



A Valuable System for Valued People



Michigan Community Mental Health Advocacy Manual:
A guide for people served, their family, service providers and community partners.

Michigan's Public Mental Health System

Vision

All people in Michigan will have access to a public mental health and substance abuse services system that supports individuals with mental illness, emotional disturbance, developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.

Mission

To provide leadership by establishing, articulating, and implementing policies, standards and practices that assure high quality, effective and efficient services and supports.

The Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration is located within the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH). The administration fulfills responsibilities specified in the Michigan Mental Health Code, the Michigan Public Health Code and administers Medicaid Waivers for people with developmental disabilities, mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, and substance disorders. Public Act 258 of 1974 codified, revised, consolidated, and classified the laws relating to mental health. The Public Health Code defines the laws for substance abuse treatment.

Service Delivery System

Mental Health and Developmental Disability services in Michigan are delivered through a county-based community mental health services programs (CMHSPs). MDCH, along with 46 regional [Community Mental Health Services Programs](#)(CMHSPs), contracts public funds for mental health, and developmental disability services. Medicaid funds, which are paid on a per Medicaid- eligible capitated basis, are contracted with CMHSPs, or affiliations of CMHSPs, as Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs). Each region is required to have an extensive array of services that allows for maximizing choice and control on the part of individuals in need of service. Individual plans of service are developed using a person-centered planning process for adults and a person-centered process and family-centered care for children. MDCH is actively promoting values of recovery and resiliency. MDCH contracts with 10 of its PIHPs to provide Medicaid Specialty Services. Limited outpatient mental health services are available through Medicaid Health Plans (MHPs).

Michigan's Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders System

Public Mental Health Funding in Michigan

- [Michigan's Community Mental Health Fiscal Forum](#)
- [The Healthy Michigan Factor](#): Impacting General Fund Dollars
- [Understanding Michigan's Public Mental Health Funding Issue](#)



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An Advocate is a:

- Person who champions for or supports a cause or policy
- Person who works for a cause or group
- Person who argues for the cause of another person in a court of law

Effective advocates influence public policy, laws and budgets by using facts; their relationships; the media; and messaging to educate government officials and the public on the changes they want to bring for themselves, their family, and their community.

Advocacy is:

The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal: the act or process of advocating something or someone. In practical terms, advocacy is a form of problem solving. It is finding the best way to improve a situation. Problem solving is used to:

1. Protect the rights of people or to change unfair or discriminatory or abusive treatment to fair, equal, and human treatment.
2. To improve services, gain eligibility for services, enhance service quality to better meet the needs of an individual.
3. To ensure adequate funding is made available for valuable services that improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities, mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbance, and people with substance use disorders.



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Tips for Effective Advocacy

- **Know the facts:** To gain and maintain credibility, it is critical that you have all the facts on both sides of any issue. Having this information at your fingertips will help you in conversations with government officials, the media, other advocates, and the public.
- **Use the facts:** Any position you take should be grounded in the facts. It is often helpful to put your facts into a one-page fact sheet that you can distribute.
- **Have a clear and concise message:** Government officials, the press, and the public do not have time for long conversations or documents—you need to get to your point quickly and concisely. Remember to watch out for the jargon and acronyms used in different fields—you want everyone to understand the issues you are discussing.
- **Nurture relationships and work collaboratively:** Advocacy is a joint venture—you need to find your allies and work with them. Your chances of success are much greater when there are large numbers of organizations and people on your side. Whenever possible, be sure you and your allies have consistent data and the same messages.
- **Engage the public:** Use the media, social media, petitions, letters, e-mails and other grassroots strategies to engage as many people as you can. Remember numbers speak loudly to elected officials!
- **Make your voice heard!** Advocacy is not the place for being shy. Make sure you spread the word—through meetings with government officials, press conferences, letters, petitions, rallies, phone calls, social media. And don't forget to talk about what you are advocating for at dinner parties and social events- you never know who can become a useful ally.
- **Say thank you:** Remember that everyone is busy, and their time is valuable. Keep your meetings short and always say thank you afterwards. When your advocacy is a success, always thank everyone who helped you achieve your victory!



Advocacy Resources

- [Brochures and Flyers](#)
- [Communicating with Michigan Legislators – Oakland County](#)
- [Legislative Social Media Contact Information](#)
- [Michigan's Community Mental Health Service Directory](#)
- [Michigan's PIHP Geographic Map](#)
- [Michigan's Public Mental Health System 101](#)
- [Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards Advocacy Center](#)
- Statewide Legislative Talking Points
- [Public Policy Updates](#)
- [Social Media Messaging](#)
- [Template Letters](#)
- [University Advocacy Groups for People with Developmental Disabilities or Mental Illness](#)