

The background of the cover is a photograph of a large, white, classical-style building with a prominent dome and a portico with columns. The building is set on a green lawn with several trees, some of which have autumn-colored leaves. In the foreground, there are several bright red tulips in full bloom, with some green leaves and stems visible. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

# CHNA IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 2022

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Assembled by the Austen Riggs Center

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January 30, 2023

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
About the Austen Riggs Center.....	4
Definition of the Community Served .....	5
Summary of Significant Community Health Needs .....	6
Implementation Strategy to Address Significant Health Needs .....	7
Needs that Austen Riggs Plans to Address Directly.....	8
Needs that Austen Riggs Plans to Address Indirectly .....	19
Needs that the Austen Riggs Center Will Not Address .....	22
Implementation Strategy Adoption .....	23

# Introduction

This document describes how the Austen Riggs Center (“Riggs” or “the Center”) plans to address needs found in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). See the CHNA report at [www.austenriggs.org/about/history](http://www.austenriggs.org/about/history). The implementation strategy describes how the Center plans to address identified needs in calendar years 2023 through 2025.

The CHNA report and this implementation strategy were undertaken by the Center to understand and address community health needs, and in accordance with proposed Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations pursuant to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.

This implementation strategy addresses the significant community health needs described in the CHNA report. It identifies significant needs the Center plans to address through various initiatives and projects and articulates why the Center does not plan to address other needs identified in the report.

The Austen Riggs Center reserves the right to amend this implementation strategy as circumstances warrant. For example, certain needs may become more pronounced and merit enhancements to the described strategic initiatives. Alternately, other organizations may decide to address one or more of the significant community health needs, and, as a result, the Center may amend its strategies and focus on other identified significant health needs.

The document contains the following information:

1. About the Austen Riggs Center
2. Definition of the Community Served
3. Summary of Significant Community Health Needs
4. Implementation Strategy to Address Significant Health Needs
5. Needs the Austen Riggs Center Will Not Address
6. Implementation Strategy Adoption

## About the Austen Riggs Center

The Austen Riggs Center, located in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, is a vital therapeutic community, open psychiatric hospital, and institute for education, research, and advocacy in the field of mental health. In addition to its residential program, Riggs also offers a fully online course of treatment for college students and other emerging adults via its Remote Access Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP).

Riggs' mission is to promote resilience and self-direction in those with complex psychiatric problems—to help people take charge of their lives. Its work is grounded in the conviction that an individual's problems are inherently meaningful, that such problems are best understood in a social context, and that treatment leads to a more fulfilling life when the sources of suffering are addressed.

The residential clinical program at Riggs has at its core individual psychotherapy with a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist. Supporting the psychotherapy is an interdisciplinary team of professionals, including nursing staff, social workers, teachers, and experts in psychopharmacology, substance use disorders, and nutrition. A sophisticated Therapeutic Community Program surrounds the individual services, offering opportunities for participation in patient government, in social and recreational activities, and in reflective process groups. Balancing the clinical work is a novel Activities Program in which working artists provide instruction in painting, ceramics, woodworking, theater, and other art forms. Patients can also work in the nursery school, the greenhouse, or in various jobs in the work program. Each person engages with staff to find the combination of services and activities suited to them, and no two treatments are exactly alike.

The IOP builds on the foundation of the Riggs residential treatment, offering a flexible schedule that includes group meetings, individual psychotherapy by doctoral-level therapists, medication management and consultation, family therapy, and partnership with other mental health resources (including school counseling centers).

For more facts and information about the Austen Riggs Center, please visit [www.austenriggs.org](http://www.austenriggs.org)

## Definition of the Community Served

In defining the community to be assessed, Riggs took into account the following facts and circumstances:

- Riggs is licensed as a psychiatric hospital and provides treatment for patients with mental illness.
- Riggs provides clinical care for patients from all over the United States and from other countries.
- Through the work of its Erikson Institute for Education, Research, and Advocacy, the Center provides education, training, and research programs to clinicians throughout the US (and internationally). It also provides education and outreach programs to organizations and clinicians in Berkshire County and the Northeast (defined as New England plus NJ, NY, and PA).
- Riggs also maintains relationships with health and human services agencies located in Berkshire County.

Taking the above considerations into account, Riggs defined and assessed health needs in local, regional, and national communities. The local community encompasses the entirety of Berkshire County, Massachusetts; the regional community includes the New England states, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; and the national community includes all 50 United States. The defined populations within these three communities are comprised largely of patients with complex psychiatric disorders (e.g., multiple co-morbid conditions, severe and persistent psychiatric symptoms, and functional impairment) and the professionals (and organizations) who serve them. Service to these communities includes treatment, education and training, research, and outreach. More specifically:

- While few of the Center's patients come from Berkshire County, the Center offers education and outreach to clinicians and organizations in this local community.
- At the regional level, 62.6% of the Center's patient population is drawn from the Northeast (New England states plus NJ, NY, and PA), and a robust program of education and outreach is provided to clinicians who treat patients with complex psychiatric disorders in the region.
- The national population of patients with complex psychiatric disorders, and the clinicians who treat them, is the broadest, all-encompassing community. This includes the Center's full patient population as well as the population of treaters served through education, training, research, and advocacy efforts.
- Additional information regarding community demographics, identified health needs, and related issues is included in the CHNA report.

