

ForwardHealth **UPDATE**

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NEW PER DIEM CRISIS STABILIZATION SERVICE TIERS AND BILLING MODIFIERS

Beginning January 1, 2026, crisis stabilization services will no longer be available through HMOs as an in lieu of service. Instead, county crisis programs will be responsible for ensuring access to crisis stabilization services for all members.

Effective January 1, 2026, ForwardHealth will:

- Increase the per diem (per day) crisis stabilization [reimbursement rates](#) for service claims.
- Update the [reimbursement structure](#) for per diem crisis stabilization to better reflect the location and intensity of stabilization services that members receive.
 - Add two billing [modifiers](#) for per diem crisis stabilization service claims.
- [Limit hourly billing](#) for crisis stabilization services to eight hours per date of service (DOS).

ForwardHealth is **not** changing any stabilization services or allowable locations.

AFFECTED PROGRAMS

BadgerCare Plus, Medicaid

TO

Community Support Programs, Comprehensive Community Services, Crisis Intervention Providers, HMOs and Other Managed Care Programs

QUICK LINKS

- Covered Services topic [#6763](#)
- Modifiers topic [#6777](#)
- Crisis Stabilization Services topic [#6805](#)
- Reimbursement Rates topic [#24066](#)



Overview

Crisis stabilization services are part of the ForwardHealth crisis intervention benefit. Professional staff provide these services to members in need of short-term, intensive, community-based crisis support.

Refer to the ForwardHealth Online Handbook Covered Services topic [#6763](#) for more information about crisis stabilization services.

Reimbursement Rates Increased for Per Diem Crisis Stabilization Services

Effective for DOS on and after January 1, 2026, ForwardHealth will increase reimbursement rates for crisis stabilization services.

Refer to the [maximum allowable fee schedule](#) for current reimbursement rates.

Maximum allowable fee scheduled rates are paid to county crisis programs. Counties negotiate their own reimbursement rates with subcontracted crisis stabilization providers.

New Tiers for Crisis Stabilization Services

Effective January 1, 2026, ForwardHealth will reimburse crisis stabilization services at three different per diem rates based on the location and intensity of services.

TIER AND TYPE	NON-RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS	RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS
1 Community-based stabilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Member's own homeOutpatient clinicSchoolOther community non-residential settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Community-based residential facility long-term and respite/crisis services per Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 83Adult family home per Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 88Children's group home per Wis. Admin. Code ch. DCF 57Children's foster home per Wis. Admin. Code ch. DCF 56Children's treatment foster home per Wis. Admin. Code ch. DCF 56

TIER AND TYPE	NON-RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS	RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS
2 Crisis-dedicated stabilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis hostel per Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 33 Adult integrated behavioral health stabilization service per Wis. Admin. Code § DHS 75.56 	Locations certified under Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 83 to provide crisis stabilization exclusively, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Quality Assurance (DQA) waiver for Wis. Admin. Code § DHS 83.02(45) DQA variance for Wis. Admin. Code § DHS 83.31
3 Youth crisis stabilization facility	None	Locations certified under Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 50

New Billing Modifiers for Per Diem Crisis Stabilization

ForwardHealth is adding two billing modifiers to indicate the tier of crisis stabilization services provided to a member.

TIER	TYPE	SERVICE LEVEL MODIFIER
1	Community-based stabilization	None
2	Crisis-dedicated stabilization	TF (Intermediate level of care)
3	Youth crisis stabilization facility	HA (Child/adolescent program)

Refer to the Modifiers topic [#6777](#) for more information.

Billing for Crisis Stabilization Services

ForwardHealth reimburses crisis stabilization services in one of two ways:

- Hourly
- Per diem

Hourly Billing

Brief stabilization services are billed per hour. Claims for hourly stabilization services must be billed using Healthcare Common Procedure Coding

System (HCPCS) billing procedure code S9484 (Crisis intervention mental health services, per hour) with the appropriate professional-level modifiers. ForwardHealth will reimburse up to eight hours of crisis stabilization per DOS, after which point providers must bill per diem.

Per Diem Billing

Stabilization services provided for more than eight hours per DOS are billed per diem. Claims for per diem stabilization services must be billed using HCPCS code S9485 (Crisis intervention mental health services, per diem) with the appropriate service-level modifier.

Refer to the Crisis Stabilization Services topic [#6805](#) for more information.

Limitations

ForwardHealth does not reimburse:

- Room and board costs.
- Stabilization services provided at non-allowable places, such as nursing facilities, hospitals, shelter care, or residential care centers for children and youth.

Documentation Retention

Providers are reminded that they must follow the documentation retention requirements per Wis. Admin. Code § [DHS 106.02\(9\)](#). Providers are required to produce or submit documentation, or both, to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) upon request. Per Wis. Stat. § [49.45\(3\)\(f\)](#), providers of services shall maintain records as required by DHS for verification of provider claims for reimbursement. DHS may audit such records to verify the actual provision of services and the appropriateness and accuracy of claims. DHS may deny or recoup payment for services that fail to meet these requirements. Refusal to produce documentation may result in denial of submitted claims, recoupment of paid claims, application of intermediate sanctions, or termination from the Medicaid program.

Information Regarding Managed Care Organizations

This ForwardHealth Update contains fee-for-service policy and applies to services members receive on a fee-for-service basis only. The benefit is “carved out” of managed care organizations (MCOs), which include BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid SSI HMOs and special managed care plans. Special managed care plans include Care4Kids, Family Care, Family Care Partnership Program, and the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).

All crisis services are billed fee for service even for members enrolled in an MCO.

This Update was issued on 12/22/2025 and information contained in this Update was incorporated into the Online Handbook on 01/02/2026.

The ForwardHealth Update is the first source of program policy and billing information for providers.

Wisconsin Medicaid, BadgerCare Plus, SeniorCare, and Wisconsin Chronic Disease Program are administered by the Division of Medicaid Services within the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). The Wisconsin HIV Drug Assistance Program and the Wisconsin Well Woman Program are administered by the Division of Public Health within DHS.

For questions, call Provider Services at 800-947-9627 or visit our website at www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/.