



NEWAYGO COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH

2023 - 2024 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Dear Friends and Community Partners,

As we reflect on the past year, it's clear that we are living in a time of both challenge and change. The landscape of public behavioral health continues to shift, and we are now facing renewed threats of Medicaid reductions that could have significant impacts on the people we serve.

Despite these headwinds, our commitment to this community remains unwavering.

Community Mental Health has always stood as a public safety net for those with the greatest needs—individuals and families living with serious mental illness, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities. We know that when resources shrink, the burden on the most vulnerable grows. That's why we've doubled down on our mission to ensure access, dignity, and support for all.

Over the past few years, we have expanded services in innovative and impactful ways—opening new housing like *Laradel*, launching successful in-jail neurofeedback programming, and reaching underserved populations through mobile and telehealth support. We've listened to the voices of those we serve, adapted to their changing needs, and strengthened partnerships to meet challenges together.

This work is not easy, and it does not happen alone. It takes dedicated staff, strong community partners, and a shared belief that everyone deserves the chance to live a life of recovery, inclusion, and hope.

As we look ahead, we do so with resolve. No matter what changes come from Lansing or Washington, our focus remains clear: meeting people where they are and helping them move forward.

With gratitude,

Carol Mills, MPA, MBA
Chief Executive Director

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Peer Support Specialists: A Vital Role in Mental Health Recovery by Chantelle Speck

Struggling with mental health can be tough and lonely. Peer Support helps by connecting people who have had similar experiences, making sure no one feels alone. It gives people a safe space to talk about their feelings with someone who truly understands.

What Do Peer Support Specialists Do?

Peer Support Specialists are people who have faced their own mental health challenges and now help others.

- Know what it's like to face mental health struggles.
- Listen with kindness and without judgment.
- Give hope by sharing their own recovery stories.
- Help people feel accepted and supported.
- Offer advice and guidance to make life a little easier.

How They Help

Peer Support Specialists provide support in different ways:

- **Community Inclusion:** Encouraging people to join activities, meet others, and feel less alone.
- **Independence:** Helping individuals feel more confident in making their own decisions.
- **Productivity:** Assisting in finding jobs, volunteering, or other meaningful activities.

Why Peer Support Matters

- **It Gives Hope:** Shows that recovery is possible.
- **It Inspires:** Seeing others succeed can motivate people on their own journeys.
- **It Builds Strength:** Sharing ways to cope with challenges.
- **It Helps Mental Health:** Studies show it improves well-being.
- **It Provides Access to Services:** Connecting people to important resources.
- **It's Cost-Effective:** A great addition to traditional mental health care.

Peer Support is a powerful way to help people heal and feel connected.



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New Adult Foster Care Home Opens, Honoring Former NCMH Board Member Adele Hansen

Newaygo County Mental Health is proud to announce the opening of *Laradel*, a new Adult Foster Care home in Grant, Michigan serving adult men living with serious mental illness. The home offers a safe, structured, and supportive environment designed to foster stability, independence, and dignity for its residents.

Named in honor of Adele Hansen, a long-serving and dedicated CMH board member, *Laradel* reflects her deep commitment to compassionate care and community service. Adele's legacy of advocacy and leadership continues to shape our mission, and this new home stands as a testament to the lasting impact of her contributions.

Laradel features 24-hour staffing, individualized care plans, and a focus on skill-building to help residents build independence within our community. With its opening, CMH continues to expand housing options for vulnerable populations in our community, reinforcing our vision of recovery-focused care.

Neurofeedback in the Jail: A New Path to Recovery and Reduced Recidivism

Community Mental Health's innovative neurofeedback program in the county jail is making a profound impact on the lives of incarcerated individuals. By helping participants regulate brain activity and reduce symptoms of trauma, anxiety, and addiction, the program has contributed to a notable reduction in recidivism rates and improved post-release outcomes.

Neurofeedback is a non-invasive technique that trains individuals to strengthen self-regulation of brain function. Many of the program's participants have a history of substance use and mental illness. For them, neurofeedback offers a new tool for recovery—one that continues to support them long after release. Preliminary results have been promising: individuals who completed the neurofeedback program were significantly less likely to return to jail and more likely to engage in treatment and recovery services once back in the community.

This effort reflects CMH's commitment to treating the root causes of incarceration and addiction. By integrating cutting-edge tools like neurofeedback and peer supports into correctional and community care settings, we are changing lives, reducing costs, and building safer, healthier communities.