# Summary of Significant Community Health Needs

The Austen Riggs Center's 2022 CHNA identified mental health needs unique to each community and needs shared across communities. The CHNA process considered and evaluated a wide range of primary and secondary data sources, including: structured interviews with persons who represent the broad interests of the community and those with expertise in public health; assessments and studies prepared by other organizations regarding local and regional mental health needs; data provided by Riggs regarding patient characteristics; a literature review; and analysis of relevant quantitative indicators regarding mental health status and access to services. The CHNA report determined that eight health priorities are significant in the local, regional, and national communities, as described below. The CHNA report conducted by the Austen Riggs Center is available at [www.austenriggs.org/about/history](http://www.austenriggs.org/about/history).

## Berkshire County

- Youth and young adult suicide prevention
- Treatment for adolescent and adult substance use disorders (prescription drugs [including opioids], alcohol, marijuana, opioids)
- Enhanced access to mental health care services for:
  - low-income populations;
  - populations that historically have experienced inequitable access to services;
  - uninsured or underinsured individuals;
  - those who have experienced childhood or adolescent trauma;
  - children/adolescents;
  - veterans and members of law enforcement with PTSD or other trauma; and
  - other populations whose mental health status worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

## Regional/National Community

- More mental health (and primary care) professionals (including psychiatrists) who are trained in psychodynamic psychotherapy, psychodynamic psychopharmacology, and other evidence-based practices
- Continued development and application of research regarding the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychopharmacology
- Enhanced access to mental health care services for low-income and vulnerable populations, including those who historically have experienced inequitable access to services

- Enhanced awareness regarding the benefits and cost-effectiveness of psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychopharmacology among clinicians, patients, and people at large
- Public policies and advocacy that enhance mental health

## Implementation Strategy to Address Significant Health Needs

This implementation strategy describes how the Austen Riggs Center plans to address the significant community health needs identified in the CHNA. The Center reviewed the CHNA findings and applied the following criteria to determine the most critical and appropriate needs to address:

- the extent to which Riggs has resources and competencies to address the need;
- the impact that Riggs could have on the need (i.e., the number of lives it can impact);
- the frequency with which stakeholders identified the need as a significant priority; and
- the extent of community support for Riggs to address the issue and potential for partnerships to address the issue.

By applying these criteria, Riggs determined that it will address the significant health needs identified by “Y” (for Yes) in the table that follows. Issues identified by “N” (for No) represent issues that Riggs does not plan to address during the 2023-2025 time period. Needs that Riggs plans to address indirectly (e.g., enhanced access to mental health care services for low-income populations) are identified by “I” (for Indirect).

### Significant Community Health Needs Identified in the 2022 CHNA

Significant Community Health Needs Identified in the 2022 CHNA	
<b>Berkshire County</b>	
Youth and young adult suicide prevention;	I
Treatment for adolescent and adult substance use disorders (prescription drugs [including opioids], alcohol, marijuana, opioids);	I
Enhanced access to mental health care services for:	
Low-income populations;	Y
Populations that historically have experienced inequitable access to services;	Y
Uninsured or underinsured individuals;	I
Those who have experienced childhood or adolescent trauma;	I
Children/adolescents;	I
Veterans and members of law enforcement with PTSD or other trauma; and	I
Other populations whose mental health status worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.	I

<b>Regional/National Community</b>	
More mental health (and primary care) professionals (including psychiatrists) who are trained in psychodynamic psychotherapy, psychodynamic psychopharmacology, and other evidence-based practices;	Y
Continued development and application of research regarding the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychopharmacology;	N
Enhanced access to mental health care services for low-income and vulnerable populations, including those who historically have experienced inequitable access to services;	Y
Enhanced awareness regarding the benefits and cost-effectiveness of psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychopharmacology among clinicians, patients, and people at large; and	Y
Public policies and advocacy that enhance mental health.	Y

## Needs that Austen Riggs Plans to Address Directly

It is worth noting that the Austen Riggs Center has made efforts over the past several years to engage with the local Berkshire community more broadly, has provided staff time to volunteer with a number of mental health-focused local organizations, has made generous payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) annually to the town of Stockbridge, and has provided meeting space for several community groups.

At the same time, many Riggs staff members are engaged broadly in regional and national professional organizations related to psychiatry, psychology, social work, and psychiatric nursing. Whether through leadership positions, research, presentations, consultations, or other activities, Riggs aims to bring a psychodynamic perspective to these disciplines in order to advance our collective understanding of and treatment for psychiatric disorders. What follows is a specific–direct, indirect, and not addressed–breakdown of needs assessed, programs in place or planned to address the needs, anticipated impacts, evaluation plans, and planned collaborations.

### Enhanced access to mental health care services for low-income populations and populations that historically have experienced inequitable access to services. (Berkshire County)

To address this need, the Austen Riggs Center will support the following program initiatives:

#### **Remote Access Intensive Outpatient Program**

Riggs launched its Remote Access Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) on November 1, 2021, with several goals in mind. Among them were to bring the fundamental elements of Riggs treatment to a



group of patients from diverse geographic locations in Massachusetts (including Berkshire County), and subsequently New York State, and to offer treatment to people from socio-economic and racial backgrounds that the Riggs residential program has not previously been able to serve in similar numbers.

