

Director's Report – October 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

October is a month filled with meaningful observances that align with Oakland Community Health Network's (OCHN) mission and values. The month began by recognizing **National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)** as a time to celebrate the many contributions of individuals living with disabilities and to highlight the importance of inclusive employment opportunities. OCHN's dedicated vocational and employment service providers play a critical role in supporting people as they pursue meaningful work and greater independence. Additionally, **World Mental Health Day**, observed on **October 10th** during **Mental Illness Awareness Week**, brings global attention to mental health awareness, advocacy, and support for individuals affected by mental illness. This day underscores the importance of mental wellness and the ongoing efforts to reduce stigma and promote recovery.

As we begin a new fiscal year, we are inspired by the significant progress made and energized by the opportunities ahead. The achievements of the past year, which we should all be proud of, are a testament to the dedication and hard work of the entire OCHN team and our valued provider network.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the individuals and families we serve. Your efforts each day make a lasting impact all year long.

STATE BUDGET FY26 AND IMPACT ON OCHN

Governor Gretchen Whitmer has signed Michigan's **Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) budget**, totaling **\$81 billion**, with **\$14.1 billion** in general funds. This marks her **seventh balanced, bipartisan budget**, focusing on key "kitchen-table" issues that directly impact Michigan residents' lives.

Key Highlights:

- **Infrastructure:** Nearly **\$2 billion** in long-term funding for road repairs.
- **Tax Relief:** Continued tax cuts for seniors and working families
- **Safety:** \$1.6 billion for local governments via revenue sharing.
- **Health & Environment:** Protection of core health care services.
- **Education:** Historic investments in schools, including increased per-student funding and support for special education and at-risk students.
- **Government Efficiency:** Elimination of thousands of unfilled government positions to reduce waste and improve transparency.
- **Economic Development:** Bipartisan legislation planned to support job creation and advanced manufacturing.

What does this mean for OCHN Community & Stakeholders?

- **Strengthening Public Safety = \$1.6 billion** in revenue sharing for local governments, funding for **2,000** Michigan State Police personnel, crime labs, and community violence prevention, and wage increases for corrections officers and state troopers.
- **Protecting Health Care Access - \$29.8 billion** for core Medicaid services, support for mental health, autism services, and senior care, and continued funding for maternal and child health programs.

UPDATE ON THE PIHP REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)*

Over the last couple of months, our team has been anticipating and has begun working on the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Request for Proposals (RFP), released on August 4, 2025, to determine which organizations will oversee Medicaid specialty behavioral health services. The RFP included numerous updates, more than 350 questions and answers, with the final due date set for October 13, 2025.

OCHN carefully reviewed the RFP to understand what these changes could mean for our community. No matter what the outcome, our priority will remain the same: making sure people and families in Oakland County continue to have access to the high-quality mental health and substance use services they need.

BOARD ACTIONS AND GOVERNANCE UPDATES

At its October 6 meeting, the OCHN Board approved two resolutions to support regional alignment and readiness for the MDHHS PIHP rebid. The first establishes a PIHP Oversight Committee to ensure governance compliance and oversight if OCHN receives a new regional contract. The second authorizes an interlocal agreement with Macomb County CMH to pursue a proposal for the Metro Region PIHP jointly. These actions position OCHN to maintain local accountability while strengthening regional collaboration and service continuity.

OCHN ACTIONS

OCHN continues to collaborate closely with partner PIHPs, Community Mental Health Service Programs (CMHSPs), and statewide associations to ensure the public mental health system's voice remains central in discussions surrounding the MDHHS rebid process.

Key actions include:

- **Coordinated Advocacy:** OCHN leadership is participating in regular strategy sessions with the **Community Mental Health Association of Michigan (CMHAM)**, other PIHP CEOs, and advocacy partners to monitor legal proceedings and assess statewide impacts.
- **Information Sharing:** OCHN provides timely updates to **Oakland County stakeholders**, including partnering with other CMHSP leadership and provider networks, to ensure awareness of potential system changes and to support continuity of care planning.
- **Policy Engagement:** OCHN has communicated with **state and legislative partners** to emphasize the importance of maintaining public governance, regional accountability, and community-based service delivery.
- **Contingency Planning:** Internal teams are evaluating potential scenarios resulting from the Court's ruling to safeguard service stability and ensure minimal disruption for individuals served.

