

# Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: March 18, 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 Service Manager

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



Present: **Adrienne Gasperoni**, Community Housing Network; **Amelia Jacobs**, CLS-OC; **Chakusola Guinn**, Easterseals; **Christina Root**, OCHN Board; **Diane Sansalone**, Advocate; **James Helstowski**, FAIR Drop-In Center; **Matthew Fritzen**, Easterseals MORC; **Nancy Diane Carter**, OCHN CEEC; **Pam Casper**, CNS Healthcare; **Steve Ludwig**, JARC; **Suzanne Serlin-Resnick**, Member At-Large; **Shari Stewart**, Oakland Family Services; **Tammy Wallace**, Our House Clubhouse; **Verdrina Mathews**, Member At-Large; **Zach Cardinell**, Member At-Large **Cheryl Patel**, OCHN CAC Member At-Large; **Chris Wright**, My Place Center for Wellness; **Lloyd Austin**, Member At-Large

Absent: **Paulette Howell**, New Horizons; **Victoria Peterson**, Member At-Large **Christie Kay**, ARC Oakland County; **Lois Shulman**, Member At-Large; **Renee Bacci**, Clubhouse Inspiration

Guests:

	Agenda Item	Presented By	Discussion
I	<p><b>Welcome to Members, Guests</b></p> <p><b>Approval of Agenda and Minutes</b></p>	<p><i>Matthew Fritzen, CAC Chair</i></p>	<p>The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am. Roll call attendance was taken by J. Space. A. Jacobs motioned to approve the agenda, and D. Sansalone seconded the agenda. S. Ludwig motioned to approve the minutes from 2/18/26 and was seconded by D. Sansalone.</p>
II	<p><b>Public Comment /</b></p> <p><b>Announcements</b></p>	<p>Members &amp; Guests</p>	<p>L. Bartaloni-Till informed CAC members that Jessica Space/OCHN Support Specialist who is the scribe for this meeting will be leaving OCHN. The CAC members thanked her for all her work and wished her well.</p>

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III	<p><b>New Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OCHN and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Vasilis K. Pozios, M.D.</i> OCHN Chief Medical Officer</p>	<p>Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include recognizing patterns, summarizing information, drafting documents, and predicting likely outcomes based on data. While AI can mimic certain aspects of human thinking, it is not perfect and can make errors. Within public mental health systems, AI is already being used primarily as a digital scribe to reduce paperwork. By automating documentation and administrative tasks, AI can increase productivity for behavioral health workers and free up more time for direct patient care. The goal is to support providers, not replace them. During the discussion, members raised questions about AI’s role. C. Guinn expressed concern about AI taking the place of doctors. It was emphasized that replacing healthcare professionals is not the intention. Instead, AI serves as a tool to enhance efficiency and support clinical decision-making. L. Austin asked about how OCHN and its provider network might use AI. Potential uses include documentation support, summarizing large amounts of information, identifying patterns in data, and improving workflow efficiency while keeping human providers at the center of care. A. Jacobs, who works in our system of care, talked about using AI as it helps in writing goals for an IPOS when working with people served.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OCHN Budget Update</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Robert Blumenfield, OCHN</i> Deputy Chief Financial Officer</p>	<p>OCHN has \$438 million in total budget revenue, with Medicaid funding contributing to the majority at \$346 million. Revenue was impacted by an estimated \$38 million reduction tied to changes in CCBHC funding, though grant revenue added \$12.6 million to the overall total. On the expense side, the organization incurred \$432</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Director’s Report</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Dana Lasenby, Executive Director/CEO, OCHN</i></p>	<p>million in total costs. The largest portion, \$388 million was distributed through provider pass-through payments, reflecting a service-delivery model heavily reliant on contracted providers. Network administration costs totaled \$34 million, while direct service expenses accounted for \$7 million. Despite the funding reduction, the organization ended the period with a net surplus of \$5.4 million, indicating stable financial performance and effective cost management. L. Austin expressed concerns about the surplus funds and the long-term sustainability of OCHN. Robert responded by highlighting the ongoing advocacy efforts aimed at securing funding for the community mental health system of care.</p> <p>Dana highlighted how OCHN is working to expand access to services even as it faces significant challenges, including declining Medicaid revenue, legislative pressures, and the ongoing need to pivot without reducing support to our providers. The Common Ground decision wasn’t chosen for financial reasons. The decision was grounded in the crisis of continuum of care and feedback from our community. OCHN is focused on achieving positive outcomes for individuals, connecting people to the right services, reducing long wait times, and ensuring they receive timely, appropriate care. This approach depends on strong collaboration with our community partners and supports a shared mission. Easterseals MORC and CNS Healthcare remain providers of OCHN. They are also providers for the state of Michigan for CCBHC behavioral health services. They are currently in moratoriums with OCHN for case management services as they are at capacity. OCHN is continuing to expand services like offering case</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communications Report</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Suzanne Weinert</i>, Director, Communications &amp; Community Outreach</p>	<p>management to meet the needs of our community. OCHN assumed more responsibilities in our system of care, such as Fiscal Intermediary (FI) functions and transitioned to a fee-for-service model to standardize rates and promote greater equity among providers. This was done to ensure everyone has a choice of providers, gets their needed support and services. Dana talked about money coming from the state into our budget to ensure the Direct Care Workers are getting the minimum wage, which is \$17.31. The importance of a “rainy day fund” was discussed to be used for short falls in the budget. M. Fritzen asked a question about F.I. wanting OCHN to offer more choices of FI, and the network will be opening for more FI providers. OCHN will continue to provide service and supports in a transparent matter, listening to the people we serve, always providing the best care possible and offering choice of providers.</p> <p>Suzanne encouraged everyone to fill out the OCHN Community Voice Surveys. She reminded the members about the Ability Aware Event held at OCHN on 3/31 from 1 to 3pm.</p>
IV	<p>Old Business – Provider &amp; Committee Reports</p>	<p><b>Christina Root</b>, OCHN Board</p> <p><b>Adrienne Gasperoni</b>, Community Housing Network</p>	<p>No Report</p> <p>No Report</p>