### **Human Development Initiative**

The Human Development Initiative (HDI) at Austen Riggs, led by staff psychologist Donna Elmendorf, PhD, is dedicated to supporting infant, child, and family mental health in Berkshire County—a rural area characterized by a lack of access to mental health care and critical social health care resources—while also bringing a deeper understanding of the process of human development to educators and clinicians.

Since its inception, the HDI has applied its relational view of early development to a community-based prevention and early intervention model of care through the Southern Berkshire Collaborative Care Team (SBCCT). The HDI is aligned with SBCCT's mission to connect, coordinate, and build strong relationships amongst families, schools, healthcare providers, and a range of social services to support healthy human development and resilience. Riggs' support for this work has included garnering grant support to fund members of the SBCCT Leadership Team and on-going weekly organizational consultation and clinical supervision provided by Dr. Elmendorf who serves on the leadership team.

In addition to supporting the work of the SBCCT, the Austen Riggs Human Development Initiative has continued to work in a partnership with the Yale Child Study Center to bring leading experts in the field of child development, particularly attachment theory, to our local community of providers and educators, who, in our rural area would not have access to such high-quality education. In 2022, the Riggs-Yale Conference on Developmental Psychopathology, Family Process, and Social Context focused on: Repairing Trust and Rebuilding Relationships with All Members of the Community, addressing ways of making meaningful connections with marginalized groups in our community. Close to 100 people attended the conference in 2022 and we anticipate similar enrollment in 2023.

**Anticipated Impact:** IOP—For the years 2023-2025, Riggs plans to explore ways to expand IOP services to these populations in Berkshire County (and other regional areas) through a number of means. Among them are working with insurance providers to secure in-network coverage; seeking support through grants and philanthropy; and offering scholarships and other financial assistance.

HDI—The support offered by the SBCCT has greatly facilitated successful referrals for mental health services for children and families in southern Berkshire County as well as a range of other social supports that can be difficult to access in our rural community. The SBCCT has followed over 240 children and families, leading to 394 referrals, 89% of which were either successful or still in process and significantly increased the number of interdisciplinary team meetings between pediatric providers and school staff. SBCCT leadership met with school administrators, health and wellness leaders, and clinicians to hear current challenges, and establish collaborative partnerships. The team has also devoted time to articulating best practices in care coordination that can serve as a roadmap for implementing similar interventions in other rural communities. Through the HDI, Riggs will continue efforts to strengthen services for young children and their families in our community and beyond, as applicable.

**Evaluation Plan:** The IOP will evaluate its progress in this area using several indices, including aggregated social-economic, demographic, and geographic data pertaining to the patients it serves. The HDI will continue to gather data related to the impact of the work of SBCCT, including numbers of families served, successful referrals, and a range of markers related to school and learning.

**Planned Collaboration:** The IOP will explore more formal collaborative relationships with colleges and universities in Massachusetts and New York. In addition, the director of the IOP will begin serving as director of the annual Riggs College Counseling Conference in 2023. The HDI plans to help SBCCT expand into another school district in Berkshire County in 2023. The Massachusetts legislature has earmarked significant support for this expansion in recognition of the promise of the SBCCT's approach to meeting the needs of at-risk children and their families and other aspects of the project will be supported by additional grants. Riggs will once again partner with the Yale Child Study Center to address the learning needs of clinicians and educators in the local community who work with under-resourced children and families.

**More mental health (and primary care) professionals (including psychiatrists) who are trained in psychodynamic psychotherapy, psychodynamic psychopharmacology, and other evidence-based practices. (Regional/National)**

To address this need, the Austen Riggs Center will support the following program initiatives:

### **Austen Riggs Center Adult Psychoanalytic Training Program and Fellowship in Hospital-Based Psychotherapy**

The Erikson Institute for Research, Education, and Advocacy of the Austen Riggs Center offers post-doctoral Fellowships in psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychoanalytic studies. The Fellowship is four years in duration with a two-year option for psychiatrists. A majority of Fellows stay for the full four years.

### **Educational Programs via the Erikson Institute**

The education and training programs of the Erikson Institute offer many opportunities for learning and application of psychodynamic thought and treatment. Through continuing education offered at conferences and presentations as well as via live and recorded video offerings, the Erikson Institute provides an array of learning programs—from an annual Fall Conference to a regular Friday Night Guest Lecture series—all directed toward an integrated biopsychosocial understanding of psychiatric problems and their familial and social contexts. Continuing education credits are provided for a variety of disciplines (including physicians, psychologists, social workers.) *Please see [www.austenriggs.org/events](http://www.austenriggs.org/events) and [www.austenriggs.org/education](http://www.austenriggs.org/education) for current listings.*

### **Grand Rounds and Presentations**

Members of the clinical staff at Austen Riggs regularly provide Grand Rounds presentations and seminars to teaching hospitals, academic institutions, and professional organizations on a wide range

of topics related to psychodynamic psychotherapy and learning from the patient population. Through the Erikson Institute Riggs staff provide supervision to Cambridge Hospital psychology interns, host two onsite visits for psychology interns, teach in a seminar for child psychiatry fellows at the Yale Child Study Center, and are available for local professional presentations on clinical and research findings.

