

Director's Report – May 2025



Dana Lasenby
OCHN Executive Director & CEO

OCHN MISSION:
Inspire Hope • Empower
People • 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

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Traditionally, this is an opportunity to celebrate mental health and identify the signs if you or someone you know may need help. Since 1949, Mental Health Awareness Month has served as a cornerstone in raising awareness and addressing the challenges faced by millions of Americans living with mental health conditions. As Oakland County's public behavioral health system, OCHN and its network of providers proudly support more than 30,000 individuals across the county each year with vital services related to mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities. Each May, OCHN commemorates this national observance by issuing a Mental Health Awareness Month proclamation, reinforcing the importance of behavioral health and the need to reduce stigma, promote early intervention, and ensure access to care. View the Mental Health Month proclamation at this [link](#).

ACCESS & CRISIS SERVICES

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 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)

Service Utilization Overview

Metric	April 2025	FY25 YTD
Calls to Access	1,210	18,495
Screenings Completed	564	4,163
Total Crisis Calls		
- 988*	802	6,659
- OC Resource & Crisis Helpline	2,304	18,697

**Source: MiCAL/988/Lifeline, Common Ground; Data reflects state-wide reporting from MiCAL's annual report.*

ADVOCACY & COLLABORATION

The State of Michigan is facing potential federal funding cuts, standing to lose a significant portion of Medicaid funding. Now more than ever, it is critical to strengthen our public behavioral health system and uphold true parity between mental health, substance use, and physical health care. The growing demand for behavioral health services—exacerbated by the lasting impacts of the pandemic, workforce shortages, and rising rates of mental health conditions—has placed unprecedented pressure on public systems that serve our most vulnerable individuals.

Despite existing laws mandating mental health parity, disparities in access, coverage, and quality persist. Public behavioral health systems remain underfunded and overstretched, leaving countless individuals without the care they need. Achieving meaningful parity and investing in sustainable, community-based behavioral health infrastructure is necessary now. Historically, when faced with federal funding cuts, states have prioritized physical healthcare over behavioral health services, despite the critical necessity of these services to vulnerable populations.

We are calling on everyone—community members, advocates, and leaders—to speak up. We must protect and strengthen the public behavioral health system and make sure mental health care is fully covered and available to all. When we invest in mental health, we invest in stronger families, safer communities, and a healthier future for everyone.

On May 15, 2025, the Detroit News published an editorial, from Kevin Fischer, Executive Director of NAMI-Michigan, in response to the MDHHS proposal to bid out the contracts of the state's PIHPs. Excerpts from that editorial are provided below highlighting Mr. Fischer's voice and leadership on this issue.

- Recently, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services announced the Department's intention to implement a competitive procurement process for the state's public health plans.
- While the Department's announcement of a procurement process signals one approach to fostering improvements in the state's public mental health system, this approach brings with it several risks without addressing the real gaps in the system. This approach will:

- Disrupt an already strained system amid a workforce shortage, state budget constraints and impending federal Medicaid reductions; and
- Open the door to privatization — by for-profit or non-profit insurance companies — a very unpopular approach that risks harm to those who rely on Michigan’s public mental system for their recovery and quality of life.

While (NAMI-MI) our organization has a number of aims around improving the private mental health system (more comprehensive array of services, sufficient providers, higher rates to providers, parity with physical healthcare, to name a few), we want to focus, at this time, on our work to refine and improve Michigan’s public mental health system. That work aims to foster a public mental health system that ensures access to high quality mental health services that reflect the voices of those served and the unique needs of local communities.

The [National Alliance for Mental Illness \(NAMI\)- Michigan](#) has identified a number of areas that hold promise for refinement and improvement in the state’s public and private mental health arenas. The full editorial can be [found here](#).

