

Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: August 20, 2025 9:30-11:30am
 Location: Teams Virtual /Call-In
 Facilitator: Diane Sansalone, Chairperson
 Liaison: Linda Bartaloni-Till, OCHN Customer Services Manager
 Scribe: Jessica Space, OCHN Customer Service Support Specialist
 Desired Results: **Teamwork toward achieving committee goals.**



Present: **Adrienne Gasperoni**, Community Housing Network; **Amelia Jacobs**, CLS-OC; **Chakusola Guinn**, Easterseals; **Chris Wright**, My Place Center for Wellness; **Christie Kay**, ARC Oakland County; **Christina Root**, OCHN Board; **Diane Sansalone**, Common Ground; **Glenda Vidosh**, Oakland Family Services; **James Helstowski**, FAIR Drop-In Center; **Matthew Fritzen**, Easterseals MORC; **Nancy Diane Carter**, OCHN CEEC; **Pam Casper**, CNS Healthcare; **Paulette Howell**, New Horizons; **Renee Bacci**, TTI; **Steve Ludwig**, JARC; **Tammy Wallace**, Our House Clubhouse; **Verdrina Mathews**, Member At-Large; **Victoria Peterson**, Member At-Large
Absent: **Cheryl Patel**, OCHN CAC Member At-Large; **Lloyd Austin**, Member At-Large; **Lois Shulman**, Member At-Large; **Malkia Newman**, CNS Empowerment Team; **Suzanne Serlin-Resnick**, Member At-Large; **Zach Cardinell**, Member At-Large
Guests:

	Agenda Item	Presented By	Discussion
I	<p>Welcome to Members, Guests</p> <p>Approval of Agenda and Minutes</p>	<i>Diane Sansalone, CAC Chair</i>	The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am. Roll call attendance was taken by J. Space. A. Jacobs motioned to approve August 2025’s agenda and R. Bacci seconded the agenda. M. Fritzen motioned to approve the minutes from July 2025 and was seconded by S. Ludwig.
II	Public Comment / Announcements	Members & Guests	D. Sansalone reminded the CAC members that there will not be a September CAC meeting and that the October 15, 2025, CAC meeting will be in person as well as virtual. She also announced that Glenda Vidosh won the Hope Giver Award at the awards banquet for the Your Voice, Your Value Event. There are new phone numbers for OCHN Customer Service and Recipient Rights. Customer Service is 888-847-0513 and Recipient Rights is 248-975-9578.

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III	<p>New Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of Access 	<p><i>Tradina Taylor, OCHN Director of Access</i></p>	<p>Access is in the Resource and Crisis Center at 1200 N Telegraph Rd, 32E, Pontiac MI. The walk in hours is Monday through Friday and that is 8:00 AM to 3:30, and the phones are on until 8:00 PM. The phone number is 248-464-6363. Access is the front door to Oakland County residents that are seeking services for mental health, intellectual and/or developmental disability, and substance use disorders. The team includes 41 staff, and there are multiple departments within a larger team. Our chief is Kim Flowers and Tradina is the director. They have 12 clinicians/screeners, 4 people on the MH school navigator team, 1 social work intern, three community clinicians, 8 referral specialists, 2 support staff/administration staff, 1 data/project t evaluator, 2 RISE care managers, 2 veteran navigator/Peer, 4 leadership, and 1 SEDW coordinator.</p> <p>Access has been working on expansion in the past year and wanted to be in other places other than on the phone and in Pontiac. So, they now have the 360 Care Center, a Southfield Health Department Screener, and they also had a SUD jail screener but unfortunately when April first came, there were some changes in the funding, and they had to pivot quickly and that grant was basically removed from them. The other thing they want to do is continue to increase mental health, school engagements and family served across Oakland County. They continue to see that there is a need for behavior health services.</p> <p>The total number of calls for FY was 41,519, FY 2023 was 38,223, and FY 2022 was 35,558. Year-to-date comparison shows that call volume to Access has increased by 9% compared to the same time last year. The total of individuals found clinically eligible of persons screeded was 7,706 for FY 2024, 7,636 for FY 2023, and 6,674 for 2022.</p>
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			<p>The mental health school navigators from October 2024 – August 2025 have done 58 school/community events and presentations, 946 family/student referrals, and 235 families/students connected to resources.</p> <p>The year-to-date total veteran referrals have also increased 8% compared to the same time last year. FY 2024 was 199, FY 2023 was 185, and FY 2022 was 176.</p> <p>The RISE center (recovery, information, support, and education) is a community hub for welcoming and providing resources, support and engagement. It promotes ongoing wellness and stability for those navigating recovery and helps community members access benefit information and services provided by a skilled care manager. Wellness and stability and help community members access the benefits that they are entitled to. From April 2024 to 2025 there were 2477 people that were served, 746 were unhoused resources and 522 were Medicaid applications or redetermination requests.