### **Austen Fox Riggs Library**

A part of the Erikson Institute, the Austen Fox Riggs Library is a useful resource for both Riggs staff members and also other mental health professionals. It houses a collection of over 18,000 items, from psychoanalytic journals to recent psychological texts and special collections with historic significance.

Some of the special collections include:

- **David Rapaport Memorial Library:** This collection of over 2,600 books was donated by Mrs. Elvira Rapaport and contains primary works in the fields of psychoanalysis, philosophy, literature, drama, and poetry. The collection is significant also in the way many books are inscribed to Rapaport by friends, including Otto Fenichel, Karl Menninger, Robert Knight, and Erik Erikson.
- **Chestnut Lodge Library:** In 2014, the Austen Fox Riggs Library was gifted the contents of the former Chestnut Lodge Library, which contains 1,400 items. Chestnut Lodge was a psychiatric hospital providing long-term psychoanalytically oriented treatment in Maryland that closed its doors in 2001.
- **Martin Cooperman, MD, Collection:** This small collection of 70 texts is comprised of works primarily on psychoanalytic technique and social psychology.
- **Otto Allen Will, MD, Collection:** This collection of 440 texts contains works primarily on schizophrenia, existentialist psychology, and suicide.

The library's unique collection is available for use by Riggs staff and mental health professionals (by appointment only) for research use. For more information, please contact the Librarian/Archivist Alison Lotto, at 413.931.5259 or [alison.lotto@austenriggs.net](mailto:alison.lotto@austenriggs.net).

Patients at the Austen Riggs Center, as part of the Riggs Work Program, may apply to work alongside the librarian/archivist and assist in the acquisition, inventory, processing, and organization of materials for the library. Riggs staff members and the general public are granted access to an online, searchable cataloging system.

### **Evelyn Stefansson Nef Scholarship**

Each year, the Erikson Institute awards three \$1,000 scholarships to local graduating high school seniors in Berkshire County. The scholarships are awarded to high school students who have been selected for their academic achievements, pursuit of study in the social sciences or pre-medicine, and their leadership in the community. The scholarships are named in memory of Evelyn Stefansson Nef, an author, lecturer, patron of the arts, philanthropist, Arctic explorer, and psychotherapist, who was a benefactor of Austen Riggs. Riggs has awarded three scholarships per year since 2009 for a total of \$39,000 to students from Lee, Lenox, and Monument Mountain Regional high schools.

## Internships

The Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) Psychology Department and the Erikson Institute have formed an affiliation for the purpose of increasing training opportunities for CHA.

Pre-Doctoral Psychology Interns. This is accomplished through twice-yearly two-day visits of the interns to Riggs and weekly psychotherapy supervision with a senior Riggs therapist. This program has been ongoing since 2014 and numerous interns have participated in this educational offering.

Separately, since 2014 Riggs has hosted 24 research interns from the local community, four of whom were then hired as staff members.

## Psychiatric Resident Elective and Medical Students

The Elective in Psychodynamic Psychiatry is designed to provide medical students with an understanding of how developmental issues and psychodynamics affect not only individual psychology, but also group life, and other aspects of psychiatric practice, such as medication responsiveness. During this elective, students begin to understand the difficulties patients have in maintaining a coherent self and the profound human struggles involved in mental illness. Students also learn about the psychotherapeutic role and deepen their understanding of the importance of psychotherapeutic boundaries.

More advanced students and residents may also focus on learning about psychodynamic approaches to treatment-resistance or the psychodynamics of groups and therapeutic community treatment.

The varied educational experience at Riggs includes

- involvement in the therapeutic community program as participant observers;
- learning about psychotherapy and dynamic formulation;
- learning about the psychodynamics of psychopharmacology;
- a focus on patient's strengths;
- didactic experiences; and
- integration of the whole learning experience through supervision/mentorship by therapy staff.

## Residents Conference

This annual conference, designed for advanced psychiatric residents (PGY3, PGY4, and Fellows), is intended to enhance participants' capacities to work effectively with difficult-to-treat patients through the integration of psychodynamically-informed and patient-centered perspectives into diverse aspects of the patient's care. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes of psychodynamic psychiatry are not only useful in the psychotherapy of patients, but also foster leadership skills for addressing systems enactments in relation to challenging patients and can markedly enhance effectiveness of pharmacotherapy.

**Anticipated Impact:** Austen Riggs anticipates that the above program initiatives will contribute to enhancing the number of professionals trained in psychodynamic psychotherapy, psychodynamic psychopharmacology, and other evidence-based practices in the regional/national community. The

work of professionals trained in these areas has been demonstrated to be effective in addressing patient needs. These professionals themselves also will play a role in educating others in these disciplines.

**Evaluation Plan:** Impacts will be measured by keeping records regarding the number of professionals that Riggs trains. When Riggs conducts another CHNA in 2025, the Center plans to seek input from interviewees and to review updated literature regarding the impacts associated with the specified education programs.