OCHN remains committed to protecting local oversight, promoting integrated care, and ensuring that any future system redesign continues to reflect the values of Michigan's public behavioral health system.

In summary, OCHN continues to navigate key challenges impacting the public behavioral health system, including:

- **Federal and State Budget Pressures:** Reductions in Medicaid funding and eligibility that may affect access to services.
- **MDHHS Contractual Requirements:** Increasing administrative, reporting, and compliance expectations for PIHPs and CMHSPs.

Despite these challenges, OCHN remains steadfast in its mission to ensure that the individuals and families we serve have access to high-quality, person-centered care.

ACCESS TO 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.

Metric	September 2025	FY25 YTD
Calls to Access	1,957	33,509
Screenings Completed	444	6,495

Customer Services, Community Engagement & Outreach

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

Metric	September 2025	FY25 YTD
Customer Service Call Responses	721	7,792
Community Events	12	167
Email Engagements	21,679	312,826
Website Views	43,175	485,945

ADVOCACY & COLLABORATION

OCHN reminds the community that **your voice matters!** Stay informed, share your stories, and support efforts to maintain strong, localized PIHP services focused on people. For more information, visit **OCHN's Advocacy page** at www.oaklandchn.org/advocacy.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC) AND RECIPIENT RIGHT ADVISORY COUNCIL (RRAC)

- **Citizens Advisory Council (CAC)** - The Citizens Advisory Council provides critical community input on OCHN programs, policies, and priorities. Members include individuals with lived experience, family members, advocates, and community representatives who ensure OCHN's work remains person-centered and inclusive. The **Board Liaison** serves as the connection between the CAC and the Board of Directors, communicating recommendations and community perspectives. As **CEO & Executive Director**, I review and integrate CAC feedback into planning and maintain open communication with the Council and Board to ensure community voices guide OCHN's work.
- **Recipient Rights Advisory Council (RRAC)** - The Recipient Rights Advisory Council provides oversight and guidance to protect and promote the rights of individuals receiving mental health services within OCHN's network, consistent with the Michigan Mental Health Code. The **Board Liaison** represents the Board of Directors and ensures communication about rights-related trends and system issues. As **CEO & Executive Director**, I support the RRAC's independence, ensure it has the necessary resources, and promote the integration of its recommendations into OCHN's quality and compliance activities.

Both councils strengthen OCHN's commitment to transparency, accountability, and community partnership, ensuring the voices of those we serve guide our mission and impact.

OAKLAND 360 CARE CENTER

The grand opening celebration for the **Oakland 360 Care Center was held on Thursday, September 25, 2025**. The Oakland 360 Care Center is a unique facility designed to expand access to integrated health services for county residents. Developed in partnership with Honor Community Health, Oakland Community Health Network, Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency, and Oakland County, the center provides behavioral health support, wrap-around resources, and primary health care regardless of a person's ability to pay. This initiative is a powerful example of how cross-sector collaboration can strengthen our system by integrating behavioral health into whole-person care - breaking barriers, reducing stigma, and fostering stronger, healthier communities.

HONOR COMMUNITY HEALTH – GREAT GATSBY GALA



On September 27th, Honor Community Health hosted a Great Gatsby Gala, and OCHN team members attended. Pictured from right to left: R. Baker, L. Walker, K. Anstett, T. Taylor, D. Lasenby, F. Carley, K. Flowers, and T. Zizumbo.

WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES RALLY

Photo recap of the Walk a Mile in My Shoes Rally on the capitol steps in Lansing on Wednesday, September 17, 2025.



Photo recap of the Recovery Celebration on Friday, September 19th at our Troy office.



Photo recap of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk on Saturday, September 20th at the University of Detroit Mercy.



