

Director's Report – February 2024



Dana Lasenby
OCHN Executive Director & CEO

OCHN MISSION:
Inspire Hope • Empower
People • Strengthen
Communities

OCHN VISION:

OCHN will be a champion for the empowerment of persons seeking quality integration of physical and mental health supports and services. This includes youth and adults with developmental or intellectual disabilities, mental health concerns, and substance use disorders. We listen and respond to our community's needs, providing support and opportunities for people to lead independent and self-directed lives.

OCHN Access: 248-464-6363
Crisis Line: 988

www.oaklandchn.org

Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) joins America in celebrating February as National Black History Month. This national observance honors African Americans' rich history and heritage and their ongoing contributions to our country. As a community behavioral health organization, educating and addressing mental health in the African American community this month and throughout the year is essential.

OCHN's accomplishments through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives offer training and educational opportunities for its employees and service provider network. The goal is to cultivate a culturally competent and sensitive service delivery system that promotes dignity and protects the rights of all people, including marginalized populations.

Additionally, OCHN also launched its annual Service Delivery Feedback Survey. We want to be responsive to the needs of those we serve; accomplished with input from the people served, family members, and the community.

The survey is available for input **through Friday, March 29, 2024**, and accessed on OCHN's website at oaklandchn.org. Information gathered from the study will help identify critical service delivery priorities that are person focused. It will also aid in developing OCHN's annual plan.

ACCESS

OCHN remains focused on ensuring that people needing public behavioral health services can connect with OCHN's Access Team whenever required. Our Access Team conducted 3,788 screenings and referrals for people requesting services in January. Strategies to promote OCHN's success in linking people to support include investing in technology and staffing recruitment efforts.

COLLABORATION

OCHN was honored to host the second annual Call to Solidarity meeting in February. The program convened individuals and

organizations in Oakland County with a shared interest in identifying solutions for the behavioral health needs of our community members. The program focused on increasing knowledge of services and breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health, substance use disorders, and homelessness. This effort is the collaborative outcome of multiple agencies across Oakland County to address these needs in our community.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The OCHN School Mental Health Navigators (SMHN) are behavioral health professionals who provide outreach and resources to schools in Oakland County. The goal is to reduce barriers to behavioral health services, increase awareness of ways to access services and provide warm, welcoming support and guidance to children, adolescents, and families. The SMHN has been hard at work as we started the new year, participating in 13 school and community events last month with almost 20 referrals to community services and resources. The SMHNs have been involved in 68 school and community programs with about 100 referrals since the fiscal year began on October 1, 2023.

CRISIS SERVICES

OCHN's crisis services through its contracted provider network include supporting those who have Medicaid, Medicare, Healthy Michigan, private insurance, or no insurance; authorizing psychiatric hospitalization; determining network service eligibility; identifying follow-up resources and managing the 988 Crisis Helpline. Using grant funds, OCHN supported substance use disorder (SUD) to 26 underinsured individuals who would not otherwise receive treatment. The Sober Support Unit (SSU) has served 90 individuals in January and 418 fiscal years.

INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE

OCHN manages Behavioral Health Homes (BHH) in Oakland County. Health Homes prioritizes a "whole person" philosophy, paving the way for integrating physical and behavioral health services. The BHHs provide comprehensive care management and service coordination to individuals with serious mental illness. OCHN enrolled 42 new people in the BHHs in January, with 940 enrollees.

NATIONAL UPDATE

National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors (February 13 - 15th). During this meeting, there was discussion about national behavioral health and I/DD policy issues including Medicaid, rural access, workforce, waivers, criminal justice, and more. Other highlights of this conference include:

- Workforce - The Next Generation of Behavioral Health - As the behavioral health and I/DD fields continue to face a workforce shortage it is critical that support the next generation of leaders.

