, providers, schools, and community organizations. We have a goal of **improving equitable access to care and decreasing the duration of untreated psychosis for youth and young adults in Massachusetts.**



Our Vision: A system of care free from stigma and structural barriers where youth and young adults with psychosis and their families can get the support they need when they need it.



Our Mission: M-PATH's mission is to partner with youth, young adults, and their families to improve access to psychosis services in Massachusetts and help them navigate the pathway to care. We do this by connecting clients and families to effective and personalized treatment, consulting with medical and behavioral health providers, partnering with historically oppressed and underrepresented groups, and promoting policy improvement.



Our Model

Guided by our vision and mission, we developed the M-PATH program model to support clients, families, and providers access and navigate the path to care.

M-PATH SERVICES

What Do We Do?

We have unique services for providers and specific support for individuals and families to meet their needs.



For Youth & Young Adults and Families:

- Triage to help determine which services would be the best fit.
- Navigation to coordinated specialty care, including first episode or clinical high risk for psychosis programs.
- Care coordination and support throughout the referral process.
- Peer and family support and education.



For Providers:

- Diagnostic consultation and education regarding risk for psychosis and early psychosis.
- Ongoing consultation for long-term work with youth and families with early psychosis.
- Facilitation of referral to specialized psychosis treatment.



For the Community:

- Promote early identification and help with referrals for organizations who are likely to interact with those experiencing psychosis such as schools, colleges, law enforcement, and faith leaders.

OUR TEAM

We have hired a full team of expert consultants, clinical staff, and individuals with lived experience. In January of 2024, we hired our latest team member, our young adult peer mentor!



Emily Gagen, PhD: Emily is a clinical psychologist; she is the director of the M-PATH program and a member of the CEDAR Clinic team.



Rebecca Wlcek, BA: Rebecca is the program coordinator; she is the primary M-PATH contact and manages all incoming calls and emails.



Charlene Flynn, LMHC: Charlene is a licensed mental health counselor who provides clinical consultation, case management, and overall support to clients, families, and providers.



Tanya Trevett, M.Ed.: Tanya is the M-PATH family partner and provides support and guidance to family members connected to M-PATH.



Sarah Dreyfus: Sarah is the M-PATH young adult peer mentor and provides support and guidance to youth and young adults connected to M-PATH.



James Green, BA: James is the M-PATH data coordinator and supports grant and data-related projects at M-PATH and the Brookline Center.



Henry White, MD: Henry is a psychiatrist; he is the founder of and lead consultant for M-PATH and is also a senior advisor for innovation at the Brookline Center.



Jessica Stern, MD: Jessica is a child psychiatrist; she is the Chief Medical Officer at the Brookline Center and is a co-founder and consultant for M-PATH.



Amanda Weber, PhD: Amanda Weber is a counseling psychologist; they are the director of the CEDAR Clinic and are a consultant for M-PATH.

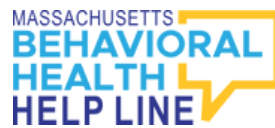


Emily Kline, PhD: Emily Kline is a clinical psychologist, the director of the WRAP Clinic at BMC, founder of the MILO intervention, and a consultant for M-PATH.



OUR PARTNERS

We have worked closely with partners to establish our program. The **CEDAR Clinic**, a clinical high risk for psychosis program at the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health, enabled our pilot and growth through providing clinical and administrative expertise. **MAPNET**, the state-wide psychosis technical assistance center, has supported us throughout our planning and pilot with clinical expertise and resource dissemination. **M3P**, a SAMHSA funded statewide collaboration, supported our prevention efforts by expanding our reach to support youth at high-risk for psychosis. We have worked closely with the **Behavioral Health Help Line** and other networks integrate our specialty psychosis referral services into established state-wide services



OUR COLLABORATORS

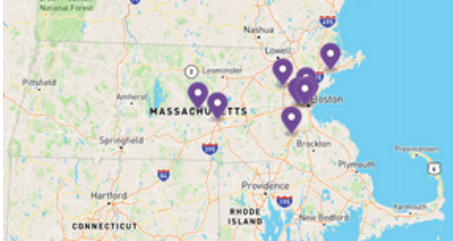
We have collaborated with a number of community agencies to expand our reach to all aspects of Massachusetts system of care.

