

Director's Report – November 2024



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

At Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN), November is a time to recognize the great service our Veterans and their families provide for our country. OCHN's Veterans Navigators are hard at work this month and all year long, ensuring our military heroes receive the important services they undeniably deserve.

Additionally, recognizing the dedication and resiliency of family caregivers during this month is both an honor and a privilege. These individuals are critical to the lives of people receiving public behavioral health services. During National Family Caregivers Month in November and throughout the entire year, OCHN thanks these individuals for the many ways they care for and impact their loved ones' lives.

I am pleased to announce that the Detroit Free Press once again named OCHN a Michigan Top Workplace. I am so proud of the dedicated OCHN family, who put their heart into the work they do every day to ensure the people we serve are valued and supported.

FINANCE

Funding for the public system does not reflect actual and growing need: While the demand for a wide range of mental health services in communities across Michigan has grown dramatically over the past several years, the funding for the public mental health system responsible for meeting those needs has not.

Despite system financial challenges, OCHN and our dedicated provider network continue to address the needs of our community through programs and services that align with some of the following needs:

- Programs to prevent suicide and respond to mental health crises with access to the public mental health systems' crisis response system – a system that is ready, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for adults and youth (Common Ground, Youth, and Family Care Connect- New Oakland and the OCHN's Resource and Crisis Center - Access and Customer Services).

- Serve children and adolescents with autism, the cost of providing evidence-based services to meet the growing demand for autism services is far above the revenues provided to cover these services (OCHN Assessment & Diagnosticians with a network of 21 ABA Providers).
- Individuals and communities impacted by the opioid crisis through prevention and treatment accessible to people in communities throughout Oakland County. (RCC's Sober Support Unit and Network of 24 SUD prevention and treatment providers).
- Prevent arrest and incarceration by working collaboratively with the justice communities that includes judges, law enforcement officials, policymakers, and families to provide mental health and support services to prevent persons with mental health needs and substance use disorders from arrest and incarceration and supporting the return of persons to the community from the corrections/justice system (OCHN's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training, CoRe (licensed mental health professionals ride-along), Chance for Life and jail services).
- Keep kids safe and successful through OCHN's school mental health navigators and mental health service benefit program to improve access and reimbursement of copays funded by the Oakland County's Board of Commissioners.
- Support persons with disabilities in living in the community by working with local and state legislators on ongoing advocacy for Medicaid funding for Michigan's recently adopted state minimum wage on the cost of Medicaid mental health services Direct Service Professional wages.

ACCESS

OCHN remains committed to ensuring that people who need public behavioral health services connect with its exceptional Access Team. Last month, OCHN's Access Team received 3,539 calls and completed 676 screenings. Access links people to services when and where needed, including determining network service eligibility, and identifying follow-up resources which is a vital agency priority.

COLLABORATION

The Resolution of Engagement to improve education, employment, and adult outcomes was mutually signed on Tuesday, November 19, 2024. This community partnership between OCHN, Oakland Schools, Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity – Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons commits to offer mutual support to Oakland County students with disabilities in planning for their natural transition to adulthood as full citizens in their communities. [Link to Resolution of Engagement](#)

Last month, the Royal Oak, Ferndale, Hazel Park, and Madison Heights Police Departments hosted a joint press conference at the Royal Oak Police Department to announce their partnership with OCHN. The Press Conference announced the expansion of OCHN's Co-Response Community Outreach (CoRe) program to these communities. The CoRe initiative embeds licensed clinicians with local law enforcement to co-respond to calls identified as requiring mental health and/or substance use related support.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Past:

- 2024 Tri-County Summit - Behavioral Health Force – October 4, 2024
- Cranbrook Upward Horizons Bound – Mental Health Career Outreach –October 19, 2025
- CMHA 2024 Annual Fall Conference – October 20 – 22, 2024
- Michigan Autism Council Meeting – October 25, 2024
- Corewell Health Tour of Resource and Crisis Center – Youth and Family Care Connections – October 29, 2024
- Eating for a Cause – Everybody VS. Stigma –November 2, 2024
- Detroit Free Press Great Places to Work Celebration – November 14, 2024
- Oakland County Schools Renewal of Engagement Resolution - Resolution of Engagement to Improve Education, Employment, and Adult Outcomes. In the spirit of collaboration, Oakland Community Health Network, Oakland Schools, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons will incorporate these core values into cooperative partnerships and effective practices for student transition into adulthood and citizenship in their communities - November 19th, 2024.

Future:

- The Alliance 20th Anniversary Celebration – November 19, 2024, Leadership and OCHN staff joining the celebration.
- OCHN Provider Network meetings – November 20, 2024.
- Citizen Advisory Council – November 20, 2024, providing CEO update.

CRISIS SERVICES

OCHN's crisis services through its contracted provider network include supporting those with Medicaid, Medicare, Healthy Michigan Plan, private insurance, or underinsured insurance. Crisis services include Crisis Intervention, Crisis Stabilization, Crisis Residential Services, Pre-Admission Review for authorizing Psychiatric Hospitalization, and the local management of Common Ground (Vendor for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline).

Using grant funds, OCHN supported substance use disorder (SUD) services to twenty-seven underinsured individuals who would not have otherwise received treatment. Last month, the Sober Support Unit (SSU) served 144 individuals.

