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## **OCHN adds retention bonus to mental health workforce crisis response**

**OAKLAND COUNTY, MI (March 8, 2022)** – Behavioral health clinical and direct professional staff shortages that were a concern before COVID-19 have since evolved into an urgent issue, sparking an immediate response from Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN).

In addition to OCHN's hourly wage increase pilot program for direct support professionals, the organization is now offering retention bonuses for these critical healthcare workers. The retention compensation is also available to all current full-time and part-time staff who were employed by a contracted OCHN service provider on January 1, 2022.

"I am committed to being responsive to and supportive of the people we serve and their family members who have been personally impacted by the national employment crisis," says OCHN Executive Director and CEO, Dana Lasenby. "The clinical and direct support staff within Oakland County's behavioral health service delivery system provide specialized behavioral healthcare services deserving of respect, which includes earning appropriate wages and an incentive bonus."

Former employees who are not currently employed by an OCHN contracted provider organization are not eligible for the retention payment. Employees hired after January 1, 2022, are eligible for retention payment after ninety (90) days of continuous employment with an OCHN network service provider organization. Contract employees are not eligible for the bonus.

OCHN is developing a provider survey to identify full-time and part-time staff who qualify for the retention payment, as well as to determine the compensation amount to be disbursed.

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“This ambitious, incentive-based program will help protect critical, community-based behavioral health services for Oakland County residents, especially for people living with developmental or intellectual disabilities, mental health challenges, and substance use disorders,” adds Lasenby. “The long-term, network employment of clinical and direct care workers is essential for people to lead self-directed, inclusive lives.”

Individuals interested in pursuing a career path in this rewarding human service industry can visit OCHN’s website at [oaklandchn.org](http://oaklandchn.org) and select the Careers link under the Contact OCHN tab.

### **About OCHN**

OCHN leads a provider service network that assists approximately 23,000 Oakland County citizens at more than 300 service sites across the county. People who receive public mental health services through OCHN's provider network include those who have an intellectual or developmental disability, mental health challenge, or substance use disorder. The majority of these individuals have Medicaid insurance coverage.

OCHN's goal is to ensure these individuals are aware of and have access to services and supports that will improve their health and quality of life, as well as ensure their engagement in full community participation. Its mission to “inspire hope, empower people, and strengthen communities” reflects an unyielding belief in a "Valuable System for Valued People." Programs and supports provided by OCHN's service network are available at [www.oaklandchn.org](http://www.oaklandchn.org).

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