

Board Update

Mental Health & Recovery Services (MHRS) Board
Serving Coshocton, Guemsey, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble & Perry Counties
1500 Coal Run Road, Zanesville, Ohio 43701
Phone: 740-454-8557

Regular Board Meeting
Highlights
December 12, 2024

FinancialMatters

Under the guidance of Finance/Audit Committee Chair Dr. Dan Scheerer, board members reviewed and approved the November 2024 Reconciliation Report that showed deposits, checks written for MHRS Board operations, payments to in-network contract service providers and out-of-network community partners, and journal entries.

Below is a breakdown of payments for the provision of treatment and support services for persons with mental illness and/or addictions:

<i>Accounts Payable</i>	<i>In-Network Providers</i>	<i>Out-of-Network Partners</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
November 14, 2024	\$174,279.13	\$33,349.68	\$207,628.81
November 18, 2024	-----	\$23,307.75	\$23,307.75
November 25, 2024	\$223,718.61	\$511,562.96	\$735,281.57
TOTAL	\$397,997.74	\$568,220.39	\$966,218.13

Other November Financial Reports: Board members reviewed the following: 1) Balance Sheet as of November 30, 2024; 2) Network Funding Reserves; 3) a 'Year-to-Date' status report for the MHRS Board's CY 2024 Operating Budget; and 4) a Dashboard Report that provides a high-level overview of key fiscal indicators.

Other Actions:

► **ARPA Projects:** Approved an appropriation transfer in the MHRS Board's CY 2024 Budget, moving \$115,801.01 from the Contingencies Line Item to the line item for ARPA expenses. See page three for information about Network ARPA projects.

► **Required BCI and FBI Background Checks:** Approved a special allocation of \$8,098.00 to Perry Behavioral Health Choices to implement a local network-wide system for conducting required BCI and FBI background checks.

► **Legendary Adventure Zone Park:** Approved a special allocation of \$47,437.06 to the Noble County Commissioners for the purchase of playground equipment for Belle Valley's "Legendary Adventure Zone" Park. The park will offer opportunities for children with disabilities to engage in play with their typically-developing peers.

► **Staff Recognition:** Approved a total of \$2,400 to be used in recognizing MHRS Board employees' outstanding work in Calendar Year 2024.

Executive Director

Misty Cromwell

Board of Directors

Sean Brady

Reid Carpenter

Abby Corder

Leondra Davis

Randi Earnest

Dennis Hitchcock

Sue Hoover

William Johnson

Tony Mayle, Jr

Lt. Dave Peoples

Dan Scheerer, M.D.

Wendy Starlin

Ben Taylor

Bonnie Taylor

Board President

Sue Hoover

Board Vice President

Leondra Davis

Mission Statement

Our mission is to distribute federal, state, and local funding to community mental health providers in a way that facilitates the existence of (and access to) high-quality mental health and substance use recovery services in our six counties.

Mobile Response & Stabilization Services

Robbie Smith, Program Director at Allwell Behavioral Health for the Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) for Youth, noted that this state program is aimed at ensuring the safety and well-being of children, their families, and caregivers facing crisis situations because of escalating behaviors that may risk disruption of a child's current living arrangements. MRSS provides an immediate mobile crisis response and coordinates needed subsequent stabilization.

The program's crisis workers have a culture where the crisis is defined by the caller, and workers quickly meet callers where needed; however, most contacts are in their homes or at schools. The objectives of the program are to establish individual and family safety; maintain youth in the least restrictive setting; divert children from hospital EDs and inpatient hospitalization; keep young people safe at home in the community and in school whenever possible and assist youth and families in learning new skills and building supports to reduce the frequency and intensity of future crises.

Robbie noted that currently the program has four staff to cover a six-county area. If an OhioRISE MRSS expansion grant is approved, the program will be able to add a few more workers. Within the past 11 months, the MRSS program has served 197 families. Team services may include: safety assessments, de-escalation, and skill building.

MHRS Board Executive Director Misty Cromwell noted that service area Family & Children First Councils and Children Services Boards very much appreciate this service and the excellent work being done by Robbie and his co-workers.

Contact Information: Robbie Smith at rsmith@allwell.org.



Below are some highlights from last calendar year that were guided by the MHRS Board's Community Assessment & Plan and Strategic Plan.