- **Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT)**
- **INTERFACE**
- **LEAP Center at McLean**
- **Local universities including Tufts and Boston College**
- **Mass211**
- **Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program (MCPAP)**
- **NAMI Massachusetts / NAMI Compass**
- **Network of Care Massachusetts**
- **Pediatric Physicians Organizations at Children's (PPOC)**
- **Parent Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)**
- **And many others!**

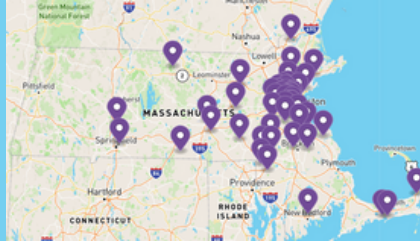


COMMUNITY OUTREACH

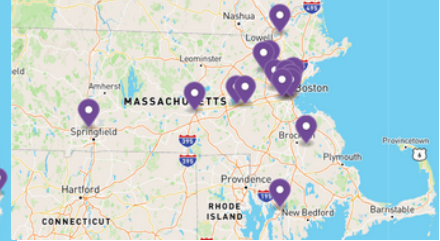
OUTREACH SITES



CLIENTS SERVED



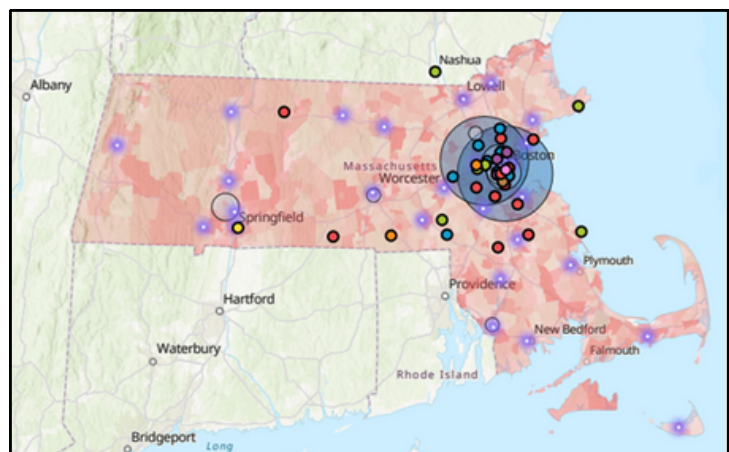
CSC PROGRAMS



As demonstrated in the maps above, we've had a great deal of success expanding our services throughout the greater Boston area. This was made possible through our outreach efforts, partnerships, and community support. We've been successful in matching our outreach efforts with the location of psychosis clinics in the state.

NEXT STEPS

In 2024, we are making a concerted effort with MAPNET and the M3P collaborative to direct outreach efforts to areas in the state with fewer resources, using social vulnerability indices to help identify these areas. We are aiming to expand equitable access to psychosis-informed care to all individuals in the state, regardless of geographic location, social identities or socio-economic resources.

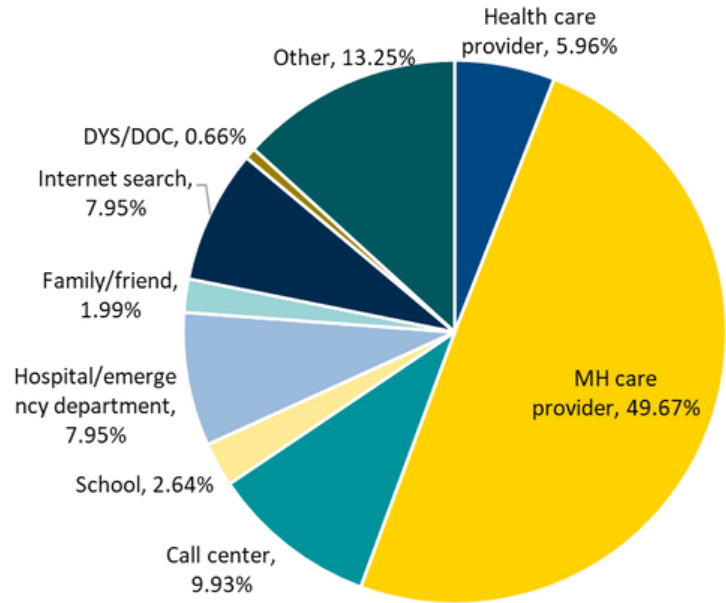


Legend:

- M-PATH Referral
- CSC program capacity
- Community behavioral health center
- SVI Index