</p> <p>Behavior Health Clinicians (BHC) are embedded in the Oakland County Health Department (Southfield), and Honor Community Health (Pontiac), as well as medical health clinics in Oakland 360 Care Center. BHC's provide OCHN service screenings, resources for individuals who may not be eligible or interested in OCHN level services and talk therapy to individuals in need of immediate support. M. Fritzen asked how many people they have answering the phones. Tradina stated they have seven answering the phones and one person at the front desk for walk in, so eight people total manning Access calls. Matt stated that it doesn't seem like a lot of people for such a lot of calls. Tradina stated that there are very busy times and other times that it is not so high volume.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical Pathway Renaming 	<p><i>Amanda Palmer, OCHN Utilization Management Clinical Analyst</i></p>	<p>Amanda stated that she presented last year to this group on Zero suicide, but in case anybody doesn't recall, here at OCHN we follow the practice of zero suicide, which means that it's the belief in practice that all suicide deaths are preventable, and so we do this through our policies and procedures, we do this with our training efforts and with how we interact in the community. And so, one of the things we've been working on this year is really revising what we call our clinical pathway for suicide care, which is a big, long title. Basically, what it means is those individuals who are in services who are identified as being at risk for suicide, and who may need some extra support during that time are connected to additional services. They're getting things like weekly therapy, they're getting more contact with their case manager, they are seeing psychiatry, their natural support, so people in their life, friends, family, whoever they identify that they would like to be involved in their treatment is then involved in their treatment. What we've been doing is really looking at that clinical pathway protocol and how that's written and really trying to make it a little easier for providers to follow, make it more person-centered for the people we serve and really just simplify it all around. So, one of the things that we were looking at is the name and when we talk about the clinical pathway, that's kind of a very eclectic clinical term, it's intimidating, it's not very person centered and if a clinician is describing this to a person served and using that title, it's not really inviting them in to engage in that service. So, we're looking to rename that. We got some wonderful suggestions from our OCHN staff, and we had about 20 different suggestions that came through and we've narrowed them down to 5. Amanda wanted to bring those five names to this group today and get some perspective on what the CAC members think is the best option for that name and get a vote on</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credentialing 	<p><i>Kayla Gerhardt, OCHN Provider Network Analyst</i></p>	<p>it. Amanda put a form in the chat to vote on it. The five names that we've narrowed it down to are: SAFE (Support Access for Emotional Wellness), Light Ahead, Stronger Tomorrow, Pathway to Hope, and Safe Space Safe Mind. Amanda will send the link to Linda and Jessica to email members, and voting will be open until Friday. V. Peterson stated that she liked the first one because it was easy to remember and says exactly what it does. C. Guinn stated that she also likes the first one and thinks it is easy to remember and the last one. D. Sansalone likes the first one because it is an easy to remember acronym and safe space, safe mind says exactly what it is. A. Jacobs stated that she likes the first one as well as it is easy to remember.</p> <p>Only one camp left that is going through credentialing, everyone else is credentialed. For self-determination there are still quite a few being added. They have found that some of the providers that are in for self-determination have decided they want to contract with us, so they are going through that process as well. We have two additional 3rd party transportation providers being credentialed and we have four new residential and CLS providers being credentialed and we just added Camp Grace Bentley, and they will continue to be open throughout the year. The goal is to be open for two weekends a month, one weekend for children and one for adults for anyone who has respite needs.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Report 	<p><i>Suzanne Weinert, Director, Communications & Community Outreach</i></p>	<p>Your Voice, Your Value was earlier this month. It's an opportunity to honor the individuals with their achievement awards and the peer awards and that is just such a highlight for the event, but it was also an opportunity to design highlight groups such as CAC. Thank you so much Diane and Linda for giving a great highlight for this work group. It was a great opportunity to highlight all the important work of all of our work groups as well as honor those individuals for their peer and achievement awards. So that was held on the 5th. I also wanted to mention we hosted a town hall earlier this week on Monday it had a number of speakers and a number of people in attendance. We had probably around 75 people in attendance in person, and then we had almost 200 people online attending. We had a lot of speaking about Kevin Fisher from NAMI as well as Hannah from the national NAMI office who does a lot of advocacy work and presented on some of the national issues related to the Big Beautiful bill and Medicaid. And then we had a couple providers, we had Deirdre from Therapeutics as well as Jenny from Dutton Farm to give us some perspective from our provider network, and we had a Peer from the alliance, Pepper Cat. She did a fabulous job sharing her story and the importance of the public health system as well as Amit. Amit is always, always does a great job. He's one of our OCN trainers and he was the host the Your Voice, Your Value event. He spoke last night at the Board Meeting and for the Stories that Inspire Hope. We heard from a lot of different people, individuals as well as a lot of people in the audience. I just wanted to kind of reiterate the importance of advocacy. OCHN does have an advocacy page. It's oaklandchn.org/advocacy. Make sure you go to that page, and we put on there to call/ contact Governor Whitmer and let her know that we want to keep the public system both public and local. So, I encourage you to make phone calls to her</p>