In keeping with OCHN's commitment to continuous quality improvement and to ensuring best practices are implemented, our clinical and operations teams review service outcomes data and conduct root cause analysis with law enforcement partners. This includes the Oakland County Sheriff Crisis Response Unit (CRU), and the Alliance, which reports barriers or delays to access to crisis services.

INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE

The Walk-in Center at Pontiac General Hospital, soft launched in June 2024 as a collaboration between OCHN, Oakland County Health Division, and Honor Community Health continues to provide the community with access to urgent physical and behavioral health services.

- An OCHN Behavior Health Coordinator maintains a presence at the clinic to assist and access individuals presenting with mental health and substance use disorder treatment needs.
- The clinic has served 737 individuals, with twenty-seven of these individuals being referred to, or screened for behavioral health or SUD concerns. The number of people served for behavioral health challenges is expected to increase as the services are promoted and recognized in the community.

OCHN manages Behavioral Health Homes (BHHs) in Oakland County. Health Homes prioritize 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. Last month, OCHN enrolled twenty-eight new people in BHHs out of 830 program enrollers.

LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

The OCHN team continues to collaborate with our legislative consultants and CMHA to advocate for the additional funding needed to close the revenue gap. Other issues include:

- Medicaid Redetermination – categories of disability and rate adjustments.
- Restatement of Medicaid Spend-down and reinstatement of Medicaid Spend Down Benefit policies.
- Direct Care Worker/ Direct Service Professional rate increases.

LOCAL ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT

OCHN hosted an Advocacy Workgroup last month to discuss Direct Care Worker wages and spend down initiatives. The group is comprised of individuals served and community advocates developed, and implementation plans to address these critical issues in the community and incoming elected officials.

OCHN continues to advocate and ensure adequate transportation services for individuals served. According to the Michigan Medicaid Provider Manual, Pre-Paid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs) are responsible for transportation to and from a beneficiary's place of residence for the individual to participate in a state plan, Habilitation Support Waiver (HSW) or additional /1915(i) SPA service at an approved day program site program. Under the new transportation billing process, OCHN's specialized residential providers can bill for Medicaid vocational and supported employment transportation services. This Medicaid billing process replaces the \$1,000 stipend.

SYSTEMS OF CARE VALUE-BASED CARE & OUTCOMES

- FY25 plans to standardize contracted funding rates and promote service provider network equity continue to move forward. To ensure transparent communication, a fact sheet explaining this critical system of care transition has been developed ([click here](#)).
- The fact sheet also highlights the transition of several administrative service lines delegated to the provider network to OCHN's contracted network for direct contracting, management, and administrative oversight. These include the following:
 - Transportation: OCHN continues to prioritize the current and future transportation needs for individuals receiving support. To date, OCHN and Easterseals MORC have

successfully transitioned an estimated 2,300 individuals requiring transportation. OCHN continues to work with transportation providers and ES/MORC to ensure transportation needs are being met for individuals served as it aligns with the Individual Plan of Service (IPOS).

- Special Residential Services SRS/ Community Living Supports (CLS): The \$.20 direct care wage increase pass through funding from MDHHS has been added to OCHN's FY25 rates. OCHN's robust Claims Team continues to work diligently to ensure essential practices are in place to process claims efficiently and maintain critical support for individuals served.
- Financial Management Services (FMS): The transition of FMS contracts, management, policies, and procedures to OCHN's Managed Care Administration Department took effect at the beginning of fiscal year 2025 (October 1, 2024). This transition includes review of the Self-Determination / Self Directed Agreements for critical elements that ensure individuals have choice in services and support and engage in ways that enhance their lives.

PROVIDER NOTIFICATIONS

Pontiac General Hospital (PGH) has received notification regarding their participation in the Medicare program as an acute care hospital has been terminated as of November 24, 2024. While this will have a significant impact on the hospital's operations in the immediate future, OCHN is not aware of any long-term plan regarding closing the hospital that currently is the location of the OCHD, Honor Health and OCHN's Integrated Urgent Care (Walk-In) Center.

The Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a letter terminating PGH's CMS ID related to acute care. The hospital has not lost its hospital license and reportedly intend to reopen as a behavioral health entity.

According to WARN notice, which is the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act that helps ensure advance notice in cases of qualified plant closings and mass layoffs, a notice filed with the state of Michigan reports that Pontiac General Hospital will begin laying off more than 250 people in the coming weeks. The layoffs are being enacted because they have been excluded from receiving Medicare funds. The WARN notice says the hospital does not expect that the entire facility will be affected and that they do not believe the hospital will shut down.

RECOGNITION

- Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) recently received **Full Compliance** for the state assessment for recipient rights. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Office of Recipient Rights (MDHHS ORR) completed the assessment.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- In October, OCHN hosted thirty-three training courses for 949 people.
- OCHN is committed to increasing staff recruitment and retainment to support our reputation as a competitive employer with an appealing work culture. Human Resources continues to participate in college-sponsored career fairs. The OCHN Advocacy Workgroup convenes this

month to discuss and develop a robust advocacy workplan to champion increased Direct Care Worker (DCW) wages.

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
- Attend an OCHN Board Meeting:
 - [Committee of the Whole](#) (COW): Monday, December 9th at 4:30 p.m.
 - [General Board](#): Tuesday, December 17th at 6 p.m.