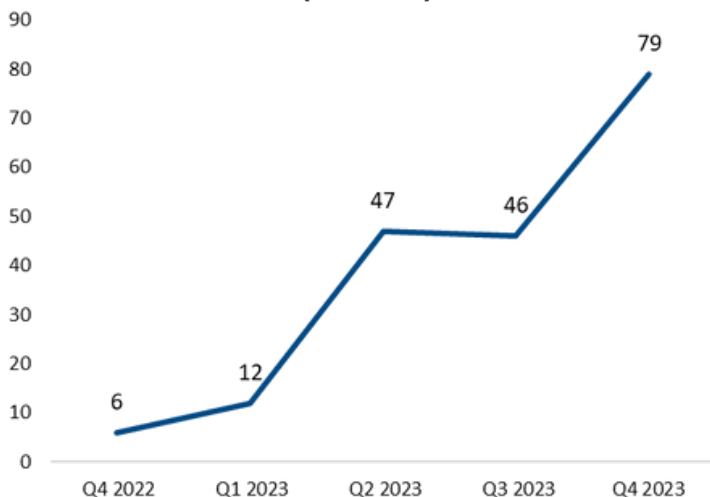
HOW DID CALLERS FIND M-PATH?

The majority of people learned about M-PATH through other mental health care providers. Our training collaboration with the Behavioral Health Help Line accounted for 10% of our referrals. In 2024, we plan to continue directed outreach efforts to health care providers, schools, and inpatient psychiatric facilities.



WHO DID WE HELP?

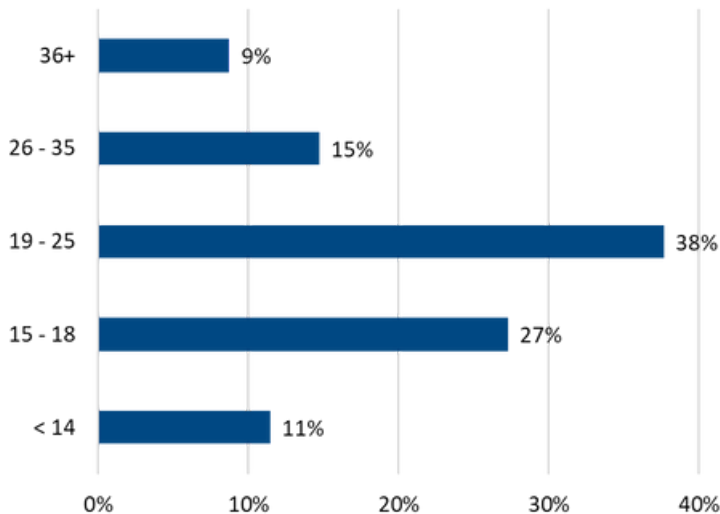
Clients seen Dec 2022 - Dec 2023
(n = 190)



Since our launch in December of 2022, we have worked with **190** clients, families, and providers. On average, we took 1 day to respond. For individuals referred to specialized early psychosis care, the average time from their first call to us to their first appointment was **47** days. We are working to reduce it further, with a goal of less than 30 days.

WHO DID WE HELP?

