

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Director of Customer Service / Recipient Rights Receives Award for Consumer Empowerment

SAGINAW, MI – The Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) is proud to announce that Timothy Ninemire, Director of Customer Service / Recipient Rights was honored by the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) with the Director’s Award for Consumer Empowerment.

Nominees for this award have made an outstanding contribution toward, or have gone to extraordinary means, to advocate on behalf of people receiving mental health services. This may include exceptional effort or initiative by the nominee directly advocating on behalf of an individual consumer or a group of consumers. It may also include extraordinary indirect advocacy, such as a rights office acting as a catalyst for positive change, inspiring other entities or systems within or outside of mental health, to realize their roles in championing the rights or needs of recipients.

“Tim has been a steadfast leader for consumer rights and has worked very diligently in support of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) community.” – Sandra M. Lindsey, CEO

When SCCMHA, through its MAX System of Care effort, took on the challenge of trying to figure out how to better serve the LGBTQ population of Saginaw County, Tim readily became involved. He did not do so because it was a job requirement, but because of his belief that it was the right thing to do. At one of the founding meetings of the collaborative Sexual Orientation Gender Identity Youth Advocacy Council (SOGI YAC), local LGBTQ advocates explained what members of their community looked for in a service provider agency to determine if it was informed, safe, and affirming. Tim Ninemire’s unhesitating response was that, as the Director of Customer Service/Recipient Rights Office, he believed it was his responsibility to ensure all individuals who encountered SCCMHA felt safe, understood, and were treated with dignity and respect. Right away he began asking direct questions to learn what SCCMHA could do to best serve all consumers of a minority sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Tim is an active member of SOGI YAC, which is comprised of representatives from service organizations, advocacy organizations, and community members. His friendliness, clear quest for understanding new and different perspectives, and consistent positive enthusiasm bring a highly-regarded energy to every meeting and event.

Tim's clear-headed and kind approach to problem-solving helps everyone come together and proceed with dignity and respect when encountering questions that have been unexpected for some (such as how to direct transgender individuals to the correct restroom). He is continuing to bring people together to make thoughtful decisions about implementing changes in demographic data collection to more accurately and sensitively capture SOGI-relevant information and how to mark "safe spaces" throughout all SCCMHA locations.

Tim has served as the Director of the Office of Recipient Rights at SCCMHA for more than 15 years and reports directly to Sandra M. Lindsey, CEO. Tim is a longtime Bay City resident.

Over the years, we have watched Tim become an important advocate to assure that all individuals are treated fairly regardless of their sexual orientation or identity. Throughout Tim's journey he has taken it upon himself to challenge his own thinking to assure he is socially informed in his advocacy role.

Tim was presented his award on September 22, 2017 during the 24th Annual MDHHS Recipient Rights Conference held at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Kalamazoo.

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Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority is headquartered at 500 Hancock Street in Saginaw. SCCMHA provides numerous services including evaluations, screenings, treatment and referrals. In 2016, SCCMHA assisted more than 6,000 Saginaw County citizens.