- ▶ **Strategic Plan Monitoring:** The MHRS Board's monthly Director's Reports are now formatted to align staff members' work to the organization's Strategic Plan Goals.
- ▶ **Community Assessment & Plan (CAP):** The MHRS Board's CAP is also periodically reviewed, and quarterly 'touch-base' meetings are being held with OhioMHAS's Regional Director.
- ▶ **Improving Network Operations:** The MHRS Board approved an Open Minds Consulting Proposal for collaborating with contract organizations in considering ways to improve healthcare quality and value, strengthen local communities, and create opportunities for customizing contract management.
- ▶ **Improving Crisis Continuum:** A large community stakeholder feedback session was held this fall to identify those areas in the network's crisis continuum that could be improved. Smaller follow-up feedback sessions are being planned for the coming months. This work is being coordinated by TBD Solutions.
- ▶ **Criminal Justice Matters and Stepping Up Initiative:** Service area Criminal Justice Collaboratives continued to meet in 2024, and 'Stepping Up' meetings with former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Evelyn Stratton were held with community stakeholders. The

Stepping Up meetings are focused on the partnerships between mental health and criminal justice professionals, with the goal being to prevent persons with mental illness and/or addictions from being held in jails.

► **Operation BRIDGE Days:** On September 24-25, 2024, the MHRS Board partnered with state and local entities to co-host Operation BRIDGE Days in Guernsey County. The goal of this initiative was to focus on the reduction of supply and demand and simultaneously prioritizing treatment for individuals fighting addictions.

► **Mini-Grant Awards:** The MHRS Board approved over \$80,000 in mini-grants for service area community grassroots organizations. These grants help to engage citizens in creative community betterment that can positively impact at-risk populations. The grants addressed pregnancy and infant loss, treatment for foster care families, helping young girls cope with daily life struggles, services for youths detained in a juvenile treatment center, promotion of information about the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, literacy assistance, a man camp, a parent café, the 'No Limits' Livestock Show, and services for children and families recovering from abuse and sexual assaults.

► **Special ARPA Construction Projects:**

- Regional Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit: A groundbreaking ceremony for this project was recently held in Bethesda, Ohio.
- Genesis Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit: Project is on track, with renovations having been started at Genesis Hospital.
- Allwell Behavioral Health's Urgent Care Facility – Guernsey County: A contractor for this project has been identified and things are beginning to move forward.

► **SCOPE Grant:** Year 2 of this grant is designed to equip and empower first responders to reduce the impact of opioid overdoses in their communities. Key strategies are training, increasing Naloxone distribution, referring patients to treatment services, and community engagement. The SCOPE initiative is creating an important intercept point in connecting individuals with addictions to recovery resources.

► **Special Allocations:** The MHRS Board awarded several special allocations to support: recovery housing, an e-TMS clinic, a foster home treatment pilot, the Warriors to Wellness Program for Veterans, a consumer-operated coffee shop, medication-assisted treatment, help for children with autism and their families, and a winter shelter program for the homeless. A few advances were needed due to problems with electronic billings and workforce development issues. Other allocations were used to help struggling contract organizations.

► **Friends of Recovery:** On September 25, the MHRS Board presented this year's Friends of Recovery awards. The Board annually recognizes individuals who promote recovery from mental illness and/or addictions. Recipients were: **Drew and Courtney Bauserman** from Co-Lab Productions; **Zanesville Community School**; **Jessica Wheeler** from Muskingum Behavioral Health; **Commander Elizabeth Biggers** from the New Lexington Police Department; **Tracie Edwards** from Allwell Behavioral Health; **Travis Stevens** from Guernsey County Juvenile Court; **Jim Fain**, New Lexington Fire Department Chief; and **Fetchy Doodle**, Chief Inspiration Officer for Muskingum Behavioral Health.

► **Local Recovery Summit:** Was held on September 20 in Marietta. There were 165 people in attendance, who heard inspiring recovery stories, danced, played games, and created crafts. Most importantly of all, they celebrated recovery with each other.

► **Annual Board Member Training:** On March 14, reps from the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities conducted a board training that covered the state budget and legislative priorities, marijuana in Ohio, workforce issues, and considerations for the future of behavioral health services. They also reviewed board members' roles and responsibilities.

► **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training:** Twenty-four law enforcement officers graduated from the 2024 CIT Academy. The 4-day course covered scene assessment and de-escalation skills, basic information about mental illnesses and addictions, and the importance of officer self-care. The group also heard the meaningful perspectives of clients and family members. A 1-day training was also held for four service area dispatchers.