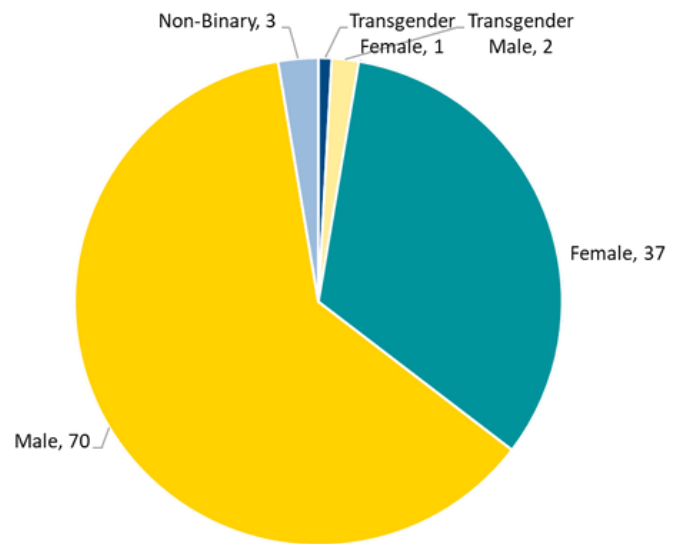
Client Ages



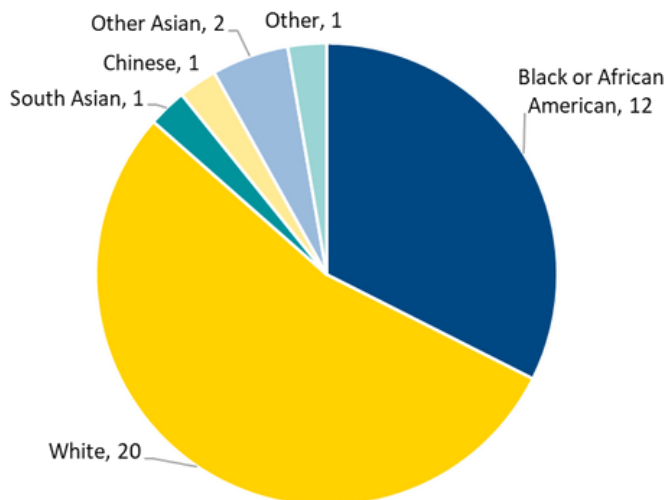
The majority of individuals seeking help were between the ages of **15 and 25**, however we did hear from a number of older and younger clients as well. While early psychosis typically occurs between ages 15 - 24, our data has identified a need to support younger and older individuals as well.

We heard from **50% more males than females**, and about **7% of clients identified as gender expansive**.

Gender Identity



Racial Identity



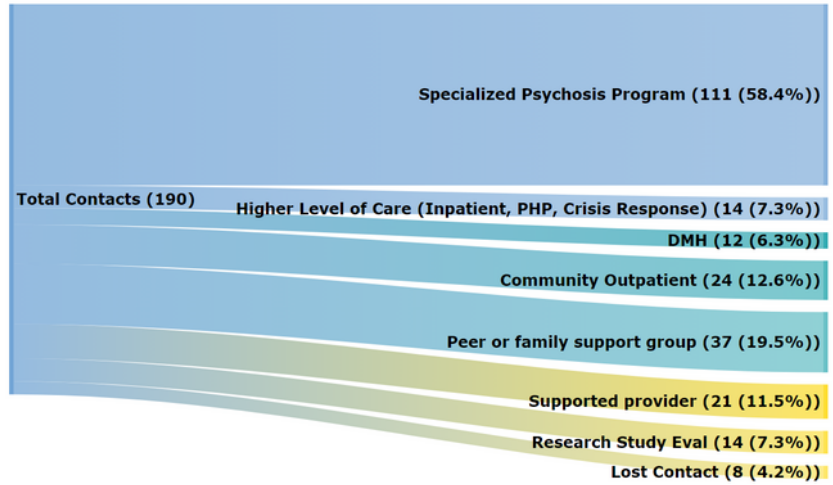
Based on our data, the racial diversity of M-PATH clients closely aligned with Suffolk County.

Race and gender identity data are only representative of individuals who consented to reporting this information.

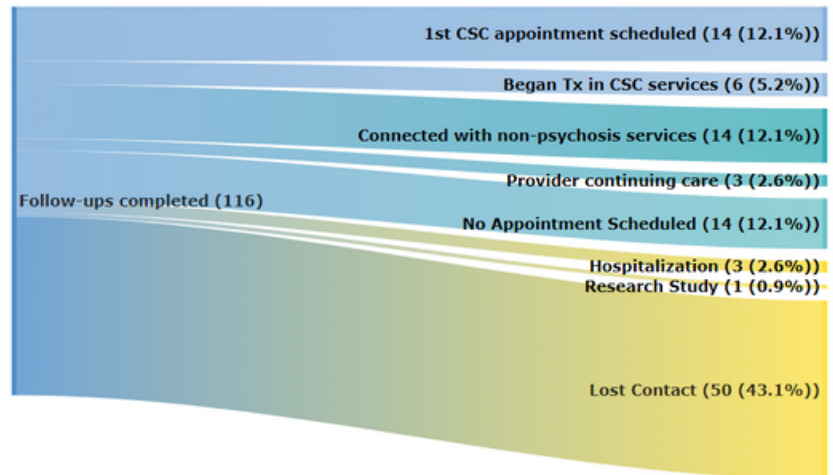
PATHWAYS TO CARE

We referred the majority (58.4%) of clients to specialized early psychosis programs. We helped some clients connect to DMH services or higher levels of care (7.3%). We also helped clients to connect with local peer and family support groups (19.5%) and worked directly with clinicians to help them provide **psychosis informed care** (11.5%). We also followed up with folks one month after we referred and connected individuals to resources. Out of the 116 cases with whom we followed up, 17.3% were either scheduled or connected to specialty psychosis services.

