

Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: January 21, 2026, 9:30-11:30am

Location: OCHN (Troy) – Teams Virtual /Call-In

Facilitator: Matthew Fritzen, Chairperson

Liaison: Linda Bartaloni-Till, OCHN Customer Services Manager

Scribe: Linda Bartaloni-Till, OCHN Customer Services Manager

Desired Results: ***Teamwork toward achieving committee goals.***



Present: **Adrienne Gasperoni**, Community Housing Network; **Amelia Jacobs**, CLS-OC; **Chakusola Guinn**, Easterseals; **Cheryl Patel**, Member At-Large; **Chris Wright**, My Place Center for Wellness; **Christie Kay**, ARC Oakland County; **Christina Root**, OCHN Board; **Diane Sansalone**, Common Ground; **Shari Stewart**, Oakland Family Services; **James Helstowski**, FAIR Drop-In Center; **Lloyd Austin**, Member At-Large; **Matthew Fritzen**, Easterseals MORC; **Nancy Diane Carter**, OCHN CEEC; **Pam Casper**, CNS Healthcare; **Renee Bacci**, Clubhouse Inspiration; **Steve Ludwig**, JARC; **Suzanne Serlin-Resnick**, Member At-Large; **Verdrina Mathews**, Member At-Large

Absent: **Lois Shulman**, Member At-Large; **Paulette Howell**, New Horizons; **Tammy Wallace**, Our House Clubhouse; **Victoria Peterson**, 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>	<p><i>Matt Fritzen, CAC Chair</i></p>	<p>The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am. Roll call attendance was taken by L. Bartaloni-Till.</p>
II	<p>Public Comment / Announcements</p>	<p>Members & Guests</p>	<p>L. Bartaloni-Till introduced Shari Stewart to the CAC Members. L. Austin spoke about Martin Luther King Jr. and the current times. L. Bartaloni-Till spoke about Malkia Newman and requested a moment of silence to remember her advocacy and her life.</p>