**Planned Collaboration:** As outlined above, Riggs will collaborate with the Cambridge Health Alliance and local human service organizations. Ongoing collaborations with teaching hospitals, academic institutions and professional organizations for Grand Rounds presentations and seminars will continue.

## Enhanced access to mental health care services for low-income and vulnerable populations, including those who historically have experienced inequitable access to services. (Regional/National)

To address this need, the Austen Riggs Center will support the following program initiatives:

### Mental health Outreach for MotherS (MOMS) Partnership Program

Staff Psychologist Dan Knauss, PsyD, ABPP, began participating in the Mental health Outreach for MotherS (MOMS) Partnership Program in December of 2021. The MOMS program is a joint collaboration and research study between the Yale School of Public Health at Yale University in New Haven, CT; Mathematica in Cambridge, MA; and Viability, Inc., in Springfield, MA. The latter community service organization was awarded the opportunity to house the program in Western Massachusetts. The MOMS program is a manualized group intervention program developed by Yale that aims to foster stress management skills in mothers from under-resourced populations. Although the MOMS program has been around and exists in several states, this is the first iteration of it in Western Massachusetts.

Over the course of two years, the program hopes to screen and provide services (half in treatment groups and half in a control group) for 2,000 women. Those in the treatment group meet weekly with a clinician and community mental health assistant (a mother from the community who has a similar background to participants that has received training in implementation of the MOMS program). They walk through a sequential stress management program and learn skills for coping with their daily lives. In addition, they receive support services, referrals and follow-up after graduation at the end of the eight-week group from other members of the Viability team.

Dr. Knauss provides reflective supervision for the clinicians and Community Mental Health Affiliates (CMHA). The weekly hour-long meetings process experiences from the work (both with the moms and with one another) to better understand the nature of the unfolding work. Without using analytic language, they attend to concepts such as the frame, transference-countertransference issues,

systems issues, and attempt sustain a mentalizing stance. In addition, Dr. Knauss has been providing a second reflective supervision hour to the other support staff on the Viability team (childcare workers, intake specialists, and those who work for the “MOMS moving forward” referral service). Lastly, he meets weekly with the collaborative team at Yale, Mathematica, and Viability as they continue to assess the efficacy and rollout of the program.

### **Remote Access Intensive Outpatient Program**

Please refer to the “Enhanced access to mental health care services for low-income populations and populations that historically have experienced inequitable access to services. (Berkshire County)” section above.

### **Human Development Initiative**

Please refer to the “Enhanced access to mental health care services for low-income populations and populations that historically have experienced inequitable access to services. (Berkshire County)” section above.

**Anticipated Impact:** In terms of outcomes for the MOMS collaboration, there will be actual data regarding the efficacy of the program in reducing stress and improving the mental health of participants. The project is also looking at upward mobility as a primary outcome (i.e., employment). See previous sections for IOP and HDI Anticipated Impacts.

**Evaluation Plan:** Mathematica will conduct the data collection and analysis. See previous sections for IOP and HDI Evaluation Plans.

**Planned Collaboration:** The group will comprise the partners mentioned above. Dr. Knauss has no planned end date at present for his participation. The research study is slated to conclude in the summer of 2024; however, Viability plans to continue the MOMS program afterward with their own funding. See previous sections for IOP and HDI Planned Collaborations.

## **Enhanced awareness regarding the benefits and cost-effectiveness of psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychopharmacology among clinicians, patients, and people at large. (Regional/National)**

To address this need, the Austen Riggs Center will support the following program initiatives:

### **Psychodynamic Psychopharmacology**

Psychodynamic psychopharmacology is an approach to pharmacotherapy that explicitly acknowledges the central role of meaning and interpersonal factors in promoting good treatment outcomes. It is informed both by a psychodynamic perspective and by an evidence base that suggests that psychosocial aspects of medications are often more potent than the putative active ingredients of those medications. The psychodynamic perspective emphasizes that meaning can have profound influences on the effects of any intervention, that these meanings are often obscure and require time

and attention to illuminate, that patients' desires from treatment are complex and multilayered, that the doctor-patient relationship can be a powerful tool for healing, and that the doctor, as much as the patient, is vulnerable to succumbing to irrationality in the context of the patients' distress. The evidence base that is incorporated into the treatment model and treatment recommendations emphasizes, among other things, the role of the placebo (and nocebo) effect on treatment outcomes; the role of the patients' desires, expectations, and ambivalence on treatment outcomes; and the potency of the therapeutic alliance, including the role of active engagement of patient preferences in promoting good treatment outcomes and a recognition that patients who experience treatment as disempowering are less likely to benefit from treatment.

In his new book *Psychodynamic Psychopharmacology: Caring for the Treatment-Resistant Patient* (2022, American Psychiatric Association Publishing), Austen Riggs Center Director of Psychiatric Education David Mintz, MD, outlines this approach to help understand the issues at hand and solve the problem of pharmacological treatment resistance to improve care and outcomes for patients who have been labeled "difficult to treat." Dr. Mintz has long written about, presented, and taught on the subject of psychodynamic psychopharmacology and will continue to do so in the coming years.

