



St. Clair County Community Mental Health

*Promoting Discovery & Recovery Opportunities
for Healthy Minds & Bodies*

St. Clair County Community Mental Health Community Relations Activity Report – May 2020 (Reporting for April 2020)

Paid Media/Sponsorships/Advertisements

Newspapers/Magazines/Programs

- Yale Expositor: Medical Directory listing (CMH West). Ad runs each week.
- Bluewater Senior Options: CMH general ad

Radio/TV

- Radio First (Mental Health Minute) – Autism Awareness Month
- WGRT (Mental Health Minute) – Autism Awareness Month
- EBW-TV interview – services CMH is providing during crisis and how people can deal with stress and anxiety caused by COVID-19

Billboards

- Digital billboard runs ongoing in various locations

Sponsorships/Advertisements

- None in April

Unpaid Media Coverage

Newspapers, Newsletters & Magazines

- The Times Herald
 - 4/06/2020: Agencies launch support lines to help with stress
 - 4/24/2020: Officials urge people to seek mental treatment (Kathleen Gallagher community column)

Radio / TV

- 4/01/2020: Radio First (WPHM), COVID-19 – services CMH is providing during crisis and how people can deal with stress and anxiety caused by COVID-19
- 4/02/2020: Paul Dingeman FOCUS Program – COVID-19 – services CMH is providing during crisis and how people can deal with stress and anxiety caused by COVID-19
- 4/22/2020: EBW Virtual Spotlight, Managing stress during COVID-19

Social Media Outreach

Facebook Report: SCCCMH

- Number of page likes: 2,521 (176 new likes in April)
- Number of posts to page (March): 84
- Post with highest reach: 33,910 impressions “Make sure you are taking care of YOU” post with image

Other Activities

Casual for a Cause

- 3/27/2020: YMCA Open Arms Campaign, \$286.50
- 4/03/2020: CMH Autism Support Group, \$286.50
- 4/10/2020: CMH Caring for Kids Fund, \$283.50
- 4/17/2020: CMH Caring For Kids Fund, \$283.50

Critical Incident Stress Management Activities:

- None in April

Community Outreach/External Event Participation:

- 4/22/2020: Virtual St. Clair County Health & Human Services Townhall Forum

CMH Sponsored Community Events

- None in April

Upcoming Events/Activities

- 08/05/2020: Annual Meeting / Agency In-Service
- 10/03/2020: Run for Recovery

Agencies launch support lines to help with stress

Jackie Smith Port Huron Times Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

Residents in both St. Clair and Sanilac counties now have access to Community Mental Health COVID-19 support lines if they're struggling with anxiety or feeling overwhelmed by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Deb Johnson, St. Clair County CMH's executive director, said the agency began with a soft launch early last week, making a clinician available over the

phone before adding text and email options.

"It's for anybody and it doesn't have to be a long conversation," Johnson said. "But if anyone is feeling lonely or isolated, wants some tips to manage the stress of the situation, this is a great resource and it's free."

Sanilac County announced the launch of a mental health helpline on Monday.

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Where to call

- St. Clair County CMH's COVID-19 support line is available by calling (810) 985-8900, via text at (810) 956-6335 or emailing covid19support@scccmh.org from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- More general or technical questions about the coronavirus can also be answered via St. Clair County's COVID-19 informational hotline at (810) 966-4163 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and through email at covid19@stclaircounty.org.
- Sanilac CMH's helpline can be reached at (810) 648-0330 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. The county's after-hours crisis line is (888) 225-4447.
- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has a hotline available between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. seven days a week at 1 (888) 535-6136.



Helplines

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Sanilac CMH Chief Clinical Officer Nicole Beagle said in a Facebook video that the county's line was also confidential for callers who needed tools and resources to cope or wanted "just to connect with somebody."

"I think it's safe to say that everyone's starting to feel that pressure, just starting to feel overwhelmed with the whole quarantine process and the information that comes out daily on COVID-19," Beagle said in the video "So, here at Sanilac County CMH, we wanted to make sure our community members have as many resources, tools and (are) provided with as much education as possible to help protect their mental health during this pandemic."

The St. Clair County Health Department already has a regular information line for questions about the coronavirus, and Johnson said CMH had been asked to send a masters-level clinician to the county's emergency operations

center.

"But they were getting a lot of callers just stressed out about the situation," she said. So, with other clinicians working from home who could answer questions anywhere, she said they decided to develop a line of their own.

Johnson said the support line was geared toward individuals who are age 14 and older. If personnel suspect they're speaking with a younger youth, she said they'd likely ask to speak with a parent.

On Thursday, the CMH official estimated they'd likely had roughly 15 to 20 people call in amid the support line's slow unveil and before the added text and email options were more advertised.

A support line 'regular folks could call if needed'

Johnson said on Wednesday, that officials heard from an older woman who called the new support line after she'd gotten a flyer passed out by the mother of a CMH employee.

"I really am struggling," she said, re-

calling the woman's comment. "... This is a woman with no previous medical health concerns."

The feedback from the exchange was positive, Johnson said, and a good example that "regular folks could call if needed."

Although calls were confidential, Johnson said CMH staff providing the service are tracking data.

It wasn't clear yet what the demand would be for the service, but she said they knew it'd be a need.

"We'll have as many people as we need assigned to it," Johnson said. "Right now, we have one clinician answering the line, one with (a) cell phone to text and two with access (to the email). But as the demand increases, we have the ability to add more masters-level clinicians."

She added that if clinicians interact with someone who "has some real serious anxiety that needs to be addressed more than just hat phone call," CMH's mobile crisis unit and regular access line were still available through 24/seven phone numbers.