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS

OCHN received a grant through the state for \$1 Million in FY25 thanks to the support of the Michigan Legislature and Governor for enhancements. To strengthen access and improve care coordination, OCHN plans for significant infrastructure improvements in:

- **OCHN Assessment Center – Troy:** This site will enhance access to screenings and early intervention services, streamlining entry into the behavioral health system.
- **Resource & Crisis Center (RCC):** Focused on urgent and walk-in behavioral health needs, this facility ensures timely support and reduces reliance on emergency departments. The RCC supports the crisis continuum and reinforces our commitment to trauma-informed care.

These centers support our broader strategy to build a responsive, person-centered service delivery infrastructure that adapts to community needs in real time.

COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY TO ADDRESS SYSTEMIC THREATS

OCHN is actively engaged in addressing the following challenges impacting the public behavioral health system:

- **Potential Loss of Local Oversight**
- **Federal and MDHHS Budget Challenges** – reduction to Medicaid eligibility and funding.

- **MDHHS Contractual Requirements**
- **Privatization Threats**

These collaborative efforts are essential to OCHN’s mission to protect and advance accessible, equitable, and high-quality behavioral health services.

CRISIS SERVICES & SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD) SUPPORT

OCHN continues to support substance use disorder treatment through grant-funded initiatives. In April, the **Sober Support Unit (SSU)** served 105 individuals, totaling 845 YTD. Additionally, 3 underinsured individuals received necessary SUD services in March, bringing the YTD total to 197 individuals.

Youth & Family Care Connections (YFCC) Outcomes

Metric	April 2025	FY25 YTD
Service Requests	186	1064
Unique Persons Served	145	805
Inpatient Dispositions	31	186
Diversions	114	816
Mobile Crisis Unit Responses	26	149

CUSTOMER SERVICES & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OCHN remains dedicated to engaging with our community through outreach initiatives and transparent communication.

Community Engagement & Outreach

Metric	April 2025	FY25 YTD
Customer Service Call Responses	619	4,383
Community Events	6	101
Email Engagements	17,865	177,213
Website Views	44,145	268,024

OCHN hosted its fourth annual **Veteran and Military Families Resource Fair** on Saturday, May 10, 2025, at its Troy headquarters. Almost 200 people attended the annual event to share much-needed services and resources available to Veterans and their families. Over 50 vendors participated in the resource fair, including the Oakland County Sheriff’s Office, Habitat for Humanity, and Michigan Ability Partners, to name a few. Several informative presentations about

gun lock safety, Veterans Administration (VA) services, and the connection between Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Alzheimer's, and other dementia related diseases were held. The Oakland County Health Division provided vaccinations for attendees. OCHN also offered gift cards, food, games, and activities for children.

The **Veteran Navigator's** mission is to support Oakland County Veterans and their family members by helping them navigate state, federal, and community resources. Those who can participate in the services include

- All Veterans regardless of discharge status
- Veterans who do not meet service eligibility due to time-in-service
- Veterans who are not eligible for VA services
- Veterans who do not wish to seek traditional support paths



Pictured above: OCHN Resource table, Oakland County Sheriff's K-9 Comfort Dog "Colt" and event attendees.

National Nurses Week is celebrated annually from May 6th through May 12th. This week serves as a dedicated time to recognize the incredible contributions of nurses across all healthcare settings. OCHN celebrates the compassionate hearts and steady hands of our staff nurses who make a difference daily in the lives of those navigating mental health and emotional challenges. Their dedication, patience, and resilience are unmatched. They care for individuals and advocate, listen, and heal in ways that often go unseen but are always deeply felt. In a field that requires clinical excellence and emotional strength, they rise to the challenge with professionalism and empathy. Thank you to our nurses for helping people feel seen, heard, and supported on their journeys toward healing. I celebrate these outstanding individuals during Nurses Week—and every week!

JUSTICE-RELATED INITIATIVES & TRAINING

OCHN's **Co-Responder (CoRe) Program** strengthens partnerships with law enforcement, policymakers, and the judiciary to divert individuals from incarceration to behavioral health services.