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III	<p>New Business</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAC Bylaw Review 	<p><i>Linda Bartaloni-Till,</i> OCHN Manager Customer Service</p>	<p>L. Bartaloni-Till advised that the current CAC Bylaws were included in the January CAC Packet and that each year, they should be reviewed and voted on any changes that need to be made. We have not done this for a few years. The bylaws set our processes and standards on how we operate. It talks about our responsibilities as a group, our membership and officers, when and how we vote for officers and the limit of the terms. Linda would like the CAC members to take a look and see if they see anything that should be changed. L. Austin had a question about voting and a conflict of the quorum and 50% needed. L. Bartaloni-Till stated that she will review and bring to the next meeting for review and vote from the CAC members for any changes. L. Austin recommended a future meeting topic to include a review of Robert’s Rules.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Report 	<p><i>Suzanne Weinert,</i> Director, Communications & Community Outreach</p>	<p>Law Enforcement appreciation breakfast was held on January 12th, and we had about 15 cities represented at the event and we honored several individuals at the event. We expect to have the website to be up and running by the end of February or beginning of March. The Ambassador Program is still up and running and if you are interested in attending and representing OCHN at the OCHN resource table at one of the events, please reach out for more information. We have our Abilities Awareness event in March, Veterans event in May, Minorities Mental Health event in July, and the Your Voice Your Value event in August.</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>OCHN is looking at a February 13th date for transitioning Crisis services to OCHN. Some of the staff have already been hired and we are opening the doors for people to join our team after background checks and completing the hiring process. Dana spoke about Malkia Newman and her impact with advocacy. OCHN hosted its annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Breakfast on Monday, January 12, 2026, bringing together officers and leadership from more than 15 cities across Oakland County to recognize their service, collaboration, and commitment to community well-being. This annual gathering provided a meaningful opportunity to honor the law enforcement professionals who work daily to protect and serve our communities, while reinforcing Oakland County’s shared commitment to working as one coordinated team. The event highlighted the importance of strong partnerships between law enforcement, mental health providers, and substance use professionals, all of whom play critical roles in enhancing public safety and improving crisis response for residents. During the event, OCHN honored several award recipients for their exceptional leadership, advocacy, and dedication to advancing coordinated crisis response and behavioral health collaboration across Oakland County. These individuals and teams were recognized for going above and beyond in strengthening cross-system partnerships, improving outcomes for people in crisis, and demonstrating outstanding commitment to community safety and well-being. CIT Executive of the Year Chief Ryan Gagnon, Auburn Hills Police Department CIT First Responder Officer Amy Drehmer, Stoney Creek High School Resource Officer Behavioral Healthcare Practitioner Hillary Nusbaum,</p>
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			<p>OCHN Co-Responder Supervisor Advocate Sherri Rushman, OCHN Education Specialist Person with Lived Experience Pepper Catt, The Alliance Peer Navigator / Recovery Support Specialist.</p> <p>Michigan Court Decision on MDHHS PIHP RFP On January 8, 2026, Judge Yates, in the Michigan Court of Claims, issued an important decision about the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services’ (MDHHS) plan to restructure how regional mental health Medicaid services are managed across the state. MDHHS had issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select only three large regional entities to manage Medicaid mental health services starting October 1, 2026. Several Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs) and Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSPs) challenged this RFP in court.</p> <p>Why does this matter? OCHN is both PIHP and CMHSP. CMHSPs like ours are not optional providers. Under Michigan law, counties are required to operate CMHSPs, and CMHSPs have non-negotiable legal duties, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing crisis and emergency mental health services• Conducting pre-admission screenings for inpatient care• Coordinating care with hospitals, jails, courts, and law enforcement• Protecting recipient rights• Serving people regardless of insurance status or ability to pay <p>These duties apply to both Medicaid and non-Medicaid individuals, often before anyone even knows how services will be paid for.</p> <p>What did the Court decide? The Court found that MDHHS’s RFP conflicts with Michigan law because it shifts too much control to the new regional PIHPs and limits CMHSP authority in ways that could prevent CMHSPs from carrying out their legal</p>
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			<p>responsibilities under the Mental Health Code. Key points from the Court:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The RFP is final and real, not hypothetical. Bids have already been submitted.• CMHSPs depend heavily on Medicaid funding to operate. The RFP gives PIHPs exclusive control over key “managed care” functions such as:• Authorizing services• Managing provider networks• Paying claims• Quality and compliance oversight <p>Without those functions being granted to the CMHSPs, CMHSPs may not be able to legally do their jobs. The Court made clear that CMHSPs are system managers required by statute, not just vendors that can be sidelined.</p> <p>Did the Court stop the RFP? • No. The Court did not order MDHHS to immediately stop or cancel the RFP. However, it strongly warned that moving forward without changes will likely result in continued lawsuits and court intervention.</p> <p>What options does MDHHS have now? The Court outlined several paths MDHHS could take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change the RFP to better share authority with CMHSPs• Cancel and reissue a redesigned RFP• Proceed as-is, which carries a high risk of lawsuits and delays• Seek legislative or federal changes, which would take time and does not solve immediate issues <p>What does this all mean? • There is some level of ongoing legal and operational uncertainty statewide. However, this should be viewed as a win for our system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CMHSP roles and responsibilities remain grounded in statute and have not gone away.• MDHHS’s next steps will directly affect future structure, funding, and governance.• More litigation or changes to the transition timeline are possible. OCHN will continue monitoring MDHHS
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			actions and court developments and will communicate updates as decisions are made.
IV	Old Business – Provider & Committee Reports	<p>Christina Root, OCHN Board</p> <p>Adrienne Gasperoni, Community Housing Network</p>	<p>The OCHN Board has a study session next week and they are planning a Board Retreat. Christina announced that she will not be renewing her position on the Board and her position is ending in March. The CAC will be getting a new Board representative in the CAC.</p> <p>Tonight is the Point in Time Count where volunteers bring resources to people that may be sleeping under the stars and assess how many people are there so the community can see how much service and funding needs to be provided for those who may be homeless.</p>

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	<p>Amelia Jacobs, Community Living Services</p> <p>Chakusola Guinn, Easterseals</p> <p>Cheryl Patel, Member At-Large</p> <p>Chris Wright, My Place Center for Wellness</p> <p>Christie Kay, ARC of Oakland County</p> <p>Diane Sansalone, Common Ground</p> <p>Shari Stewart, Oakland Family Services</p> <p>James Helstowski, F.A.I.R., Drop-In</p>	<p>No Report</p> <p>They scheduled the calendar of speakers and reviewed the advisory committee goals. They spoke about the recent rulings about the PIHP and the RP and they will have a wait and see approach. They will be taking nominations for March’s election.</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>They have been helping members and have been closed a few times due to the weather.</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report</p>
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	<p>Lloyd Austin, Member At-Large</p> <p>Lois Shulman, Member At-Large</p> <p>Matthew Fritzen, Easterseals MORC</p> <p>Nancy Diane Carter, CEEC</p> <p>Pam Casper, CNS Healthcare</p> <p>Paulette Howell, New Horizons</p> <p>Renee Bacci, Clubhouse Inspiration</p> <p>Suzanne Serlin-Resnick, Member At-Large</p> <p>Tammy Wallace, Our House Clubhouse</p> <p>Verdrina Mathews, Member At-Large</p>	<p>No Report</p> <p>No Report (absent)</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>The complete FY25 data and trends for the network were presented.</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report (absent)</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report</p> <p>No Report (absent)</p> <p>No Report</p>
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		Victoria Peterson , Member At Large	No Report (absent)
		Zach Cardinell , Member At-Large	No Report (absent)
V	Public Comment / Announcements		
VI	Adjournment		The Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.
VII	Next Meeting		Wednesday, February 18, 2026 – Virtual/Phone In

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Space

Jessica Space, OCHN – Customer Service Support Specialist

2/9/2026