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2024 Art Wunsch Award

The Art Wunsch Award recognizes people who dedicate their time and effort to helping others. This year's winner is **Ryan Hoffman**.

Ryan has been a key member of the Empowerment Network since 2011. He leads the Pine St. cleaning crew, runs the intern program, and serves as the board president. But Ryan does much more—he helps with repairs, delivers meals, and supports others in any way he can.

Ryan is known for his kindness and humor. He loves sports and often shares jokes to bring smiles to those around him. Recently, he reached a big personal goal—buying a home in the local community!



His hard work, generosity, and commitment make a huge impact on the Empowerment Network. We are honored to celebrate Ryan Hoffman as the 2024 Art Wunsch Award winner.

Empowerment Network Celebration: 25 Years of Service

This year marked a significant milestone for the Empowerment Network as they celebrated 25 years of serving the Newaygo County community. Founded in 1999, the Empowerment Network operates as a drop-in center located in Fremont, dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities or mental illness. The center provides a space for people to learn new skills, socialize, and engage with others.

History & Growth

- Founded: 1999
- Current Location: 5 East Main Street, Fremont (purchased 5 years ago)
- Original Staff & Members: Started with 1 staff member and 5 members.
- Current Staff & Members: Now includes 10 staff members, 5 interns, over 300 members, and many volunteers.

The Celebration Event

The Empowerment Network marked its 25th anniversary during its annual holiday party held at the Dogwood Center's Black Box Theater. The event was well attended by over 100 members, staff, and members of the public, including staff from Newaygo County Mental Health. The celebration was near Halloween, so many attendees dressed up, and prizes were awarded for the best costumes. The event also featured a lunch and various snacks.

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Services & Programs

The Empowerment Network offers a wide range of services and programs, some of which include:

- Lunch Program - provided with the support of United Way and the Fremont Area Community Foundation
- Bi-weekly Phone Calls to check in with members
- Emergency Food Pantry
- Outreach Program - weekly visits to members
- Clothing Closet
- Retail Store
- Use of Washer and Dryer
- Assistance with Paperwork
- Computer Center
- DIY Craft Projects
- Additional social activities and group programs for members

The Empowerment Network has continued to be a vital resource for people in Newaygo County, offering not just services, but also a welcoming space where members can connect and thrive.



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Where Your Money Comes

Source	Amount	% of Total
Client Fees	\$67,203	0.31%
County Funds	\$220,000	1.02%
State Funds	\$961,678	4.47%
Federal Funds	\$190,488	0.89%
Medicaid	\$19,610,549	91.14%
Other	\$466,284	2.17%
Total	\$21,516,203	100%

How Your Money Was Spent

Expense Category	Amount	% of Total
Residential Care Services	\$9,533,226	44.31%
Clinical Services	\$10,055,782	46.74%
Administration & Support	\$1,927,194	8.96%
Total	\$21,516,203	100%

Cases Served by Age Group

Age Group	Number of Cases
0-3	48
4-12	380
13-17	276
18-26	340
27-64	1330
65+	77
Total	2,451

Service Performance

Customers with emergencies seen within three hours.	97.79%
Customers seen for follow-up care within 7 days of inpatient discharge.	96.25%
Customers not readmitted within 30 days of inpatient discharge.	89%

2023-2024 Board of Directors

Ralph Bell, Newaygo	Todd Koopmans, Fremont
Sarah Boluyt, Sand Lake	Wayne Mast, Fremont
Kathy Broome, White Cloud	Cheryl Parker, Newaygo
Ken DeLaat, Newaygo	Michelle Petz, Newaygo
Catherine Kellerman, Fremont	Helen Taube, Fremont
Bryan Kolk, Fremont	Susan Twing, White Cloud

Newaygo County Mental Health is a government agency run by a board of 12 citizens, appointed by the Newaygo County Board of Commissioners. They meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 10:00 a.m. The public is invited to attend.

NCMH is accredited by Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

Newaygo County Mental Health is funded, in part, by Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, the County of Newaygo, insurance, and



Our Mission: "To improve and promote the wellness and recovery of persons with, or at risk of, behavioral healthcare needs, substance use disorder and/or intellectual/developmental disabilities, who reside in Newaygo County and surrounding communities, through the provision of integrated, person/family-centered, and trauma-informed services."

Newaygo County Mental Health assures that no individual shall be denied service on the basis of ability to pay, race, color, age, sex, religion, national affiliations, marital status, height, weight, arrest record, disability, or any other legally protected status.