Left: Grand Opening of the Oakland 360 Care Center, 48980 Woodward Ave, Pontiac on September 25, 2025.
Right: Radio Centro interview regarding the Oakland 360 Care Center on September 24, 2025.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS

OCHN received a \$1 million grant from the State of Michigan for FY25, thanks to the support of the Michigan Legislature and the Governor. The enhancements to services on the crisis continuum and assessments are designed to strengthen access and improve care coordination. To achieve this, 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, more importantly, reinforces our unwavering 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.

CRISIS CONTINUUM SERVICES

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 who are 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)

Total Crisis Calls	September 2025	FY25 YTD
OC Resource & Crisis Helpline	2,176	30,768

Youth & Family Care Connections (YFCC) Outcomes

Metric	September 2025	FY25 YTD
Service Requests	158	1,624
Unique Persons Served	133	1,318
Inpatient Dispositions	40	386
Diversions	84	936
Mobile Crisis Unit Responses	17	233

Substance Abuse Disorder Services & Supports

OCHN continues to support substance use disorder treatment through grant-funded initiatives. In September, the **Sober Support Unit (SSU)** served 138 individuals, totaling 1,462 YTD. Additionally, 11 underinsured individuals received necessary SUD services, bringing the YTD total to 287 individuals.

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	September 2025	FY25 YTD
Referrals	468	4,884
Remained in Community	237 / 50.6%	2,424 / 49.6%
Arrests	9 / 1.9%	150 / 3.1%
Voluntary Emergency Transports	71 / 15.2%	868 / 17.8%

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.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY UPDATE

Court of Claims Hears PIHP Rebid Lawsuit Against DHHS - The Michigan Court of Claims heard oral arguments on October 9 in Region 10 PIHP v. State of Michigan; a case challenging the Department of Health and Human Services’ (DHHS) plan to rebid and restructure the state’s Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs). Judge Christopher Yates presided over a full day of testimony and stated he expects to issue a declaratory judgment early next week, likely October 14, to resolve the matter.

Summary of the Case - The lawsuit was filed after DHHS issued an August 2025 Request for Proposals (RFP) to consolidate the current 10 PIHP regions into three larger regions. Under the proposed configuration, Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne counties would be grouped into a single region, replacing the current locally governed PIHP structure. Plaintiffs — including one PIHP and other community mental health entities — argue that the RFP violates provisions of the Michigan Mental Health Code; undermines the public governance model that ensures local accountability; and risks significant disruption to continuity of care for individuals with behavioral health needs.

MDHHS maintains that state law grants the department broad authority to determine PIHP boundaries and selection, asserting that the rebid process complies with legislative intent.

Next Steps and Implications

The Court’s decision is expected on October 14, coinciding with the October 13 RFP submission deadline.

- If DHHS proceeds under the current RFP, existing PIHPs—including OCHN—would be ineligible to bid without substantial restructuring.

- The outcome will have significant implications for regional governance, funding distribution, and care coordination across the state’s public behavioral health system.

OCHN leadership will review the Court’s decision once issued and work with regional and statewide partners to assess the impact on operations, system governance, and service delivery in Oakland County and the Metro Region.

MANAGED CARE

CCBHC Direct Payment Update

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has issued new guidance about shifting to a direct payment system for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) starting in FY2026. From FY2026 onward, OCHN and other PIHPs will no longer manage or oversee the CCBHC demonstration.

- MDHHS’ Goals - Corrects inconsistent implementation across PIHP regions by MDHHS and reduces conflicts of interest with CCBHC standards. Payments will be sent directly from MDHHS to CCBHCs through the CHAMPS system by October 1, 2025. The Quality Bonus Payments will stay part of the model. The direct payment system will continue until the demonstration ends in September 2027.
- PIHP’s Role - Will continue to coordinate with CCBHCs to help individuals access services outside the CCBHC scope, but administrative funding for CCBHCs has been removed from the OCHN Budget for FY26.
- Recipient Rights oversight will keep going through the local CMHSP. OCHN will keep working with MDHHS, CCBHCs, and community partners to ensure smooth service coordination for individuals and families. Protections for recipient rights, grievances, and appeals remain solid, and feedback from providers and clients helps guide the implementation process.