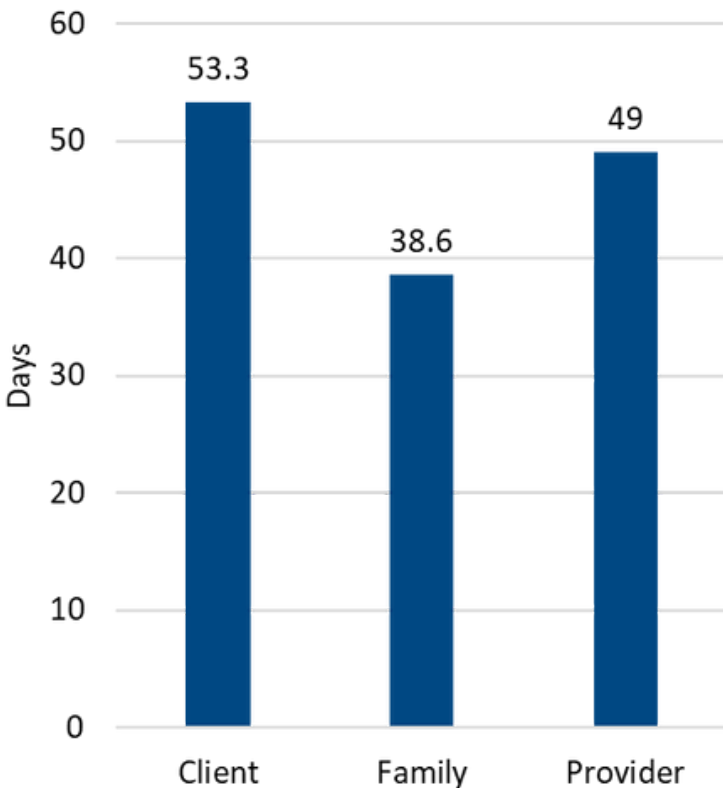
Where M-PATH referred clients



1-month follow-up outcomes



Total Time to Care (average = 47 days)