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			<p>office, send messages. You can mail something to her if you like. That information is on that page so that you can do that. We will be posting the recording from the town hall that should be posted today. If you weren't able to join us, then you can view those and I encourage you to take a look at it, it was very engaging. The Walk-A-Mile Rally is on Wednesday, September 17th. It's going to be at the State Capital from 12:00 to 3:00, and this is yet another opportunity for your voice to be heard. You can join us at the rally, and I think that that it speaks volumes when we're in numbers like that. Letting legislators know, it gives you an opportunity to catch some legislators as they're milling about and they're going in and out of the Capital Building to let them know that you want to make sure the public behavioral system stays both local and public. We are providing transportation, but space is limited. I believe we still have some space available if you need to if you want to join us on the bus. These are our locations that we're picking up at; In the north area, it's CNS Healthcare in Waterford and then in the south end of town, it's going to be at our building here in Troy. I want to also mention our Annual Recovery Celebration is on Friday, September the 19th is going to be in the parking lot of the Troy Building from 11:00 to 1:30. Bryce the Third is going to be our featured performer. I also wanted to mention that the NAMI walk is on Saturday, September the 20th and it's going to be located at University of Detroit Mercy at 9:00 AM.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director’s Report 	<p><i>Dana Lasenby, Executive Director/CEO, OCHN</i></p>	<p>July marks two significant observances at Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) that highlight the importance of equity, inclusion, and visibility: Minority Mental Health Awareness Month and Disability Pride Month. Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, established in honor of advocate Bebe Moore Campbell, draws attention to the unique mental health challenges faced by communities of color. Systemic inequalities, cultural stigma, and reduced access to care continue to impact mental well-being among Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and other marginalized groups. It is a call to action for more inclusive, culturally competent mental health care. At the same time, Disability Pride Month recognizes the contributions, identities, and rights of people with disabilities. It is a celebration of diversity, and a reminder that disability is an important part of human experience. This month also commemorates the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in July 1990 — a landmark moment for civil rights. Both observances remind us that inclusion is not optional — it is essential. Mental health and disability justice must be integrated into our policies, programs, and everyday practices. By acknowledging these identities and addressing intersecting barriers, we move closer to a society where every person can thrive with dignity and support. As part of our broader commitment to mental health and diversity, equity, and inclusion, we recognize the importance of creating spaces where everyone feels seen, heard, and supported — both emotionally and culturally. OCHN remains committed to connecting individuals with essential behavioral health services. Our Access Team makes timely service eligibility determinations and links individuals to critical community resources. Through a robust network of contracted providers, OCHN offers crisis and support services for</p>
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			<p>individuals with Medicaid, Medicare, the Healthy Michigan Plan, private insurance, or underinsured. These services include: • Crisis Intervention • Crisis Stabilization • Crisis Residential Services • Pre-Admission Review for Psychiatric Hospitalization Authorization • Local management of Common Ground (988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline). To continually raise awareness about the vital work being done every day, OCHN educates advocates and the community about the overall system. We want to reinforce the importance of the Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan (PIHP), which plays a crucial role in supporting children, adults, and families dealing with mental health issues, substance use, and developmental disabilities. These services are community-based, person-centered, and provided at no cost to qualifying individuals. OCHN continues to support substance use disorder treatment through grant-funded initiatives. In June, 26 underinsured individuals received necessary SUD services, bringing the YTD total to 223 