

ST. CLAIR COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH
3111 Electric Avenue
Port Huron, Michigan 48060

GROUP MEETING: Advisory Council
PLACE: St. Clair County CMH – Room 204
DATE: June 5, 2025
TIME: 12:00 p.m.
PRESIDING: Nancy Thomson, Chairman

PRESENT: D. Johnson, K. Thompson, S. Herrle, M. Partipilo, C. Raymo, R. Mirabelli, Dr. K. Albrecht, C. Randall, J. Totty, T. Hudson
ABSENT: K. Gallagher, H. Fogarty, N. Thomson, J. Marocco, N. Condland, S. Chase, T. Pierce, C. Raymo, J. Parker
GUEST: D. Choiniere, V. Blackburn

I. Call to Order/Agenda Changes

The meeting began at 12:08 PM, with R. Mirabelli calling it to order.

II. Review/Accept Minutes

M. Partipilo moved to approve the April meeting minutes, and C. Randall seconded the motion.

III. Quality Improvement Update

1. FY2024 Quality Improvement Annual Report

These are the goals established for FY2024. The team meets quarterly to review and update them, with input from approximately 12 different departments. This report provides a summary of those goals.

2. FY2025 Quality Improvement Program Plan

These goals were set for FY2025 by the same 12 departments. They will meet quarterly to review their progress, and an annual report will be compiled at the end of the year. The goals vary by department—some may be completed during the year, while others, particularly in the Community Relations department, are ongoing by nature.

IV. Chief Executive Director Update

1. Teen Advisory Group

We have representatives from every school in the county, with several schools having more than one participant. Additionally, about five students from the Youth Advisory Committee will be joining the group to help bridge collaboration between the two groups. Their first meeting is scheduled for August.

2. Recruiting for Psychologist

We are partnering with the same agency that recruited Dr. Sial and Dr. Moore. D. Johnson has requested that the new doctor be on-site five days a week, as we currently have only one doctor available, and only one day per week.

V. CMH Updates

1. Possible Medicaid Cuts

There are approximately 30,000 individuals in our community enrolled in Medicaid, with a significant portion at risk of losing coverage—particularly those under the Healthy Michigan Plan, which includes about 11,000 people in St. Clair County. Efforts are underway to assess how many of these individuals receive CMH services. While cuts are anticipated, they are not expected to take effect until 2027.

Our Chief Financial Officer has indicated that the budget appears stable for the next two years. However, if the projected changes occur as expected, the resulting reductions would be devastating—for both those we serve and the services we provide.

As a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC), we are also bound by the state’s mental health code, which prohibits us from turning away individuals in need or maintaining waiting lists. This requirement could place us in a deficit position if funding does not keep pace with demand.

Currently, as a Community Mental Health Authority connected to the PIHP, there is some funding support available through the PIHP, but the long-term outlook remains uncertain.

2. PIHP Procurement

The State of Michigan is proposing to consolidate the current 10 PIHPs into just three regions. Under this proposal, one region would include Mt. Pleasant and areas north, another would encompass Detroit, Wayne, and Oakland counties, and the third would include all remaining counties—placing us among 44 others in a single PIHP region.

They are exploring different structural models, which could be either public or private, but must be non-profit—such as Blue Cross Blue Shield, which meets that criteria.

A significant concern is that, as one of 44 counties, our local voice and unique needs may be overshadowed by larger urban centers like Lansing, Saginaw, and Grand Rapids. Additionally, being grouped with underfunded areas raises the risk of service shortages and diminished access to qualified mental health providers, which could negatively impact care quality across the region.

3. Region 10 Audit

We have a Region 10 audit scheduled for Friday, June 6, 2025—our first on-site audit in some time. The focus will be on our current waiver processes, including the Habilitation Supports Waiver and the more recently introduced 1915(i) waiver, which has gained prominence over the past few years.

VII. Program Operations Update

1. Ukeru

We’ve been seeking effective tools to support families in managing emotional and behavioral regulation challenges at home, both for children and adults. Ukeru is a unique, restraint-free program that offers a combination of hands-on training, theoretical foundations, and practical strategies to safely manage and de-escalate crises. This evidence-based approach has shown strong results both locally and across North America, benefiting individuals in crisis as well as their caregivers.

We plan to send a few staff members to Ukeru training in September. If the training proves valuable, we will consider recommending it to group homes for their staff as well. Kristen will provide a report on the training outcomes in October.

VIII. Community Relations Update

1. May Events Recap

Our Run for Recovery, held on May 10th, was a great success with 452 runners and walkers participating under beautiful weather conditions. We were supported by 69 dedicated volunteers and raised \$16,985 through sponsorships and donations. These funds are distributed among several of our charitable initiatives at CMH, including the Lifeline Fund and Endowment Fund.

This year, we also partnered with our local Bluewater NAMI chapter, which contributed volunteers and participants. In recognition of their support and shared commitment to recovery, we allocated a portion of the proceeds to them. Each year, we select a partner organization that aligns with our values and mission to share in the event's success and impact.

2. 60th Anniversary

Our Annual Awards Ceremony and 60th Anniversary Celebration took place on May 21st, where we recognized this year's award recipients and winners of the Creative Arts Contest. The grand prize winner's artwork is featured on both the official event poster and in our Creative Arts Booklet, which highlights all winning entries in art and poetry.

As part of the celebration, elementary students created bookmarks, which are distributed to every school in the county. Extra bookmarks are provided to the local library system for community use, and each includes our access number to ensure resources are easily available.

Our Annual Report is also now available. It highlights all award winners, including Team and Employee of the Year, and showcases a selection of CMH programs. Each featured program includes a QR code linking to a short video, offering an engaging way to learn more about our services.

3. Rotary Parade

We've proudly participated in the Rotary Parade, part of the Blue Water Festival, for the past several years, and we're excited to do so again this year. The parade will take place on Wednesday, July 9th.

An email with a sign-up link will be sent out soon. We'll be putting together a float and handing out bracelets featuring our contact information. Participation is open to CMH staff, their families, and the individuals we serve—we'd love to have as many people join us as possible!

IX. Policy Review

There were no substantive changes; the documents were simply updated to reflect the new template.

M. Partipilo inquired about the meaning of "treatment by spiritual means." K. Thompson explained that this refers to supporting individuals who choose to explore spirituality or a specific religion as part of their recovery. If spirituality is important to the individual, the clinician will incorporate it into the treatment approach—either as a coping strategy, a form of support, or in conjunction with other interventions like medication. For example, if an individual requests a referral to a Catholic organization, CMH would honor that and provide the appropriate connection.

X. Council Round Table

1. M. Partipilo reiterated their support for implementing online payment options for group homes and would like to continue advocating for this change.
2. Dr. K. Albrecht suggested that the Community Relations team consider creating a video for advocacy purposes, focused on the potential impact of Medicaid cuts and the PIHP procurement process. The video could feature individuals sharing their personal stories about the services they rely on, helping to put a face and voice to what is at stake. S. Herrle will bring the idea to the Community Relations team for consideration.

XI. Next Meeting

Thursday August 7, 2025, in the Summit

XII. Adjournment

1:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tonia Hudson
Recording Secretary

Reviewed and Approved,
Kristen Thompson
Adult Services Director