### **Suicide Research and Education**

The Suicide Research and Education project was launched in June 2016. The purpose of the initiative is to conduct clinical research to help understand risk and protective factors for suicide and to understand how interpersonal interactions are related to suicidal and self-destructive thoughts and actions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a series of new longitudinal studies were launched examining the impact of social distancing on both loneliness and suicide risk in the general public, expanding the scope of this initiative beyond the immediate Riggs patient population and linking the suicide research program to emergent public health crises. Researchers involved in this initiative present findings at regional and national professional conferences and provide education about suicide in the local schools and Berkshire County community forums.

In the past few years this initiative has contributed important empirical findings across a range of clinical topics relevant to suicide prevention and intervention. A seven-year follow-up study of subjects who initially participated in a study of states of mind preceding near lethal suicide attempts showed general trajectories of increased resilience and decreased psychic pain over time. Two externally funded ecological momentary assessment studies (one focusing on the impact of daily social interactions on short-term changes in suicidal thoughts, the other on sleep disturbance and impaired self-regulation on suicidality over time) have brought this initiative into collaboration with leading national research universities and demonstrated the importance of tracking momentary changes in mental health functioning in relation to evolving suicide risk. Finally, as mentioned above, the initiative has expanded to include studies that involve participants beyond the immediate Austen Riggs patient community, in order to better evaluate suicide risk at the general community level in the context of emergent public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Planned projects include a collaboration with researchers at Universidad del Monterrey to evaluate a Spanish version of the Psychic Pain Scale, and community partnerships focused on a new ecological momentary study of suicide risk factors in trans and gender-expansive (TGE) individuals. Katie Lewis, PhD, is also a co-investigator on a pending NIMH grant application for a longitudinal study of social disconnection as a risk factor for suicide in late life.

Dr. Lewis and Jane G. Tillman, PhD, serve as the principal investigator or co-investigator for all studies. Each has also published and presented research findings at local, regional, and national meetings. Dr. Tillman is a regular presenter at Grand Rounds in regional medical centers and at Veteran's Affairs hospitals, in addition to teaching and lecturing at local and national meetings. Dr. Lewis has also presented the findings of her research at national meetings and has served as the keynote speaker and invited guest lecturer at leading national research institutions, including the Mayo Clinic and the Ohio State University Wexler Medical Center.

The Erikson Institute partnered with our local organizations to host a public forum based on the Ken Burns documentary "Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness." Drs. Lewis and Tillman participated in a panel discussion about youth mental health, suicide, access to care, and peer support.

### **Institutional Review Board**

The Austen Riggs Center maintains an Institutional Review Board (IRB) with internal and external members to ensure that any research which involves human subjects is conducted ethically and with the safety of subjects foremost in mind. An important aspect of IRBs is that they include membership and representation from the regional community.

### **Scholarship**

Scholarship at the Center includes empirical, phenomenological, and clinical studies and inter-institutional collaborations. Research labs on self-destructiveness, psychosis, and structural change are underway, some of which are in collaboration with other institutions.

### **The Yale/Riggs Partnership**

The Riggs-Yale partnership has a long and rich history. In recent years, Riggs clinical staff members have taught a spring seminar to Fellows in Child Psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center. Since 2012, the Yale Child Study Center, the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine, and the Erikson Institute have brought together their clinical and research interests to jointly sponsor annual conferences focused on issues related to parenting and child development.

### **Grand Rounds and Presentations**

Members of the clinical staff at Riggs regularly provide Grand Rounds presentations and seminars to teaching hospitals, academic institutions and professional organizations on a wide range of topics related to psychodynamic psychotherapy and learning from the patient population.

### **Austen Fox Riggs Library**

Please refer to the "More mental health (and primary care) professionals (including psychiatrists) who are trained in psychodynamic psychotherapy, psychodynamic psychopharmacology, and other evidence-based practices. (Regional/National)" section above.



## Erikson Scholar Program

This endowed scholar-in-residence program brings scholars to the Center to carry out their research projects in conversation with the clinical staff. Scholars are selected both for the centrality of their theme to the work of the staff and for the potential of that work to enrich and be enriched by interaction with the clinical program. Academicians, clinicians, and other professionals are invited into the clinical and intellectual life of the Center through participation in seminars, lectures, case discussions, and other interdisciplinary activities.

## Hosting of Professional Groups

Austen Riggs provides space for relevant regional organizations to use for their meetings and conferences. Examples include the Western Massachusetts and Albany Association for Psychoanalytic Psychology (WMAAP), the Rapaport-Klein Study Group, the Lacanian Clinical Forum, the Berkshire Psychoanalytic Institute, and the Boston Center for the Study of Groups and Social Systems.

**Anticipated Impact:** As additional professionals, patients, and communities become aware of the benefits of psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychopharmacology, Riggs anticipates that demand for these services will increase—contributing to greater access to quality mental health services over the next few years.

**Evaluation Plan:** When Riggs conducts another CHNA in 2025, the Center plans to seek input from interviewees and to review updated literature to assess the extent to which awareness of the benefits of psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychopharmacology has increased.

**Planned Collaboration:** Collaborations will continue with the Yale Child Study Center, the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine, and with teaching hospitals, academic institutions, and professional organizations on Grand Rounds presentations and seminars. Future collaborations with other organizations are possible.

