

PINE REST PEDIATRIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Grand Rapids, Michigan



Pine Rest's Pediatric Behavioral Health Center was developed in response to the growing mental health crisis among children and adolescents across Michigan. Conceived as a comprehensive expansion of pediatric behavioral health services, the new center brings together inpatient and outpatient care while supporting specialized programs for autism, eating disorders, and substance use. Rippe Associates joined the project through its established relationship with BWBR, collaborating with the design and operations teams to create a foodservice program centered on healing, comfort, nutrition, and choice. The Phase I scope encompasses a 3,031-square-foot production kitchen, 740-square-foot retail café, dining space, and two serving pantries within the new facility.

With three 22-bed inpatient units and provisions for future expansion, the foodservice operation needed to balance efficiency with the security and sensitivity required in a pediatric behavioral health environment. Rippe strategically located the primary inpatient serving pantry adjacent to the kitchen, creating a direct path for prepared food and soiled dish return while minimizing staff travel. The double-sided pantry incorporates two secure serving windows to serve adjacent 20-seat dining rooms from one centralized location.

Details

Opening Date: March 2026

Equipment Cost: \$900,000

Servery: 740 SF

Dining Area: 913 SF

BOH: 3,031 SF

Scope

Foodservice design for Phase I of the new Pediatric Behavioral Health Center, including the main production kitchen, retail café, and two 250-square-foot serving pantries supporting inpatient dining and meal service.

This configuration supports efficient meal delivery and collection while maintaining appropriate separation between production, service, and dish return functions.

Flexibility was equally important in the retail café, which was designed to transition throughout the day as service needs change. In the morning, the operation supports coffee, breakfast sandwiches, pastries, beverages, and grab-and-go selections; later, the same space transitions to deli and pizza service. Refrigerated merchandising, warming and cooking equipment, hot wells, and beverage systems were selected to align with this varied menu while maintaining food quality and operational efficiency. Infrastructure and space were also incorporated for a future made-to-order grill, allowing Pine Rest to expand its offerings as demand grows without requiring significant renovation.

Beyond traditional foodservice, the project reflects Pine Rest's family-centered approach to behavioral health care. Outpatient programming includes dedicated dining and pantry support as well as a teaching kitchen equipped with residential-style appliances to facilitate nutrition education, therapeutic programming, and practical life-skills training. Together, these elements reinforce the project's broader goal of making food an integral part of a nourishing, supportive environment, one that provides choice and comfort while helping patients and families translate healthy behaviors beyond the facility and back to the family table.