Fiscal Management Services Transition Update

Over the past year, under the direction of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) has been engaged in the transition to assume oversight of Fiscal Management Services (FMS). This transition is a critical step in strengthening accountability, ensuring regulatory compliance, and achieving greater consistency across service delivery.

As OCHN continues to implement the technical requirements established by MDHHS, we remain committed to maintaining program fidelity and adherence to established standards. Importantly, rates for Community Living Supports (CLS) have not been altered or reduced under OCHN’s oversight.

To align fully with MDHHS guidelines and safeguard program integrity, adjustments to budget allocations have been implemented. These adjustments do not constitute reductions in CLS rates but represent necessary measures to ensure long-term sustainability and compliance with state-mandated requirements.

OCHN will continue to prioritize transparency and accountability in all aspects of this process and will maintain ongoing collaboration with providers, partners, and stakeholders to support the continuity and quality of services for the individuals and families we serve.

Value Based Care

OCHN has transitioned from Service Models to a Value-Based Care model. This transition is using standardized rates to promote equity and a fee-for-service reimbursement model to support service sustainability which aligns with MDHHS reimbursement models. The goal is to improve measurable and sustainable outcomes for people served.

OCHN moved to a standardized and improved reimbursement process by utilizing fund source management with Value-Based Care. The value-based care model brings tangible benefits by using standardized service rates to ensure provider network equity and prioritize quality life outcomes for people served.

RECOGNITION

OCHN is proud to announce that our own **Sherri Rushman**, Education Specialist, Certified Peer Support Specialist, and author, was recently honored during the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' annual Recipient Rights Conference with the prestigious 2025 Cookie Gant Spirit Award.



The **Cookie Gant Spirit Award** is presented annually to an individual who exemplifies unwavering commitment, compassion, and advocacy for people with mental health needs and developmental disabilities, all values that defined Cookie Gant's life and legacy.

Sherri is a licensed Social Worker and a Certified Peer Support Specialist; Rushman has dedicated her career to uplifting individuals with disabilities and their families. In 2023, she published her first book, *Catching Hope: Hope Givers, Hope Receivers & Hope Stealers*, which combines her lived experience, professional insights, and the core principles of her "Catching Hope" framework.

We are incredibly proud of Sherri and the well-deserved recognition she has received. She has been a vital part of OCHN for decades, and through her Hope Giver Training Series, she has inspired and empowered hundreds of individuals. She truly embodies the spirit of hope and resilience. We are honored to have her as part of the OCHN team.

SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER 2025 CEO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

- Walk a Mile Rally (9/17)
- Recovery Celebration (9/19)
- NAMI Walk (9/20)
- Honor
- Recipient Rights Advisory Council (RRAC) Meeting (10/2)
- Community Advisory Council (CAC) Meeting (10/15)
- Community Mental Health Association Conference (10/26-10/28)

STRATEGIC GOALS & PRIORITIES (FY26-28)

1. **Managed Care Administration and Operations** - This priority focuses on strategies that increase efficiency and strengthen administrative and operational services.
2. **Advocacy, Partnership, and Outreach** - Under this focus area, our strong, trust-based partnerships power a responsive and inclusive behavioral health system.
3. **Comprehensive Systems of Care** - This priority demonstrates OCHN's commitment to establishing and reaching key milestones to ensure optimal whole-health outcomes for individuals receiving services.
4. **Crisis Continuum of Care** - This priority focuses on enhancing access to a full continuum of crisis services that ensures timely, clinically driven assessment and stabilization for individuals during their most vulnerable moments.

Please see OCHN's FY 26 Annual Plan and FY26-28 Strategic Plan for more detail.

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, November 10th at 4:30 p.m.
- **General Board:** Tuesday, November 18th at 6 p.m.

Looking Ahead

As we welcome FY26, OCHN remains committed to fiscal responsibility, workforce engagement, advocacy leadership, and compassionate care delivery. With our partners, we will continue to strengthen public behavioral health services in Oakland County.

Respectfully,

Dana Lasenby
Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director