► **Annual Suicide Awareness Banquet:** The Annual Suicide Awareness Banquet was held in April. A highlight of the evening was the presentation of several "Heroes of Hope" awards. Recipients were Jim Still-Pepper from Allwell Behavioral Health, Maureen Montgomery from Muskingum County Juvenile Court, New Lexington Police Chief Doug Gill, a coffee shop representative who helped to promote the "Brew Matter" campaign in Guernsey & Noble Counties, and Sandra Harstine, the founder of our service area Suicide Prevention Coalitions. There was also a presentation by Daniel Bennett from Lifeside Ohio, who stressed the importance of keeping guns out of the reach of those who may be contemplating suicide.

► **Levy Renewal:** The Guernsey County Renewal Levy was approved by voters on November 5. This levy will help to ensure that treatment and support services are available for those struggling with mental illness and/or addictions.

► **Continued Transformation of the MHRS Board's Funding Process:** Board and staff members worked to improve the network's 'Request for Funding Applications' process—through meetings of the MHRS Board's Care Management Council and trainings for system fiscal employees. Also, the MHRS Board's funding allocation 'buckets' were revised and made available to network contract organizations. | Several of the MHRS Board's Partners Workgroup meetings this year were focused on reviewing the various funding prioritization tiers and the services included in each.

► **Oxford Recovery Housing:** The MHRS Board approved an allocation of \$128,000 for the development of some Oxford Recovery Housing in our service area. The Oxford concept is the creation of democratically-run, self-supported, and drug-free homes. Oxford Housing is offering an effective and low-cost method of preventing relapse. Initial development is taking place in Guernsey and Coshocton Counties.

► **Improved Access to Psychiatrists:** The MHRS Board approved an allocation to Muskingum Valley Health Centers to support (for one year) the salary and benefits for a newly-recruited psychiatrist – up to a maximum of \$137,888. Access to psychiatrists in our region is not adequate, and the addition of a psychiatrist at MVHC will help to expand access to this level of care. The psychiatrist's services are not limited to clients served by MVHC; services are available to anyone seeking help.

► **Addressing Farmer Stress:** Last summer, at County Fairs throughout our service area, the MHRS Board gathered feedback (through an anonymous survey) about stress in rural communities among farmers. Feedback was received from 887 farmers that indicated many are quietly struggling with untreated anxiety and depression. The MHRS Board is paying certification expenses for network clinicians who would like to serve this special population. Excellent connections have been established with local and state farm supporting organizations.

► **'No Limits' Livestock Show:** The Noble County Board of DD and the MHRS Board teamed up to offer a free opportunity for children over the age of 8 and adults who have developmental disabilities or receive mental health services — to show rabbits, sheep, goats, or feeder calves at the Noble County Fair. All animals were provided, and the 'No Limits' participants were paired with a 4-H or FFA member, who mentored them from practice on Monday of fair week until showtime on Friday. Sarah Reed, MHRS Board Director of Compliance & Quality Improvement, noted: "The 'No Limits' Livestock Show was a huge success and such an amazing experience for those showing animals as well as the 4-H and FFA mentors. To watch them be a part of something that can be life-changing doesn't happen very often, but it did at this special event!"

► **Internship Support — Building Our Future:** The MHRS Board participated in the Appalachian Children's Coalition's Behavioral Health Workforce Hub that offers up to \$1,500 to support up to 135 hours of intern work in the behavioral health arena. The purpose of this program is to improve the quality of life for our region's kids and to promote interest in mental health and addiction recovery careers. The MHRS Board's four interns were from area high schools.

► **Allwell's Transitional Housing in Cambridge, Ohio:** The MHRS Board supported Allwell's development of a Transitional House in Cambridge. The house can accommodate up to eight persons. Residents are assigned a case manager who assists them in accessing community resources and/or employment. Residents are required to save their money toward getting their own housing.

► **OneOhio Funding for a Crisis Notification Program:** OneOhio recently awarded \$65,000 through Ascend to implement a Crisis Notification Program. Under this program, crisis care providers can be alerted when someone has been admitted to an emergency room due to a behavioral health crisis—like an overdose, suicide attempt, or ideation. These notifications give providers and community health organizations timely information to ensure individuals are quickly connected with recovery resources. Behavioral health service providers must provide a 'next day' response to the client following notification.

MHRS Board Executive Director Misty Cromwell thanked board members for their dedicated service, noting that they are giving our service area some of the most precious things they own — their time and talents.