## Public policies and advocacy that enhance mental health. (Regional/National)

To address this need, the Austen Riggs Center will support the following program initiatives:

### Biopsychosocial Advocacy

Contemporary research strongly supports the biopsychosocial model through evidence demonstrating the importance of both genes and environmental factors like childhood adversity in mental disorders.

In keeping with the biopsychosocial model, psychotherapy plays a crucial role in treatment. There is substantial evidence that several forms of psychotherapy are effective in treating patients with single disorders, complex co-occurring disorders, and so-called “treatment resistant” disorders—and that psychotherapy may be the preferred treatment for people with histories of early adverse life experiences. As such, Riggs’ clinical advocacy encourages a shift away from competition between

schools of therapy toward recognition of a need to define shared elements of psychotherapy associated with change—regardless of school of therapy. Additionally, Austen Riggs seeks to emphasize the importance of psychotherapy as part of the training and practice of psychiatrists.

### **Four Freedoms of Mental Health Award**

There are a number of individuals and organizations already working hard to help those struggling with mental illness, and they deserve to be commended for their work. To that end, the Austen Riggs Center established the Four Freedoms of Mental Health Award to recognize outstanding leadership and advocacy on behalf of accessible, high-quality mental health care in the United States. The Four Freedoms of Mental Health defined by Riggs include:

- Freedom from **stigma**
- Freedom from **dehumanizing treatment**
- Freedom to **pursue recovery**
- Freedom of **access to effective treatment**

The inaugural award was presented in 2019 to Carol Gilligan, PhD, honoring “her work to deepen our understanding of humanity and to promote a culture that values human relationships, trust, and empathy”; and Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT), saluting “his leadership in the U.S. Senate on mental health issues and his advocacy for access to medically necessary treatment.”

### **Austen Riggs Erikson Prize for Excellence in Mental Health Media**

Initiated in 2010, Riggs presents this prize annually to recognize media professionals, including journalists, writers, and others who create exemplary work that contributes to a deeper understanding of and greater public awareness about mental health issues. An awards event is open to the public and education about various issues related to mental health occurs through a short presentation by the winner of the prize and a discussion with Riggs’ staff and audience questions.

### **Providing Resources and Supporting Other Advocacy Groups**

Riggs will continue its practice of leading and supporting advocacy efforts through initiatives such as creating, promoting, and providing letter templates for clinicians to assist their patients and family members to secure insurance coverage and coordinating with and collaborating with other leading advocacy organizations such as the Kennedy Forum, the Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN), the National Association of Behavioral Health (NABH), the American Association of Community Psychiatrists (AACCP), the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to enhance access to care that pursues recovery, rather than mere crisis stabilization. Riggs staff will also participate in several regional and national professional groups such as the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association as well as offer consultation to litigation to implement parity and increase access to care or provide education about insurance appeals.

**Anticipated Impact:** The efforts above, plus others Riggs will develop over the course of the implementation period, are expected to increase public awareness of critical issues pertaining to mental health treatment and public policy as well as provide much-needed resources.

**Evaluation Plan:** Riggs will evaluate impact through several means, including tracking initiatives and new partnerships; the creation and distribution of new resources; presentations and publications related to this topic; and changes in public policies and regulations that enhance the provision of mental health services.

**Planned Collaboration:** Riggs plans to continue collaborations with other leading advocacy organizations such as the Kennedy Forum, the Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN), the National Association of Behavioral Health (NABH), the American Association of Community Psychiatrists (AACP), the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to enhance access to care that pursues recovery, rather than mere crisis stabilization.

## Needs that Austen Riggs Plans to Address Indirectly

For each of the needs identified below, the Austen Riggs Center will continue offer a limited number of scholarships (to attend Riggs-sponsored educational programs) to local human service organizations whose missions align with these needs. Criteria will be established for these scholarships. Riggs will also consider making charitable community benefit grants to organizations that serve these populations.

### Youth and young adult suicide prevention (Berkshire County)

To address this need, the Austen Riggs Center will support the following program initiatives:

#### Local Organization Collaborations

In addition to Riggs' financial support of many of these groups, Riggs staff members coordinate local outreach efforts with groups such as:

Berkshire Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): Austen Riggs has been a key participant in the Out of the Darkness Community Walks in Berkshire County since its inception in 2015. Riggs staff members chaired or co-chaired these walks since 2019 and the "Stockbridge Stompers" team raised over \$65,000 between 2019-2022.

Berkshire Coalition for Suicide Prevention (BCSP): Riggs staff members have served in various BCSP roles for several years, including president and board positions.

Berkshire County National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) chapter: The Center participates in the annual Cupcake Wars fundraiser as well as NAMI Walks and contributes to the sponsorship of the annual county-wide suicide prevention conference.

Berkshire International Film Festival (BIFF): Through the Erikson Institute, Riggs works with BIFF to sponsor and organize films, presentations, and panels on topics related to mental health.

**Anticipated Impact:** Riggs' ongoing support of the AFSP, BSCP, Berkshire County NAMI, and BIFF contributes to those organizations' overall missions related to addressing suicide and other mental health issues among youth and other age groups.

**Evaluation Plan:** Riggs and its involved staff members will be in regular dialogue with the groups regarding needed support and resources.