- Legislative - Congress has been instrumental in creating a time of transformation for behavioral health. From the expansion of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBCHs) to the establishment of 988, a nationwide behavioral health crisis line, the legislative branch has been critical in this moment. Information presented by the new lead staffers for the newly established Senate Mental Health Caucus and the House Mental Health Caucus.
- Opportunity for Creativity in Waiver Use - Medicaid programs vary widely by state. A main driver of this diversity is the use of waivers used to expand coverage, modify delivery systems, and restructure financing and other program elements. An overview of waivers, including 1115 Demonstration Waivers, recent developments, and their ramifications for behavioral health and I/DD provided.
- Redetermination - During the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress required Medicaid disenrollment's to stop. Primarily due to this continuous enrollment requirement over ninety-four million people enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. Since the continuous enrollment requirement expired in April 2023 over 13 million Medicaid enrollees have been removed from the program. There was a review of Medicaid redetermination, its ramifications for the future of the program, and other developments.
- Continuum of Care, Social Determinants of Health, and Federal Partners - Crisis response efforts require coordination between behavioral health care, emergency services, law enforcement, and other sectors. The importance of these services has amplified since the launch of 9-8-8 in the Summer of 2022 along with the establishment of Medicaid waivers for crisis response and the expansion of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) program. Discussion of impact, infrastructure, and future of local crisis services.
- Federal-State-Local Connection - Collaboration is imperative for improving access to behavioral health and I/DD services. NACBBHDD partners shared the vision and mission of their respective organizations, building an image of the landscape of work in behavioral health and I/DD within various interest groups.
- Traditional & New Federal Partners - Impactful policy hinges on cross sectional relationships, especially those spanning between local and federal authorities. Understanding federal efforts in relation to behavioral health and I/DD policy, local providers better utilize available support systems.

VALUE-BASED CARE & OUTCOMES

In our commitment to improve and ensure quality care, services, and support, the following leadership-led project:

1. Operations: Integrated - Urgent Behavioral Health Clinic services project with Honor Health, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland, and Oakland County Health Division
2. Legal: Implementation of Cobblestone Contract management system implementation
3. Finance & Budget: Business Central software implementation, Fund Source Management, and rate standardization.

4. Justice Initiatives: Collaboration and development of Threat Assessments Initiatives
5. Strategic Initiatives: Rate standardization, planning and development of transportation service line, CCBHC planning grant.
6. Information Technology & Data Analytics: aligning Oakland Data Information Network (ODIN) for encounters/claims system with Power-BI to improve data analytics and reporting to enhance cost settling project.
7. Compliance and Quality: incorporation of new standard and policy changes
8. Staff Engagement: activities and initiatives to encourage and support staff engagement, retention and reduce turnover.
9. Clinical: Expand access to clinical assessments, services, and supports – OCHN Assessment Center expansion and partnerships with other service providers to create a supportive collaborative for youth and families.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) partnered with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to host a two-day behavioral health training for more than 40 FBI agents and Task Force Officers at the OCHN Administrative Offices this month. The training included education on mental health, with in-depth education related to anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), personality disorders, substance use disorders (SUD), and interacting with Veterans experiencing mental health concerns. Additionally, agents learned crisis de-escalation communication skills and practiced these skills with mini scenarios. This training was a collaborative effort with the FBI, including speakers from OCHN's Justice Initiatives Team, The Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities, and the Royal Oak and Birmingham Police Departments.

STAFF RECOGNITION

I am incredibly pleased to announce that The Arc of Oakland County recognized our own Vicki Suder, Director of Rights and Advocacy, as one of the recipients of the 2024 Dove Awards. Vicki will be honored next month at The Arc's Annual event with the Al Carter Distinguished Service Award for her endless contribution and leadership in enhancing the quality of life for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

CALL TO ACTION - If you or someone you know needs support now:

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) – [Call 988](#), [Text 988](#), or [Chat with Lifeline](#)
- [Crisis Textline](#) – Text TALK to 741741
- OCHN Access (248)464-6363