



**Improved Patient Access to
Behavioral Health Care
Translates into \$10M Savings
for WakeMed Health & Hospitals**

Hospitals, accountable care organizations, and managed care organizations across the country are facing crippling demand from patients with behavioral health (BH) issues, including both mental health and/or substance use disorders. One in eight Emergency Department (ED) patients present for BH issues and an additional 68%¹ present with medical issues complicated by their BH diagnosis. The number of inpatient psychiatric beds available nationally to serve these patients plummeted nearly 80% from the 1970's to 2010, from about 500,000 to 114,000². For lack of an alternative, almost all of these patients are referred to scarce inpatient BH beds, often resulting in a patient being "boarded" at a medical hospital for 3-90+ days (avg. 6-8 days³). As much as 25% of hospital bed capacity can be allocated to BH, representing 18-20% of hospital budget.

The Challenge

WakeMed Health and Hospitals, a 1000-bed community safety net health system in Raleigh, North Carolina, was facing similar challenges. In 2017, fifty percent of the 180,3320 patients seen in their EDs had documented evidence of a BH disorder, and one third had severe BH. Approximately 3,000 patients were involuntarily committed, resulting in 12,000 avoidable bed days and \$33M in BH charity care. BH patients awaiting placement experienced an average length of stay (ALOS) of 6.6 days, which translated to an average daily census of 21% of hospital capacity.

The Right Care. The Right Environment. The Right Time.

In early 2017, WakeMed engaged Blaze Advisors to design a comprehensive strategy to help accelerate access to appropriate care for patients with BH disorders. The objective was to build a high performance, multi-disciplinary network of inpatient, outpatient, and community benefit organizations (CBOs), creating a circle of support around each care transition. To be successful it required:

- ✓ The use of common screening and assessment tools
- ✓ Mitigation of social and medical obstacles to treatment compliance
- ✓ Application of best practice patient engagement techniques and technology
- ✓ Coordination at all levels of follow up care

Most importantly, all members of the network agreed to singularly and jointly measure network progress toward several process and two key network performance goals:

- ✓ Reduction in BH 30-day readmissions
- ✓ Decrease in avoidable bed days (post-medical clearance)

It Takes a Connected Community

In partnership with WakeMed Health and Hospitals, Blaze Advisors developed and operationalized **ONEcare**, a novel and scalable high-performance network of care that organizes and streamlines ED/short-term acute care for BH patients. An essential element of **ONEcare** is that it incentivizes an accountable care organization of BH providers who agree to provide accelerated access to care and coordinated transitions.

The **ONEcare Connected Community** was designed to be attractive to providers and CBOs across the spectrum of care, including:

- Acute Care
- Primary and Speciality Care
- Behavioral Health
- Community Based Organizations

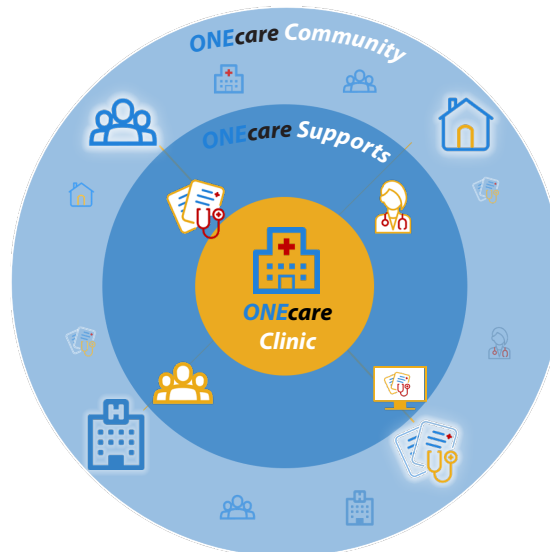
The **ONEcare** Connected Community

ONEcare© Clinic/Patient Supports

- Care Management
- Transitional Care Management/Urgent Response Team
- Case Consultation
- Care Director
- Practice Transformation
- Manage ONEcare Community

ONEcare© Clinic

- No wrong door access
- Standard and targeted BHSU and primary care targeted screenings
- Expanded top of license treatment
- Coordinate with specialists



ONEcare© Community

- Accelerated access to service
- Warm handoffs and bilateral communication
- Screen for disease and symptoms
- Interagency coordination

In addition, Blaze Advisors has deployed a suite of inpatient and outpatient protocols, communication, and technology that increase transparency and accountability, improve diagnostics and triage, and enhance clinical integration.

The **ONEcare** network uses an interoperable Care Optimization System (powered by Infina Connect) to send, coordinate, and track referrals throughout the network. A key component of this system is an embedded screening and risk stratification system that translates patient needs into eligible BH services which then “cross-walk” to network provider skillsets; significantly improving the “match” rate with a provider.

“Using **Infina Connect’s**
Care Optimization
Solution,

Blaze Advisors has been able to automatically translate patient needs into **eligible BH services,** significantly improving the **“match” rate** with providers.