individuals. OCHN hosted its annual Minority Mental Health Awareness Month event on Thursday, July 10, 2025, focusing on generational and cultural wellness. The special event titled “Hope is My Superpower: A Look at Mental Wellness Across Generations and Cultures”, highlighted the intersection of culture, generational experiences, and mental wellness, aiming to break down stigma and encourage open conversations around mental health in diverse communities. The event featured a dynamic youth panel who shared personal stories and insights about how cultural backgrounds shape their views and experiences with mental health. An informative presentation about cognitive wellness empowering individuals to invest in themselves for the future. Resiliency and how culture influences emotional well-being and perceptions of mental health were another key topic. Attendees also participated in</p>
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			<p>interactive identity chart Kene Oden, OCHN Support Specialist and Amelia Jacobs, OCHN Ambassador OCHN Director’s Report July 2025 p.4 mapping, a guided activity that encourages reflection on the many aspects of identity and how they relate to mental wellness. This was truly an impactful event with amazing speakers, important resources, conversations. and rich Student Panel at the Minority Mental Health Event on 7/10/25 ViewFest 2025 Mental Health Walk and Celebration was held on Sunday, July 13th at the Detroit Zoo. Almost 3,000 participants attended with over 200 sponsors and almost 300 community organizations represented. The Viewfest is the largest mental health festival in the world. OCHN was an event sponsor and vendor during the event and OCHN President CEO Dana Lasenby provided remarks during the festival. Attendees were able to connect to behavioral health resources, talk with experts, and receive informative and educational information from vendors.</p>
IV	Old Business – Provider & Committee Reports	Christina Root, OCHN Board	<p>We did have our general meeting last night and we had about an hour’s worth of public comment. The public comment focused on concerns about direct care worker pay issue. It sounds like there's a lot of pieces in the puzzle to the issue and I did ask the CEO, Dana to provide the board and the public with some more information to explain what's going on. Rough summary, it's an issue with Direct care workers within the system being told that their hourly pay is being changed and other payment issues happening. It's connected to CLS. I know Dana did say last night in the meeting that she was going to gather staff this morning to discuss this issue. We also voted</p>

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		<p>Adrienne Gasperoni, Community Housing Network</p> <p>Amelia Jacobs, Community Living Services</p> <p>Chakusola Guinn, (Vice Chairperson) Easterseals</p>	<p>on a few contracts. I believe it was about four contracts. We voted to reappoint a member of the Recipient Rights Committee.</p> <p>Community Housing Network has an upcoming fundraiser in October that helps provide services and support for people that are moving from being homeless to being homed. The theme is 80's night. There will be dinner, live music and encourage people to dress up like in the 80's.</p> <p>Consumers have complained to us about the salary cuts that are being implemented on their Direct care staff. There was a large contingent of Consumers at the board meeting last night, and they voiced their opinion directly to the board</p> <p>Also, some codes have not been put in the system yet for 25-26 this year which is making it very difficult to write up plans. This was said to me via the director who has heard from some independent support coordinators that they are having an issue with this.</p> <p><u>July 2025 Report</u></p> <p>The Easter Seals MORC met virtually on July 9th, 2025. We had 2 presentations from Claire H. for IT (Information Technology) and Ken Searcy for Peer Support Services. The first presentation was from the IT (Information Technology) department. It had several updates which include the completion of its electronic records merger between Easter Seals and MORC. Services are also improving for staff</p>
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			<p>and people served by moving from telehealth services from eVisit and Zoom to Mend. Staff will also start using ELOS (I don't know what it stands for) for clinical documentation by simplifying processing progress notes. ELOS is an AI program that will reduce staff overtime, which will increase time spent with clients. It was piloted in 2023 and was officially launched in 2024. It's important to note that ELOS only listens and processes (maybe speech to text?) but it doesn't store any information. Easter Seals will also move for the traditional landline to Teams. The Easter Seals national organization has launched their redesigned website. They did a soft launch in November 2024. Easter Seals MORC of Michigan was one of the stats that took part in the soft launch. The website was fully launched this past April 2025. The Peer Support Service presentation gave an overview of the various ways peers help at Easter Seals. They not only meet people in the community, but they also run groups, etc. We also had an open forum by which members discussed the potential effects of the recent budget passage and the risk it poses to services.</p> <p><u>August 2025 Report</u></p> <p>The Easter Seals MORC CAC met virtually on August 13th, 2025. We had 3 presentations. The first presentation by Lindsay Calatera answered on how the "Big Beautiful Bill" will affect access to all programs and services. The budget lasts for 10 years. All Medicaid recipients will face Stricter eligibility requirements. These include recertification every 6 month and must do an in-person verification at DHS offices. Medicaid work requirements for people enrolled in</p>