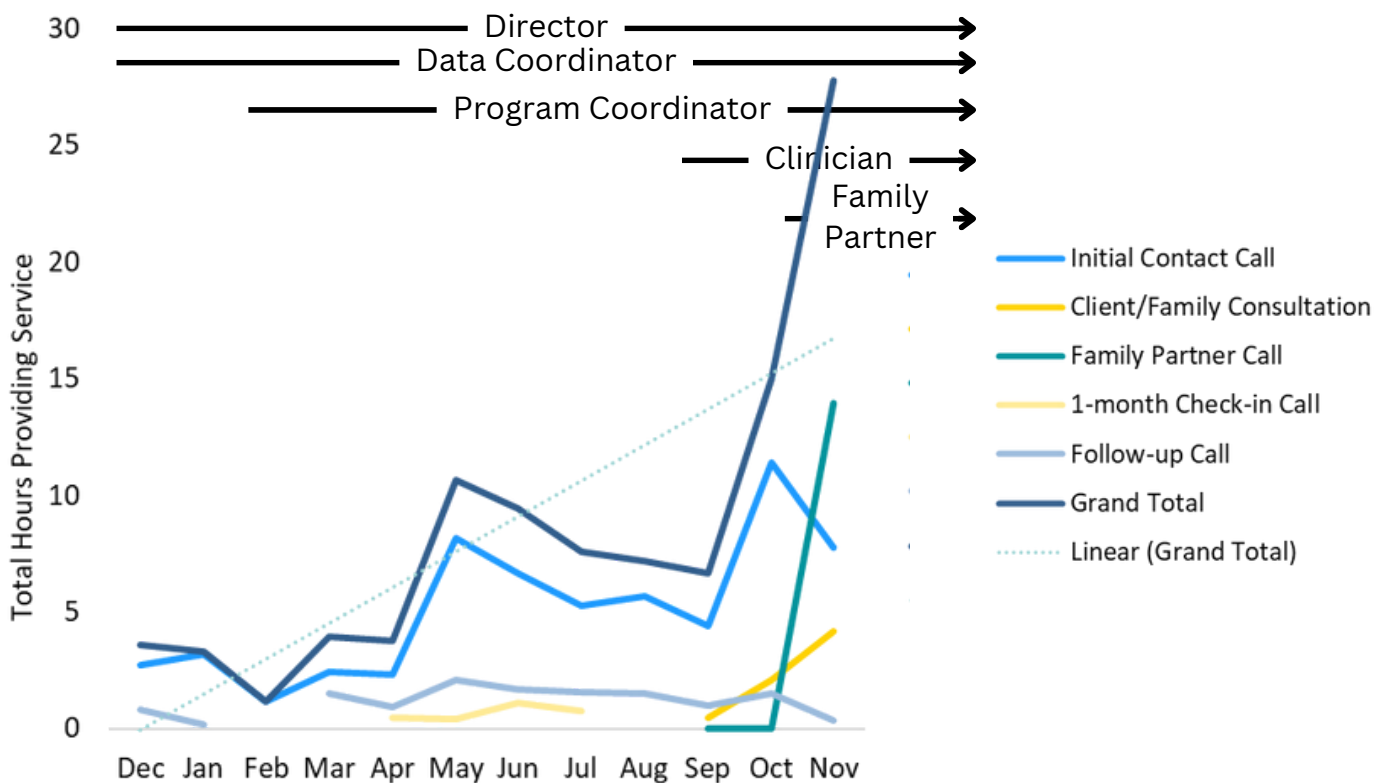


INCREASING SPEED OF ACCESS

On average, the duration between the first contact with M-PATH and a first appointment at a specialized psychosis program was **47 days**. With the recent addition of our clinician, peer mentor, and family partner, we hope to increase supports for these individuals, as well as provide interim support during this wait for care.

SERVICE EXPANSION

During the year, we made steady progress in building our team. Our **Program Coordinator** joined in February, which enabled quick response to callers and one-month follow-up to reduce dropouts. In September, we successfully recruited a **Clinician** and a **Family Partner**, dramatically increasing our capacity for client and family consultation, education, and support. The addition of a **Young Adult Peer Mentor** in January 2024 greatly strengthened our ability to engage and support youth and young adults who reach out to us. All the staff participate in our outreach efforts and presentations.



COMMUNITY-INFORMED SERVICES

TESTIMONIALS

M-PATH helped me understand services in the Boston area that I otherwise would not have known about. I am a clinician in another state, so it was extremely helpful to have 'boots on the ground' help me navigate all of the options. Our client has successfully moved to your area and is receiving services.
- **Provider**

CONSTRUCTIVE IDEAS

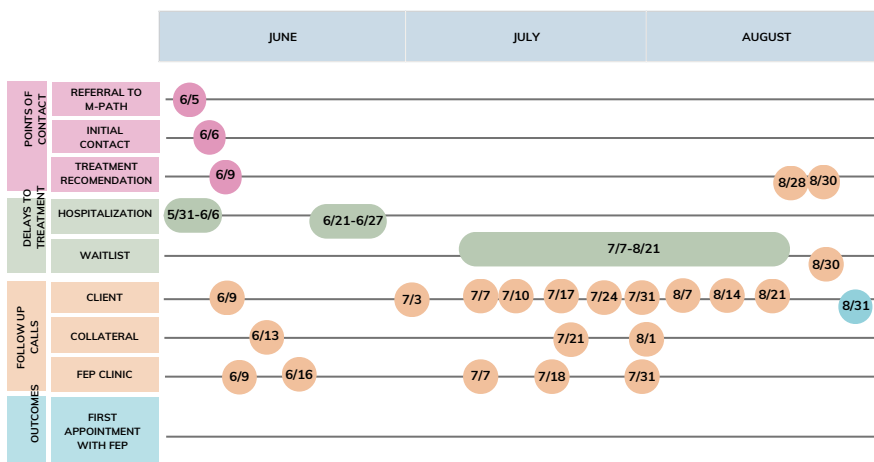
Our close connection to these communities also informed us of additional services individuals were seeking along their journey to care. This included more direct therapeutic support and medication consultation. A shared sentiment of wishing more services were available was salient in our work with this community in the last year. We hope to continue to address these needs through the expansion of our **peer services** and inclusion of **medical expertise**.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

We received a great deal of positive feedback regarding our services from both family members and providers. This was validating for our program model, as it was evident our clients were benefiting from our capacity to be well-connected to early psychosis programs and have the ability to maintain connection with people throughout the journey to care.

