



Dana Lasenby
OCHN Executive Director & CEO

OCHN MISSION:

Inspire Hope • Empower People
• Strengthen 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.

Director's Report – January 2026

Welcome to 2026!

Happy New Year! The start of a new year comes with meaningful, measurable change and transition. Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) remains dedicated to providing the highest quality behavioral healthcare to the individuals and families we serve across our community, especially during times of crisis.

Beginning mid-February, all crisis services will be provided directly by OCHN at the Resource and Crisis Center in Pontiac.

OCHN's top priority is ensuring that Oakland County residents continue to experience uninterrupted access to crisis care throughout this transition. Although the accelerated timeline presents challenges, OCHN is fully prepared to manage this change. Our leadership team is actively engaged and committed to maintaining continuity of care for every person we serve.

We are collaborating closely with provider partners, law enforcement, hospitals, and other community stakeholders to minimize disruption and support a seamless transition. Transparent and timely communication will continue as this work progresses.

OCHN's Crisis Services are grounded in our commitment to delivering timely, coordinated, person-centered, and quality-focused care. By working hand in hand with community partners, OCHN aims to strengthen continuity of care and improve outcomes before, during, and after a crisis.

As we also observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day this month, we reflect on Dr. King's enduring call to advance justice through service. His legacy—deeply connected to Michigan through the 1963 Walk to Freedom in Detroit—continues to guide our mission and our responsibility to address behavioral health disparities within our community.

Together, we move into 2026 committed to strengthening crisis care, supporting equity, and ensuring every person receives the help they need when they need it most. OCHN remains committed to ***Our Mission to Inspire hope, empower people, and strengthen communities.***

IN MEMORIAM: MALKIA NEWMAN, HONORING A LEGACY

We honor our dear friend, valued colleague, and longtime OCHN Board Member, Malkia Maisha Newman, who recently passed away. Malkia served on the OCHN Board for more than 19 years in many roles, including Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, bringing a wealth of life experience, compassion, and unwavering dedication to her public service.



As the CNS Healthcare Anti-Stigma Team Supervisor, Malkia was deeply committed to educating others about the importance of eliminating stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding mental illness. She consistently sought to uplift and celebrate the person behind the challenges, offering understanding, dignity, and hope. Her own life journey inspired Malkia's dedication to the Anti-Stigma campaign. She did not simply hold a position; she carried out a mission.

On Saturday, January 10, 2026, a heartfelt homegoing service celebrating her life and legacy was held at Welcome Missionary Baptist Church in Pontiac, where many gathered to honor this extraordinary woman. Her wisdom, friendship, and steadfast commitment to those served by OCHN and its providers will be deeply missed. The OCHN team honors Malkia's life, style, and legacy and extends our heartfelt thoughts to her family, friends, and all who were blessed to know her.

Special Message from Mr. Kevin Fischer, Executive Director of NAMI, MI

Malkia was a uniquely powerful spirit. When I first met her, I was overwhelmed by her presence. You knew when Malkia was in the room, even before you saw her, you could feel her positive spirit. Even before her powerful voice filled the room in song, you felt her presence. Our connection was immediate.

For years, I had the privilege of serving with her on the Behavioral Health Advisory Council and in several other capacities. Malkia was a leader! Very self-assured, direct, and steadfast. She was transparent about the challenges she faced in life, and those who knew her best understood that her resilience was her strength. I enjoyed her presence and friendship. I referred to her as "my baby sister" because she loved bossing me around, much as my baby sister did. We all knew her as a powerful advocate, but she was so much more to me. I miss "my baby sister," but I find comfort in knowing she is now at peace.

Please know that I would like to work with OCHN to honor Malkia at NAMI Michigan Honors in April.

*Regards,
Kevin Fischer, Executive Director
NAMI Michigan*

ACCESS TO SERVICES

OCHN remains committed to connecting individuals with essential behavioral health services. Our **Access Team** continues to ensure timely service eligibility determinations and provides immediate linkage to critical community resources, helping individuals receive the right support at the right time.

