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Mental Health Patients Turning to Last Resorts for Help

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By Marie Waxel [CONNECT](#)

FLORENCE, AL (WAFF) - With violent attacks across the Nation and Alabama Lawmakers threatening to cut funding from the state's mental health budget, mental health advocates say these attacks could happen right here at home.

The lack of funding has caused big problems and major backlogs with the state's mental health system. So much, that people are turning to last resort measures to get help. Mental Health Advocates say they believe it will take a horrific event like we've seen in other states before lawmakers will do their part to better the system.

In the meantime, emergency room staff across the state are the ones left to pick up the pieces.

"The unexpected is expected in the emergency department," says Kevin Bowling who knows all too well the importance of staying on your toes in the ER. Often times when people aren't getting help from other parts of the community, they turn to the ER as their last resort.

"As with any other issue that comes up medically across the United States the ER becomes a safety net for everything," Bowling says, "the fact that it is psychiatric care versus something else is not strange, we have seen a little bit of an uptick in our numbers for those patients that we serve here in the past few months."

With the backlog in care at facilities like Riverbend in Florence, more and more patients are getting pushed to their limits.

According to Bowling, "If someone comes in suicidal or homicidal we render care here and then get them the psychiatric help they need, even if that means admitting them overnight or sending them to another facility to for specialized treatment."

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