

Impact of Out-of-State Pediatric Behavioral Health Patients at Primary Children's Hospital

The following data provides an overview of the impact that out-of-state pediatric patients have on Primary Children's Hospital's behavioral health inpatient units.

- Primary Children's served 169 out-of-state children in 2024 in its behavioral health inpatient units.
 - This represents 9% of total pediatric behavioral health inpatient stays.
- The average length of stay for out-of-state patients was 30% longer.
- A total of 1,677 patient days were attributed to out-of-state children.
 - This accounts for 12% of total patient days, which could have been used to serve 218 Utah children (about 18 children per month).
- Inpatient pediatric behavioral health beds are a very limited resource in the state of Utah.
 - Primary Children's operates 53 beds.
- At Primary Children's, the Medicaid payer mix was statistically significantly higher for out-of-state children in the inpatient behavioral health units:
 - 43.45% Medicaid for out-of-state children, compared to 35.49% Medicaid for Utah children.

March 3, 2025
Paris Hilton Written Testimony
Attn: House Health and Human Services Committee
Re: Support of S.B.297

Dear Chairman Bolinder, Vice Chair Hall, and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

The first time I ever testified on a piece of legislation was before the Utah Legislature in 2021. I was so nervous, but I knew I had to speak my truth. I shared my deeply personal and vulnerable story not just as Paris Hilton, but as a survivor—one of the thousands of children who suffered abuse in Utah's residential treatment facilities as a child. Sharing my story was one of the hardest things I've ever done, but looking back, it was also one of the most healing. I didn't know what to expect, but I will never forget how the Utah legislature listened, how you cared, and how this body took action.

Because of your committee's leadership, S.B.127 became law, marking the beginning of real reform. That moment proved that change is possible. But as we've learned over the past four years, our work is unfortunately far from over. Since that time, more children have suffered, more families have been devastated, and tragically, more young lives have been lost. The very concerns raised in 2021—that S.B.127 might not go far enough—have proven true. The truth is, we now have more information and transparency because of S.B. 127, and with that knowledge comes responsibility. We must act swiftly and decisively to close the gaps that continue to put children in residential treatment facilities in grave danger.

That is why I am supporting S.B.297, a bill that builds on the foundation we laid in 2021 and strengthens protections for the most vulnerable. One of the most critical pieces of this legislation is the Congregate Care Admissions Committee, which will ensure that only programs that meet clear, evidence-based safety standards are allowed to operate in Utah. If these protections had been in place when I was a teenager, I and so many others could have been spared unimaginable suffering.

Another crucial measure is implementing minimum admissions criteria. This bill makes sure that children are placed only in facilities that are equipped to meet their specific needs—prioritizing real treatment and safety rather than exposing them to neglect, abuse, and senseless death as in the cases of Biruk Silvers, Taylor Goodridge and hundreds of others.

I am so grateful to continue this fight, alongside this dedicated Committee. Passing S.B.297 is a chance to save lives, protect families, and ensure that no child ever experiences the trauma I endured. We cannot afford to wait.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to keeping children safe,

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized capital 'P' followed by the word 'Paris' in a cursive script.

Paris Hilton