

## **DHS Response to Public Comment Regarding Rehabilitative Hospital Manual**

**Brian Thomas President & CEO**

**On behalf of the Board of Directors, Medical Staff, and Leadership of Jefferson Hospital Association, Inc., d/b/a Jefferson Regional Medical Center**

**Comment:** On behalf of the Board of Directors, Medical Staff, and Leadership of Jefferson Hospital Association, Inc., d/b/a Jefferson Regional Medical Center, I wish to offer our full support for the modification and expansion of the Rehabilitative Hospital Manual to include Medicaid coverage for inpatient behavioral health services provided at the Jefferson Regional Specialty Hospital in White Hall, AR.

For over four decades, Jefferson Regional Medical Center offered inpatient adult behavioral health services within its acute care hospital to care for the southeast Arkansas market. In 2024, Jefferson Regional partnered with LifePoint Health in order to expand this excellent program to a brand new, state-of-the-art stand-alone hospital that increased our adult psych beds from 18 beds to 36 beds. In fact, this new hospital is one of the first of its kind in the United States to house an inpatient behavioral health unit joined with an inpatient rehabilitation hospital. We are so proud of this new project, but the inability to treat and bill for Medicaid services for adult behavioral health at this new facility is a direct detriment to the patients that we serve in this region. Currently, many patients are being held in the emergency department for hours/days, only to be transferred to other behavioral health hospitals elsewhere in the state in order to receive the necessary care they need. In order to keep those patients right here in southeast Arkansas, we strongly support this manual change to include the provision that inpatient behavioral health services be covered within the Inpatient Rehabilitation hospital.

**Response:** Thank you for the comment supporting the changes to the Rehabilitative Hospital Manual allowing a new provider type to provide much needed psychiatric hospital services to Medicaid beneficiaries.