How to learn more

In addition to information coming out of the county's EOC, Johnson referred people to St. Clair County Community Mental Health's Facebook page, where she said they try to post resources more specifically about stress and anxiety.

Overall, Johnson said there were simple rules to follow at home to help — what you can control and what you can't.

"What you can control is your attitude and how much you watch the news," she said. "More than 30 minutes of news on the coronavirus, it's not good for you."

Johnson also pointed to things like nutrition and exercise to cope, adding, "Nothing says you can't get outside. Just keep your distance. ... Go outside, get some vitamin D."

Jackie Smith is the local government reporter for the Times Herald. Have questions or a story idea? Contact her at (810) 989-6270 or jssmith@gannett.com. Follow her on Twitter @Jackie20Smith

Officials urge people to seek mental health treatment

Laura Fitzgerald Port Huron Times Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

Fewer people have been seeking mental health services from St. Clair and Sanilac counties since the coronavirus outbreak, raising concerns among officials that those who need help aren't seeking it.

Deb Johnson, St. Clair County Community Mental Health executive director, said while the mobile crisis unit has seen about the same number of people as it normally would, CMH has seen a

slight decrease in new clients completing the intake process.

It's possible people are delaying mental health treatment out of fear of contracting the virus, in the same way people are delaying treatment for physical health issues, said Kathleen Gallagher, CMH program director and master's level clinician.

"We really just want to encourage people not to wait," Gallagher said. "If they have a mental health issue and they need services, they should definitely call us." CMH can provide many of

its services over the phone.

Sanilac County CMH Chief Executive Director Wil Morris said the crisis unit usually assists between one and six people in crisis per day. Since the pandemic started, Morris said the crisis unit has only assisted about a half dozen people.

"I think people are sheltering in place, allowing their mental health concerns to grow versus dealing with their issues," he said. "I'm slightly concerned

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"We really just want to encourage people not to wait. If they have a mental health issue and they need services, they should definitely call us."

Kathleen Gallagher
CMH program director

Treatment

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this is like a pressure cooker.”

The agency is anticipating a major increase in crisis calls in the coming weeks, Morris said.

St. Clair County CMH is still taking referrals. Intakes can be started over the phone, and current clients are contacted remotely. The agency currently provides about 650 services a week, which can include wellness checks, phone calls, medication reviews and more.

Some services, such as psychiatric evaluations or medication reviews, are still conducted in person. Johnson said the Assertive Community Treatment Team, which treats clients with the most severe mental illnesses, has seen about 900 face-to-face contacts in the last four weeks.

Similarly, Sanilac's CMH is conducting most of its services remotely and calling current clients at least once a week.

Both agencies also have launched COVID-19 support lines for anyone who is struggling with feelings of isolation, loneliness, anxiety, stress, depression or any other need.

“It can be for anything. You don't have to have a severe mental health issue to call that number,” Johnson said. “It can be just you're feeling a little dis-

connected, a little isolated, you just need to talk to another human voice for a little bit.”

The St. Clair County COVID-19 support line can be reached by phone at (810) 985-8900, by text at (810) 956-6335 and by email at covid19support@scccmh.org. Phone lines are open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Sanilac CMH's helpline could be reached at (810) 648-0330 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Johnson said the COVID-19 helpline has received about two to five calls a day, mostly from people who are anxious and need someone to talk to.

The pandemic causes a lot of uncertainty, which in turn can cause stress and anxiety, Gallagher said. People who already have mental health diagnoses might see a worsening of their symptoms or those with no previous mental health issues might be experiencing symptoms for the first time.

“This is obviously something that people haven't experienced ever before so I think it can definitely be anxiety-producing,” Gallagher said. “If you enter any store, obviously things are very different, that can be anxiety-producing.”

Still, Johnson said many of CMH's clients, including parents with children with behavioral health issues, are coping with the crisis better than expected.

“Given the situation people are in, people are finding they are more re-

sourceful than they thought they were,” she said.

How can I stay mentally healthy during the pandemic?

Johnson said you can maintain your mental health by maintaining your physical health. Go for walks to get fresh air and exercise, eat healthy and get adequate sleep.

Limit the amount of news you consume, she said. Excessive negative news can be overwhelming and produce anxiety.

Connect with loved ones, friends and neighbors over the phone or via video conference. Helping others, such as picking up groceries for elderly neighbors, can also boost your mood.

And local agencies have launched services to connect residents to resources.

The St. Clair County Community Services Coordinating Body launched a new website at csbinfo.org to provide a central repository of information for county residents seeking assistance during the pandemic. The website includes information for food distribution dates, utility assistance, housing resources, unemployment assistance, links to benefit enrollment, information for small businesses and healthcare information.

Those without internet access may call the COVID-19 support line between

8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Other resources include:

- Visit St. Clair County Community Mental Health's Facebook page at facebook.com/SCCCMH. Sanilac County's Community Mental Health Authority's Facebook can be found at facebook.com/sanilacmh/. The organizations share workouts, activities, resources and tips to keep mentally healthy during the pandemic.

- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services launched a free website that delivers free activities, resources and exercises to help users cope with anxiety. To access it, visit headspace.com/mi.

- Visit St. Clair County CMH's website at scccmh.org/ or Sanilac's CMH website at sanilacmh.org/ for more information on their services and programs.

- To access the St. Clair County's CMH Mobile Crisis Unit, call (810) 966-2575.

- To access St. Clair County's or Sanilac's CMH's services and begin the intake process, call (888) 225-4447.

- More general or technical questions about the coronavirus can also be answered via St. Clair County's COVID-19 informational hotline at (810) 966-4163 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and through email at covid19@stclaircounty.org