I cannot think of one thing that M-PATH didn't provide. There were multiple phone calls and updates while we connected to the center my son was referred to. In addition, there was a follow up call several weeks later to check on to see how he was doing. Thank you!!
- **Parent**

CASE EXAMPLE



AN ILLUSTRATION

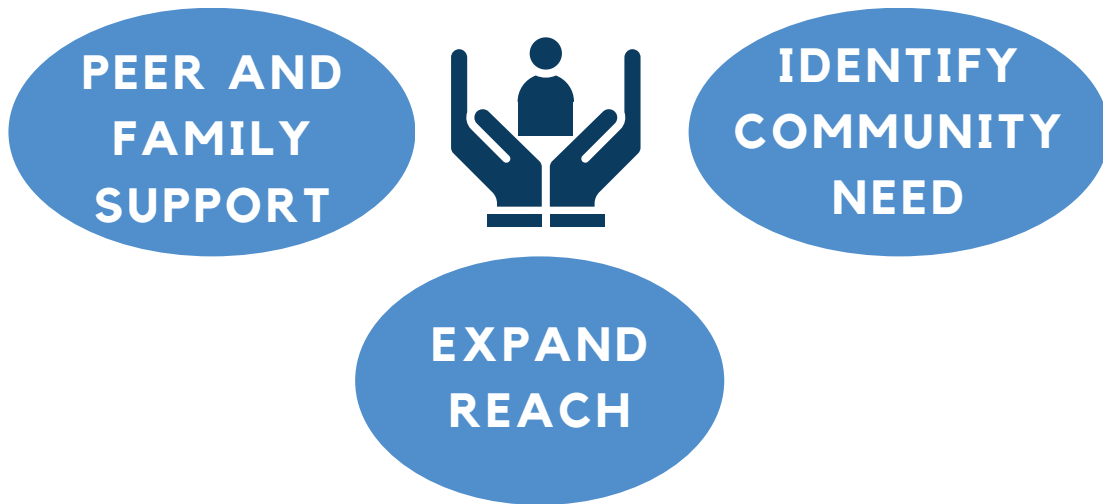
Our work with clients can be complex and take many different forms. The timeline to the left illustrates one of our client's pathway to care.

'Joe' was referred to M-PATH by an inpatient social worker for symptoms of early psychosis. After discharge, M-PATH began working with them on a referral to a first episode program. Despite barriers including another hospitalization, documentation requirements, transportation difficulties, and a waitlist, they attended their first appointment at an early psychosis clinic in less than 3 months. M-PATH supported them throughout the referral process through weekly check in calls to ensure they were on track.



** This case has been de-identified to protect the identity of our client.*

WHAT'S NEXT?



Continue expansion of family partner and peer support services

We are now offering youth and families the opportunity to meet with a young adult peer mentor and family partner while we work to connect them with specialized psychosis services and/or consult with their care team. These key members of our team offer support, education, empathy, perspective, and help navigating the critical first steps in engaging in treatment.

Leveraging data science to improve identification of community needs

We will be collaborating with MAPNET and the M3P collaborative to leverage referral data and advanced mapping software to identify underserved geographic and socio-demographic communities.

Expanding our reach

Throughout 2024, we will be leveraging our community partnerships with school systems and primary care settings to expand our reach to realize our vision: a system of care, free from stigma and structural barriers where youth and young adults with psychosis and their families can get the support they need when they need it. We will continue to expand our cross-agency integration to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our services and to allow the journey to care to be as seamless and easy for clients, families, and providers as possible.

THANK YOU

Turning the vision of MA STEP into reality was made possible with the support of both public and private funders. We are grateful to the Department of Mental Health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Sydney R. Baer Jr. Foundation, and other private foundations for their generous financial support which has enabled us to build our team and make our services accessible and equitable to clients, families, and providers.

M-PATH was developed in collaboration with local agencies and community members whose expertise, passion, and commitment to this work enabled our first years promising growth. We are grateful for leadership from the Department of Mental Health, expertise from the CEDAR Clinic, the MAPNET program of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and the LEAP Center of McLean Hospital, and the continuous support from the M3P collaborative.



CONTACT US



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