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	<b>Amelia Jacobs</b> , Community Living Services	No Report
	<b>Chakusola Guinn</b> , Easterseals	No Report
	<b>Cheryl Patel</b> , Member At-Large	No Report
	<b>Chris Wright</b> , My Place Center for Wellness	No Report
	<b>Christie Kay</b> , ARC of Oakland County	No Report (absent)
	<b>Diane Sansalone</b> , Advocate	No Report
	<b>James Helstowski</b> , F.A.I.R., Drop-In	No Report
	<b>Lloyd Austin</b> , Member At-Large	No Report
	<b>Lois Shulman</b> , Member At-Large	No Report (absent)
	<b>Matthew Fritzen</b> , Easterseals MORC	No Report

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		<b>Nancy Diane Carter, CEEC</b>	The CEEC discussed ground rules for conducting their meetings in a fair and orderly fashion. They reviewed the FY 2025 Member Experience report. This report looked at the experience of care and health outcomes for people served. For FY 2026, OCHN is looking for improved overall outcomes. CEC deferred elections until they have a quorum at their next face-to-face meeting on May 6, 2026.
		<b>Pam Casper, CNS Healthcare</b>	No Report
		<b>Paulette Howell, New Horizons</b>	No Report (absent)
		<b>Renee Bacci, Clubhouse Inspiration</b>	No Report (absent)
		<b>Suzanne Serlin-Resnick, Member At-Large</b>	No Report
		<b>Shari Stewart, Oakland Family Services</b>	No Report
		<b>Tammy Wallace, Our House Clubhouse</b>	No Report
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		<p><b>Verdrina Mathews,</b> Member At-Large</p> <p><b>Victoria Peterson,</b> Member At Large</p> <p><b>Zach Cardinell,</b> Member At- Large</p>	<p>No Report (absent)</p> <p>No Report</p>
V	Public Comment / Announcements		Z. Cardinell spoke about the upcoming Dove Awards and highlighted and gave recognition for the outstanding Awardees; Linda Bartaloni-Till – Lifetime Achievement Award, Ed Kiefer – President’s Award, and Adam Fuhrman – Inspiration Award.
VI	Adjournment		The Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am
VII	Next Meeting		April 15, 2026, Virtual/Call In

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Bartaloni-Till

Linda Bartaloni-Till OCHN – Customer Service Manager

3/20/2026