**Planned Collaboration:** Riggs will continue to support staff involvement and sponsorships in the organizations listed above as well as explore new opportunities to work with groups that share common goals and missions.

## Treatment for adolescent and adult substance use disorders (prescription drugs [including opioids], alcohol, marijuana, opioids) (Berkshire County)

To address this need, the Austen Riggs Center will support the following program initiatives:

### College Counseling Service Conference

In the last several years, college counseling services across the country have seen an increase in the number of students seeking treatment, an increase in the range and severity of student problems, and a broadening of the role they play in students' lives. Since 2002 Riggs has been collaborating with the regional college counseling service network to deliver programs and consultation on the issues affecting college age students—from substance use to psychiatric problems. In 2023, Spencer Biel, PsyD, the director of the Center's Remote Access Intensive Outpatient Program, which treats college students and young adults, took the lead position in organizing this event.

### Consultation to Local Youth and Mental Health Organizations

Local community agencies such as the Railroad Street Youth Project (RSYP) and the local schools periodically turn to the Erikson Institute for consultation and/or specific educational programs related to parenting, suicide prevention education, youth mental health, or access to care issues. The Erikson Institute collaborates with requests for expert consultation and education. In 2022 staff participated in a discussion with parents in the local community about how to provide support to teens who have peers contending with serious mental health issues, or mental health challenges themselves.

**Anticipated Impact:** College Counseling Service Conference—With the need for mental health services on campuses projected to keep increasing, this conference and ensuing relationships that stem from it are intended to provide much-needed knowledge and resources for colleges.

Consultation to Local Youth and Mental Health Organizations—These engagements aim to foster discussions among parents and teens about mental illness emerging in youth and the parental and community supports needed to address mental health issues.

**Evaluation Plan:** College Counseling Service Conference—Riggs will gather feedback from participants regarding the effectiveness of the conferences as well as keep track of salient initiatives that arise from the conferences.

Consultation to Local Youth and Mental Health Organizations—Riggs will gather feedback from participants regarding the effectiveness of the consultations as well as keep track of salient initiatives that arise from the consultations.

**Planned Collaboration:** College Counseling Service Conference—The Center will continue collaborations with existing partners and look for opportunities to include new colleges and universities.

Consultation to Local Youth and Mental Health Organizations—Riggs will continue partnerships with local agencies to provide education about youth and emerging adult mental health issues. These partnerships are informal, ongoing, and mobilized on an ad hoc basis, particularly when a local crisis occurs, or ongoing concerns about substance use, suicide, depression, or other mental health issues arise in the schools and local community.

**Enhanced access to mental health care services for: Uninsured or underinsured individuals; those who have experienced childhood or adolescent trauma; children/adolescents; veterans and members of law enforcement with PTSD or other trauma; and other populations whose mental health status worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Berkshire County)**

To address this need, the Austen Riggs Center will support the following program initiatives:

### **Human Development Initiative**

Please refer to the “Enhanced access to mental health care services for low-income populations and populations that historically have experienced inequitable access to services. (Berkshire County)” section above.

### **Mental health Outreach for MotherS (MOMS) Partnership Program**

Please refer to the “Enhanced access to mental health care services for low-income and vulnerable populations, including those who historically have experienced inequitable access to services. (Regional/National)” section above.

### **College Counseling Service**

Please refer to the “Treatment for adolescent and adult substance use disorders (prescription drugs [including opioids], alcohol, marijuana, opioids) (Berkshire County)” section above.

## Fee Reductions

Fee reductions include operating revenue, income from the patient aid endowment fund as well as annual donations restricted to patient aid support. In the residential program, on average, 20-30% of patients benefit from fee reductions that total approximately \$500,000/year. In the past 20 years, more than 500 patients have received support. Patients in the remote access IOP for college students and emerging adults are treated within their existing insurance coverage and/or with steep discounts.

**Anticipated Impact:** Austen Riggs anticipates that the above program initiatives will help individuals and organizations who are working to address mental health needs of low-income populations and of psychiatrists and other mental health professionals in the Local/Regional/National Community.

**Evaluation Plan:** Impacts will be measured by documenting the Center's work to implement the above initiatives. Riggs also will seek written evaluations from program participants regarding the benefits of their participation in conferences and other education and training provided to clinicians. Riggs also will request that Berkshire County organizations that have received cash and/or in-kind donations (e.g., the time devoted by Riggs staff) provide feedback regarding the impact of donations provided.

**Planned Collaboration:** Collaboration with regional college and university counseling programs will continue, as will collaborations with graduate training programs and other local community organizations.

## Needs that the Austen Riggs Center Will Not Address

No entity can address all the health needs present in its community. The Austen Riggs Center is committed to serving the community by adhering to its mission, using its skills and capabilities, and remaining a strong organization so that it can continue to provide a wide range of community benefits. This implementation strategy does not include specific plans to address the following health priorities that were identified in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment:

Continued development and application of research to further understanding of psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychopharmacology in regional/national community (Regional/National)

# Implementation Strategy Adoption

The Board of Trustees of the Austen Riggs Center reviewed and adopted this plan at its January 28, 2023 meeting.