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		<p>Cheryl Patel, Member At-Large</p>	<p>Healthy Michigan will take effect on December 2026. People on traditional Medicaid are exempt. People who are in a Medicaid Spend-Down are experiencing immediate cuts. One member received a letter which informed her that those on healthy Michigan will also have \$35 co-pays for doctor visits and prescriptions starting in October 2028. The co pays however, will be limited to 5% of income. The state will also receive less funding starting in January 2028, which will put a greater burden on states to administer and fund Medicaid. All of these combined will reduce available providers, increase wait times and lessen access to services. Although this outcome is pretty dire, there is a chance that some of these provisions can be repealed before it starts. What people can do? Stay informed, look for ongoing updates from reputable sources, contact your representative in the state and national office. We also had an update on Behavioral Health Programs from Juliana Harper. As of this moment, the stat is pushing forward to rebid all PIHPS and reduce them for 10 to 3. It was stressed that the organizations will still be there, but the management structure will change. The state is also seeking to have a 3rd party to manage the system. On a positive note, many members of the CAC attended the Your Voice, Your Value Conference on August 5th. Vice Chair Matt Fritzen recently attended a Peer Conference.</p> <p>No Report (absent)</p>
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		<p>Chris Wright, My Place Center for Wellness</p> <p>Christie Kay, Arc of Oakland County</p> <p>Diane Sansalone, (Chairperson) Common Ground</p> <p>Glenda Vidosh, OFS</p>	<p>With the hot weather we have recently, they decided to take their members on a few short trips to Belle Isle for a few hours. They also have been keeping up on their groups and other support programs to help give the members different ways to cope with the illnesses they have. They are still getting their shipments from Forgotten Harvest.</p> <p>Arc of Oakland is offering, in partnership with OCHN, the ELEVATUS Course. It is a 22-week course that people can either participate in person at the Arc’s office in Troy or virtually. It is a sex and sexuality curriculum that is designed for people with developmental disabilities. There will be an informational session virtually in September for parents, caregivers or individuals that are interested in potentially signing up to get more information about the course and there will be a formal flyer sent out to register.</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>OFS closed their Walled Lake location and had been looking for a new one. They recently moved to the west side of Farmington Hills. It is a small office space they share in a complex. They were gifted an ice cream treat from Cold Stone and they sent all the employees a gift card to get an ice cream from Cold Stone.</p>
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	<p>James Helstowski, F.A.I.R., Drop-In</p> <p>Lloyd Austin, Member At-Large</p> <p>Lois Shulman, Member At-Large</p> <p>Malkia Newman, OCHN Board / CNS Anti-Stigma</p> <p>Matthew Fritzen, Easterseals MORC</p> <p>Nancy Diane Carter, CEEC</p> <p>Pam Casper, CNS Healthcare</p>	<p>Average of 35 members last month and they went on the Detroit Princess boat ride. They are going to Motown next week. They are also getting the building ready for events.</p> <p>No Report (absent)</p> <p>No Report (absent)</p> <p>No Report (absent)</p> <p>Matt stated he went to the meeting for the restructuring for the PHIP and he wants to remind people to strongly advocate against this, we want them not to change the restructuring and that we want the mental health system to stay the same and try to get as many people as we can to do the same.</p> <p>CEEC members were asked for ideas on how to make services better.</p> <p>Allison Palmer, M.D., the newly appointed Medical Director, was introduced to the CAC. All the Assertive Community Treatment nurses, Behavioral Health Home nurses, and Clinic Nurses have been trained to draw blood. Individuals served may have their blood drawn at all the CNS office locations.</p>
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		<p>Paulette Howell, New Horizons</p> <p>Renee Bacci, TTI</p> <p>Suzanne Serlin-Resnick, Member At-Large</p> <p>Tammy Wallace, Our House Clubhouse</p> <p>Verdrina Mathews, Member At-Large</p> <p>Victoria Peterson, Member At Large</p> <p>Zach Cardinell, Member At-Large</p>	<p>No Report</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report (absent)</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report (absent)</p>
V	Public Comment / Announcements		
VI	Adjournment		The Meeting was adjourned at 11:37 am.

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VII	Next Meeting		October 15, 2025
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Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Space

Jessica Space, OCHN – Customer Service Support Specialist

September 8, 2025