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**Oakland Community Health Network Hosts Town
Hall to Address State's Proposed Overhaul of
Behavioral Health Funding System**

August 21, 2025-Oakland County, MI – Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) reaffirmed its commitment to the 30,000 individuals it serves during a well-attended Town Hall meeting on Monday night. More than 200 individuals including people receiving services, advocates, parents, caregivers, direct care professionals, legislators, and community members participated in-person and virtually to discuss the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDHHS) proposed changes to the state's Pre-paid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs).

Featured speakers included Dana Lasenby, OCHN CEO and Executive Officer, Frances Carley, OCHN Deputy Chief of Strategic Initiatives and Legislative Affairs, Kevin Fischer, Executive Director NAMI Michigan, Hannah Wesolowski, NAMI Chief Advocacy Officer, Alan Bolter, Associate Director Community Mental Health Association of Michigan, Michael Spisz, Oakland County Board of Commissioners, Deirdre Goldsmith, Therapeutics, Jenny Brown, Dutton Farm, Pepper Catt, The Alliance of Coalitions, and Amit Agrawal, OCHN Trainer.

A recording of the Town Hall is available here: [INSERT LINK].

At the heart of the discussion was MDHHS's Request for Proposal (RFP), a sweeping initiative that could shift management of critical behavioral health funds away from local public entities and into the hands of private health plans. This proposed change has sparked alarm across the state's behavioral health community particularly among those who fear the loss of local oversight, transparency, and trusted service delivery.

"We appreciate everyone who voiced their concerns about how this RFP will impact the lives of tens of thousands of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illness, substance use disorders, and children with autism—not only in Oakland County but across the state," said Dana Lasenby, OCHN Executive Director and CEO. "We are strongly advocating to preserve the public system that puts people first and maintains accountability to those we serve."

Key Concerns Raised at the Town Hall

Attendees voiced overwhelming concern about the future of care access if private health plans are allowed to take over the administration of PIHPs. Under the current structure, OCHN operates both as a PIHP and a Community Mental Health Service Provider (CMHSP), receiving funding from MDHHS and directly

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supporting service delivery. Health plans, under the proposed model, would manage funds but not provide services raising questions about the loss of hands-on local expertise.

Many parents questioned how this shift would impact their children's care, particularly those with autism or complex behavioral health needs. Concerns were also raised about funding shortages and additional bureaucracy in an already financially strained system. One participant noted, "Where will the state find the money to fund this added layer of administration when our current system is already underfunded?"

What's at Stake?

If adopted, the RFP could:

- Eliminate local control and consumer representation: PIHP boards are currently required to include at least one-third first or secondary consumers.
- Consolidate regions: The existing 10 PIHP regions would be reduced to just three, with the entire metro Detroit area, Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties consolidated into one region.
- Privatization of the administration of public Medicaid and other fund sources
- Disrupt community access: Residents currently rely on local officials and representatives for intervention when problems arise; this direct line of accountability would be lost.
- Destabilize the system: Transitioning funding models could lead to significant delays, confusion, and gaps in services.
- Increase administrative costs: PIHPs currently operate with 2–5% administrative costs, compared to private health plans, which are permitted to keep up to 15%. This could divert an estimated **\$500 million annually** from direct care services.

OCHN programs at risk include School Mental Health Navigators, autism support programs, Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training, and Co-responder models that pair law enforcement with mental health professionals.

Strong Local Opposition

The proposal has drawn formal opposition from numerous local leaders and agencies, including:

- OCHN Board of Directors
- Oakland County Executive David Coulter
- Oakland County Board of Commissioners and Chair Dave Woodward
- Office of Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel
- Michigan Association of Counties
- Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard
- 52nd Judicial District Court
- Oakland County Association of Chiefs of Police
- Macomb County Board of Commissioners

National Recognition of Excellence

Despite the current uncertainty, OCHN continues to excel. The organization, which is only one of two in the state to be NCQA accredited, recently earned a three-year accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) with a perfect score. NCQA's Managed Behavioral Health Organization (MBHO) Accreditation is a rigorous review process, including on-site evaluations by physicians and care experts. OCHN's accreditation confirms its commitment to high-quality, person-centered care.

Get Involved

OCHN encourages all community members, service providers, and elected officials to remain informed and engaged. Visit OCHN's Advocacy page [Advocacy Resources | Oakland CHN, MI](#) for more information on

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how to contact your local legislator and the Governor's office.

For non-emergency Access services, call 248-464-6363. If you or someone you know needs immediate assistance, call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988. For more information on OCHN, please visit www.oaklandchn.org.

About OCHN

OCHN is contracted by MDHHS to lead a provider service network and manage care for approximately 30,000 Oakland County citizens at more than 400 service sites. People who receive public behavioral health services through OCHN's provider network include those who have an intellectual or developmental disability, mental health concerns, or substance use disorder. Most of these individuals have Medicaid insurance coverage.

OCHN's goal is to ensure these individuals are aware of and have access to services and supports that will improve their health and quality of life, as well as ensure their engagement in full community participation. Its mission to "inspire hope, empower people, and strengthen communities" reflects an unyielding belief in a "Valuable System for Valued People." Programs and supports provided by OCHN's service network are available at www.oaklandchn.org.