CoRe Program Data

Metric	April 2025	FY25 YTD
Referrals	402	2,533
Remained in Community	205 (51%)	1,221 (48%)
Arrests	13 (3%)	80 (3%)
Voluntary Emergency Transports	81 (20%)	483 (19%)

Additionally, OCHN continues to provide **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training** to law enforcement, **Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) services**, and **jail diversion programs** to support individuals with mental health and substance use challenges.

APRIL – MAY 2025 CEO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

- ✓ MDHHS Director regarding Medicaid Funding, Mental Health Reform and OCHN updates related to recent challenges (4/2)
- ✓ SEEL Corp to explore vocational opportunities smart home technology for individuals living in supportive residential settings (4/3)
- ✓ Community partners regarding expansion of integrated care based on Oakland County geographic need (4/7)
- ✓ Oakland County Board of Commissioners – Quarterly Report (4/10)
- ✓ Muslim Mental Health Conference (4/11)
- ✓ NAMI-MI Honors (4/12)
- ✓ Welcome new OCHN Board Member – Christopher Smith
- ✓ Retirement Celebration for Christine Burk, Angela Costello, Victoria Marble and Glenda Weatherspoon (4/15)
- ✓ Juvenile Mental Health Court presentation – Kenneth Briggs (4/16)
- ✓ Michigan State of Reform – Health Policy Conference Panelist – PIHP and CCBHCs (4/17)
- ✓ Celebrated Administrative Professional Day (4/22)
- ✓ Tri-County CEO Advocacy Meeting (4/29)
- ✓ Connect with the Local Leaders Shaping the Metro-Detroit Region - Detroit Regional Chamber for a moderated discussion with Oakland County Executive [David Coulter](#), Wayne County Executive [Warren Evans](#), and Macomb County Executive [Mark Hackel](#) (4/30)

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- NatCon Annual Conference 2025 - **National Council for Mental Wellbeing** (5/4-5/7)
 - American Psychiatric Association (APA) Annual Meeting 2025 Lifestyle for Positive Mental and Physical Health (5/18-5/21)
 - NAMI-MI Annual Conference 2025 Annual Conference - Averting Crisis (5/22-5/24)
 - Mackinac Policy Conference (5/26-5/29)

STRATEGIC GOALS & PRIORITIES (FY23-25)

CEO Semi-Annual Report provided for Board of Directors review. OCHN remains focused on achieving key objectives aligned with our mission:

1. **Staffing & Retention** – Cultivate a positive work environment to enhance recruitment and retention.
 2. **Quality Systems of Care** – Expand direct service options for adults and children.
 3. **Administration & Service Delivery** – Streamline payment structures and processes.
 4. **Integrated Healthcare** – Strengthen the crisis continuum of care.
 5. **Partnerships, Advocacy & Outreach** – Strengthen collaborations with county officials, community leaders, law enforcement, and healthcare providers.
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➤ **Staff Changes:**

- Sheila Barrett – Director of Executive Operations & Board of Director Liaison
- Robert Blumenfeld – Deputy CFO
- Frances Carley – Deputy Chief of Strategic Initiatives & Legislative Affairs
- Richard Carpenter- CFO
- Marquitta Massey – Deputy Chief of Quality Officer/Corporate Compliance Officer

➤ **Nominations:**



Sherrie Cook, Lead Clinical Analyst on the SUD Team was nominated for the Michigan Certification Board for Addiction Professionals (MCBAP), Credential Holder of the Year award.

CALL TO ACTION

If you or someone you know needs immediate support, contact:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Call 988, Text 988, or visit online.
- **Crisis Text line:** Text TALK to 741741
- **OCHN Access Line:** (248) 464-6363

Upcoming OCHN Board Meetings:

- **Committee of the Whole:** Monday, June 9th at 4:30 p.m.
- **General Board:** Tuesday, June 17th at 6 p.m.

Looking Ahead

As we continue into the second half of FY2025, OCHN remains committed to fiscal responsibility, workforce engagement, advocacy leadership, and compassionate care delivery. Together with our partners, we will continue to strengthen public behavioral health services in Oakland County.

Respectfully,

Dana Lasenby

Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director