

# First Episode Psychosis / Bipolar Programs



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**Early treatment of psychosis greatly increases the chance of successful recovery.** The longer psychotic symptoms go untreated, the greater the risk of additional problems. Like many illnesses, intervening early for a mental illness is critical for a person's long-term wellbeing and ability to minimize and cope with symptoms. Yet, people in the United States live with psychotic symptoms, on average, for a year and a half before receiving treatment.

**What is psychosis?** "Psychosis" affects the mind, causing a distorted perception of reality, including hallucinations, paranoia, or delusions, as well as disordered thoughts or speech. Psychosis often begins when a person is in their late teens to mid-twenties and can be a symptom of a mental illness.

**What is FEP?** FEP stands for First Episode Psychosis, and FEP programs serve people ages 15 to 40 with early signs of psychosis. These programs provide intensive interventions that work to prevent psychosis from becoming a disabling condition. Minnesota uses the evidence based NAVIGATE program, which provides **Coordinated Specialty Care(CSC)**.

CSC promotes shared decision-making and uses a team of specialists who work with the person and their family members to create a personal treatment plan. The specialists offer psychotherapy, medication management, family education and support, case management, employment, or education support, and promote resiliency. CSC has shown several positive outcomes for people experiencing psychosis relative to those who receive care as usual or community care, including:

- 33% reduction in inpatient days and a 36% reduction in emergency department visits, driven by improvement in both mental health and physical health
- 42% reduction in the likelihood of being unemployed
- twofold improvement in education and employment rates (from 40% to 80% in six months)
- 48% reduction in the need for homelessness services among the FEP population
- 76% reduction in the risk of committing a first crime

The FEP programs in Minnesota are:

- The HOPE Program at Hennepin Healthcare (located in HCMC in Minneapolis)
- University of Minnesota M Health (located in their St. Louis Park and West Bank Minneapolis campus clinics)
- Human Development Center (HDC), located in Duluth
- Radas Health (St. Paul)

**How are FEP programs funded?** FEP programs are largely funded by state and federal grants. Congress requires states to set aside 10% of their Mental Health Block Grant to pay for FEP programs and the state provides \$2.7M. In 2023, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid established new billing codes for CSC payment. The codes will make it easier for private and public insurance programs to pay for these services, which could lead to the creation of more programs. The Legislature also directed DHS to develop a Medicaid benefit for First Episode of Psychosis care. DHS must make a report to the Legislature by December 2026, but in the meantime, Minnesotans are not able to afford this crucial early intervention with lifelong impacts. Private insurance companies should also be mandated to cover FEP/CSC as they would other preventative care.