Metric	December 2025	2026 Fiscal Year to Date
Calls to Access	2,557	7,895
Screenings Completed	390	1,245

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 meets on the third Wednesday of each month and 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.
- At the December 2025 Citizens Advisory Council meeting, the CEO/Executive Director acknowledged the loss experienced by a Council member and emphasized the importance of grief support during the holiday season. As the year concluded, she reflected on OCHN's accomplishments and expressed appreciation for staff, the Board of Directors, providers, and community partners for their continued collaboration. Looking ahead to the new year, priorities were reaffirmed around person- and family-centered services, expanded access, strengthening and integrating the crisis continuum, advancing accountability and integrity in decision-making, and investing in workforce recruitment and retention through innovation. Updates were provided on the PIHP and CMHSP rebid process, including recent court hearings with a ruling pending. Additional discussion focused on Community Living Supports authorization processes and ongoing efforts to enhance crisis services, including planning related to Common Ground. Strengthening and expanding a "no wrong door" crisis continuum remains a top strategic priority, with a focus on ensuring timely access to care, supporting a smooth transition, retaining skilled staff, and improving overall service delivery.
- **A member of the CAC**, asked for me or someone to speak on how OCHN is going to interface with AI regarding treating people we serve. I included Dr. Bill Pozios, CMO and Nasr Doss, CIO, who agreed to present on this topic during the March CAC.
- **Recipient Rights Advisory Council (RRAC)** - The Recipient Rights Advisory Council meets on the first Thursday of each month and 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 as discussed at the last meeting on December 4th.

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

Customer Services, Community Engagement & Outreach

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

Metric	December 2025	2026 Fiscal Year to Date
Customer Service Call Responses	567	2,618
Community Events	5	28
Email Engagements	22,548	67,876
Website Views	35,393	117,757

OCHN hosted its annual **Law Enforcement Appreciation Breakfast** on **Monday, January 12, 2026**, bringing together officers and leadership from **more than 15 cities across Oakland County** to recognize their service, collaboration, and commitment to community well-being.



This annual gathering provided a meaningful opportunity to honor the law enforcement professionals who work daily to protect and serve our communities, while reinforcing Oakland County’s shared commitment to working as **one coordinated team**.

The event highlighted the importance of strong partnerships between **law enforcement, mental health providers, and substance use professionals**, all of whom play critical roles in enhancing public safety and improving crisis response for residents.

During the event, OCHN honored several **award recipients** for their exceptional leadership, advocacy, and dedication to advancing coordinated crisis response and behavioral health collaboration across Oakland County. These individuals and teams were recognized for going above and beyond in strengthening cross-system partnerships, improving outcomes for people in crisis, and demonstrating outstanding commitment to community safety and well-being.

CIT Executive of the Year

Chief Ryan Gagnon, Auburn Hills Police Department

CIT First Responder

Officer Amy Drehmer, Stoney Creek High School Resource Officer

Behavioral Healthcare Practitioner

Hillary Nusbaum, OCHN Co-Responder Supervisor

Advocate

Sherri Rushman, OCHN Education Specialist

Person with Lived Experience

Pepper Catt, The Alliance Peer Navigator / Recovery Support Specialist



OCHN CONTINUES CRISIS SERVICES CONTINUUM

OCHN is dedicated and committed to providing the highest quality behavioral healthcare to the people it serves in our community, especially during times of crisis. That is why beginning **mid-February all crisis services will be provided by OCHN at the Resource and Crisis Center in Pontiac.**

Adults in crisis will be able to walk into the OCHN Resource and Crisis Center, anytime 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24/7) and be met with caring and compassionate staff that will be there to help them through their crisis. Services such as comprehensive crisis assessment, hospitalization support, treatment and recovery referrals, and connections to resources are available. These services will be provided in our Crisis Stabilization, Crisis Residential, and the Sober Support Units.

Also available on the lower level of the OCHN Resource and Crisis Center are services and supports available for youth in crisis at the Youth and Family Care Connection in partnership with New Oakland Family Centers. Youth ages 17 and under can walk in and receive age-appropriate care by trained professionals.

Crisis Services will remain in Oakland County and continue to be provided at the same trusted location:

OCHN Resource and Crisis Center
1200 N. Telegraph Road, Building 32E
Pontiac, MI 48341
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Key focus areas include:

- Improved coordination across crisis services and community providers
- Faster response times and more streamlined referrals
- Enhanced follow-up and post-crisis support

OCHN's Crisis Services are guided by a strong commitment to enhancing quality of care while ensuring services are timely, coordinated, and centered on the person being served. OCHN's team works closely with community partners to strengthen continuity of care and improve outcomes during and after a crisis.