Blaze Advisors has also designed/integrated a number of network-level quality improvement initiatives including:

- ✓ **rapidCare:** Network providers engage high-risk patients prior to discharge and during care transitions.
- ✓ **CONVERT:** Real-time Controlled Substance Registry query and analysis displays banner alerts inside hospital EHR; triggering physician interventions and transitional care support.
- ✓ **PatientLINK:** A pre-discharge virtual visit with a therapist/treatment team to improve treatment engagement.
- ✓ **DETECT:** On behalf of affiliate primary care physicians, the **ONEcare** network conducts online depression/anxiety screenings for patients who suffer from diabetes and hypertension and connects to BH specialist.
- ✓ **Project OBOT:** Trains/Supports outpatient primary care to practice Medication Assisted Opioid Treatment for lower risk/medically complex addiction cases. Leverages automated care management tools, controlled substance registry monitoring, STAT Labs, and virtual therapy.

Results of ONEcare Implementation

> 70%

Reduction in Avoidable
Bed Days and
Hospitalizations

>50%

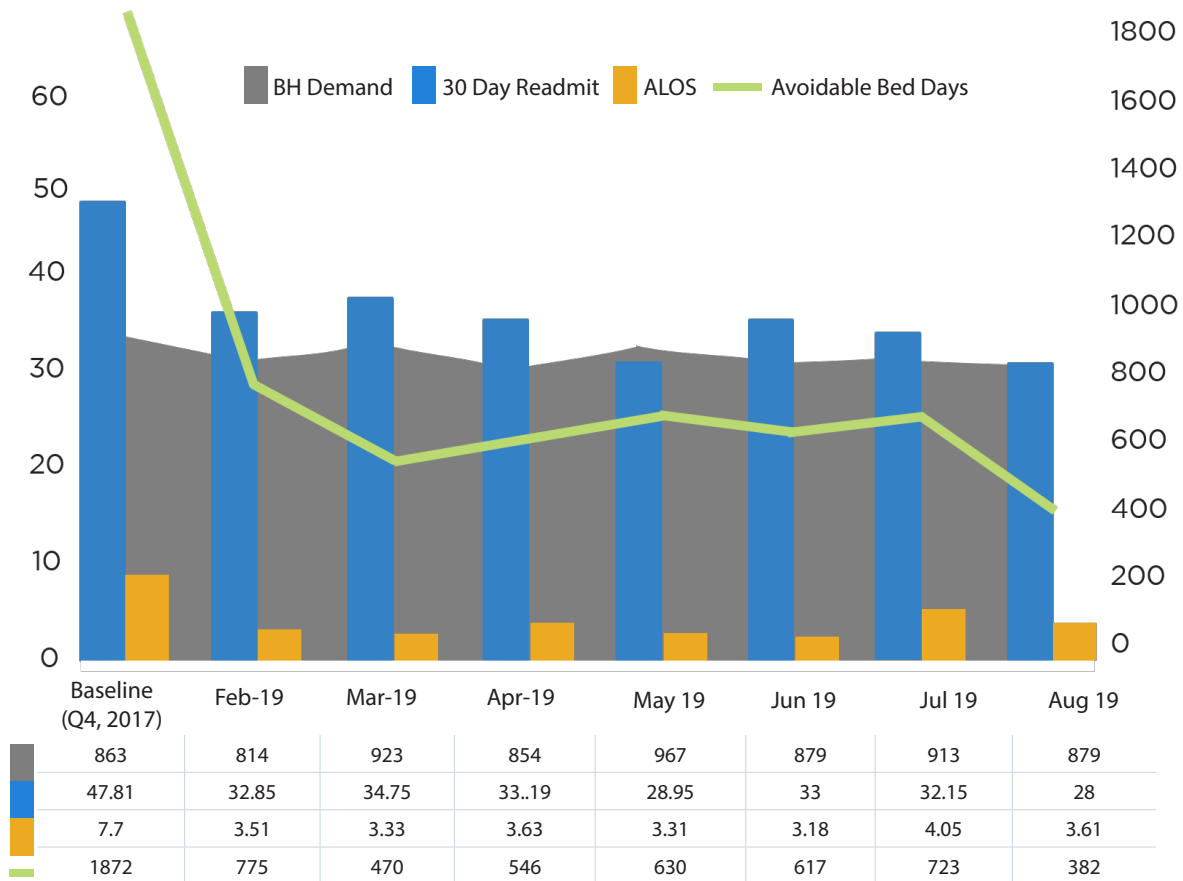
Drop in Average
Length of Stay (ALOS)

>20%

Drop in Behavioral
Health Readmissions

\$30-35M

Total Cost of Care
Savings



If you're interested in learning more about how Blaze Advisors can help your health system build an effective *ONEcare Connected Community*, visit us at www.blazeadvisors.com.

¹ <https://www.modernhealthcare.com/reports/behavioral-health/#/>

² Observational benchmark data from Blaze Advisor clients

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6167018/>