Youth & Family Care Connections (YFCC) Outcomes

Metric	December 2025	2026 Fiscal Year to Date
Service Requests	101	462
Unique Persons Served	89	383
Inpatient Dispositions	36	132
Diversions	48	241
Mobile Crisis Unit Responses	13	57

Substance Abuse Disorder Services & Supports

OCHN continues to support substance use disorder treatment through grant-funded initiatives. In November, the **Sober Support Unit (SSU)** served 118 individuals and 380 fiscal year to date.

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. OCHN currently has 10 co-responders in 21 communities.

CoRe Program Data

Metric	December 2025	2026 Fiscal Year to Date
Referrals	326	1,204
Remained in Community	156 / 48%	572 / 48%
Arrests	5 / 1%	27 / 2%
Voluntary Emergency Transports	67 / 21%	227 / 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.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY UPDATE

Michigan Court Decision on MDHHS PIHP RFP On January 8, 2026, Judge Yates, in the Michigan Court of Claims, issued an important decision about the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDHHS) plan to restructure how regional mental health Medicaid services are managed across the state. MDHHS had issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select only three large regional entities to manage Medicaid mental health services starting October 1, 2026.

Several Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs) and Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSPs) challenged this RFP in court.

Why does this matter?

OCHN is both the PIHP and CMHSP. CMHSPs like ours are **not optional providers**. Under Michigan law, counties are required to operate CMHSPs, and CMHSPs have non-negotiable legal duties, including:

- Providing crisis and emergency mental health services
- Conducting pre-admission screenings for inpatient care
- Coordinating care with hospitals, jails, courts, and law enforcement
- Protecting recipient rights
- Serving people regardless of insurance status or ability to pay

These duties apply to both Medicaid and non-Medicaid individuals, often before anyone even knows how services will be paid for.

What did the Court decide?

The Court found that MDHHS's RFP conflicts with Michigan law because it shifts too much control to the new regional PIHPs and limits CMHSP authority in ways that could prevent CMHSPs from carrying out their legal responsibilities under the Mental Health Code.

Key points from the Court:

- The RFP is final and real, not hypothetical. Bids have already been submitted.
- CMHSPs depend heavily on Medicaid funding to operate.

The RFP gives PIHPs exclusive control over key "managed care" functions such as:

- Authorizing services
- Managing provider networks
- Paying claims
- Quality and compliance oversight

Without those functions being granted to the CMHSPs, CMHSPs may not be able to legally do their jobs. The Court made clear that CMHSPs are system managers required by statute, not just vendors that can be sidelined.

Did the Court stop the RFP?

- No. The Court did not order MDHHS to immediately stop or cancel the RFP. However, it strongly warned that moving forward without changes will likely result in continued lawsuits and court intervention.

What options does MDHHS have now?

The Court outlined several paths MDHHS could take:

- Change the RFP to better share authority with CMHSPs
- Cancel and reissue a redesigned RFP
- Proceed as-is, which carries a high risk of lawsuits and delays
- Seek legislative or federal changes, which would take time and does not solve immediate issues

What does this all mean?

- There is some level of ongoing legal and operational uncertainty statewide. However, this should be viewed as a win for our system.
- CMHSP roles and responsibilities remain grounded in statute and have not gone away.
- MDHHS's next steps will directly affect future structure, funding, and governance.
- More litigation or changes to the transition timeline are possible.

OCHN will continue monitoring MDHHS actions and court developments and will communicate updates as decisions are made.

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 be 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 help 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.

DECEMBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026 CEO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

- Metro Region Meeting (12/5)
- OCHN Board Holiday Reception (12/16)
- CAC Meeting (12/17)
- Law Enforcement Appreciation Breakfast (1/12)
- MLK Day of Remembrance Event (1/19)
- CAC Meeting (1/21)
- Kevin’s Song Conference (1/22 – 1/23)

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 details.

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, February 9th at 4:30 p.m.
- **General Board:** Tuesday, February 17th at 6 p.m.

Looking Ahead

As we embrace FY26, OCHN remains committed to fiscal accountability, workforce engagement, advocacy leadership, and compassionate, person-centered care. Together with our community partners, we will continue strengthening Oakland County's public behavioral health system and advancing high quality services for every individual we serve.

Respectfully,

Dana Lasenby
Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director