SCCMHA Provider News

January 2021

1-2 CEO Message
2 Mental Health Training
3 SCCMHA Extended Hours
4 Day Activities
5 Provider Manual
5 Bayside's New Look
6 Staff Spotlight
7 Residential Corner
8 mRNA Vaccines

A Message From the CEO

Dear SCCMHA Network Members:

Happy New Year to all of you. On behalf of the SCCMHA Board of Directors, Administration and myself, our deepest gratitude for the work that you do each and every day. Thank you for your continued service and assistance to those we serve, especially since the onset of COVID-19 in March, some 11 months ago.

Last year, unlike any other in our lifetime, provided not just the health and economic challenges of a global pandemic, but the impact of a catastrophic flood, election and political unrest, and the challenge of social change in the face of recognizing health and economic disparities for persons of color, as revealed by the pandemic and their disparate experience of social justice. In response, the ways we work and live have been fundamentally changed. Serving consumers, their families and the community while protecting ourselves, our families and each other with social distancing, masking and maintaining hand hygiene and other safety procedures to mitigate risk, is and will be the strategy and the challenge again this year.

Whether you are a front line essential health care worker in the Covenant Emergency Care Center, provide mask to mask service office appointments for scheduled, urgent or crisis care, deliver treatment and support through telehealth modalities, help new consumers with access and intake, visit in person the most vulnerable consumers we serve, protect the rights of consumers to be treated with dignity and respect or to avoid eviction, provide community living supports to consumers in licensed or unlicensed settings or to find and keep a job, you are a part of the SCCMHA strategy to continue our mission. If you work behind the scenes to support these staff and their efforts at our front doors, keep our technology and financial systems running, keep our buildings safe and clean, oversee and support our network operations, keep us compliant with voluminous quality, health and payer regulations and contract and grant requirements, or you assist staff with administration of their benefits and keep us paid or reimbursed for services rendered, you are a part of the SCCMHA strategy to continue our mission. The point being that we are in this together and as the public safety net for behavioral health service in Saginaw County or our consumers living out of county, we have moved through all of the challenges 2020 threw our way, relentlessly focused on continued service and safety.

If you are a new staff hired directly at SCCMHA or joined one of our contracted provider organizations in 2020, or in the first quarter of FY 2021, welcome! Know that you have joined a mission driven network committed to serving those persons specified by the Michigan Mental Health Code or MDHHS Contracts, all of whom it is our privilege and honor to serve. Know too, that you have joined a talented, committed group of colleagues it will become your pleasure to meet and get to know.

The emergency use authorization of the Pfizer and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccines released in December and other vaccines still in the research pipeline, give us hope, As these vaccines become available first to the prioritized at-risk populations in our state including those living in AFCs, Long Term Care Facilities, the essential health care workforce of which we are a part, essential front line workers, seniors over 65 and eventually the rest of the population, things will get better, but it will still take many months from now before our lives return to anything approaching pre-COVID-19 conditions.

Our staff members working in the highest COVID-19 risk categories like the Emergency Care Center at Covenant Hospitals were included in the roll-out there for Pfizer vaccination opportunities and we were grateful for their including our staff in their vaccination plan. The partnership we have with the Great Lakes Bay Health Clinics here in Saginaw has afforded our staff Moderna vaccination opportunities and the Saginaw Department of Public Health is asking our contracted network clinical teams and providers to enroll online for Moderna vaccination access. The consumers and the staff in Long Term Care and Adult Foster Care facilities here in Saginaw and across Michigan are also being prioritized for vaccine distribution in upcoming weeks through the MDHHS Pharmacy Partnership and asked to sign up online through private commercial pharmacies that will be visiting individual group homes to administer the Moderna vaccine to willing staff and consumers.

However, until a high percentage of these groups and the rest of the population is vaccinated the danger of community spread, serious illness and for some even death will not be over. Regrettably and further complicating our mitigation of infection, is the impact soon from new mutations or variants of COVID that are much more contagious, coming out of the UK, Brazil and South Africa. Even with a new US COVID Plan emerging out of Washington last week, it will be the end of next summer from what I am reading before we can begin to put this COVID journey behind us.

Continued on next page

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

In closing, again on behalf of the SCCMHA Board of Directors, Administration and myself, thank you seems like a somewhat shallow expression for all you do, but please understand it is heartfelt and sincere. We so appreciate your commitment to the work of serving consumers and families and your patience and flexibility as we sort out and share ever changing federal and state directives and the necessary adaptations to how we safely deliver care and support to those who depend upon us.

My hope for all of you is to stay safe and well. Please find safe ways to gather with cherished friends and family members in the months to come and seriously consider vaccination for yourself and loved ones. Remember love, hope and faith cannot be quarantined!

Sincerely,

Sandra M. Lindsey, CEO

Mental Health First Aid Trainings

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis. Mental Health First Aid takes the fear and hesitation out of starting conversations about mental health and substance use problems by improving understanding and providing an action plan that teaches people to safely and responsibly identify and address a potential mental illness or substance use disorder.

Someone you know could be experiencing a mental illness or crisis. You can help them. You are more likely to encounter someone– a friend, family member, coworker, neighbor, or member of the community — in an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack. Mental Health First Aid teaches a 5-step action plan to offer initial help to people with the signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in a crisis, and connect them with the appropriate professional, peer, social, or self help care. Anyone can take the 2 -hour self-paced/4 hour instructor led class using video conferencing. Sometimes, the best first aid is you. Take the course, save a life, strengthen your community.

Upcoming Adult Classes: 2/17/21 and 4/22/21. Upcoming Youth Class: 3/24/21

More information can be found at: Mental Health First Aid Training : Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (sccmha.org)

Reminder for all SCCMHA Trainings

Written by: Jennifer Keilitz

This past year has been a whirlwind. We appreciate the patience of all trainees. As we continue on our journey of the COVID Pandemic, we would like to remind everyone about attendance at trainings. In order to receive credit for any class taken at SCCMHA via Zoom, cameras must be on at all times and trainers must be able to see your entire face. Attendees should treat the live Zoom trainings in the same manner they would if they were in person. What that means is staff should be dressed in something other than pajamas and be sitting upright in a chair. Please be aware of your surroundings as some activities in the background are distracting to other attendees. For your safety and others, please do not drive while attending class.

Thank you to SCCMHA Transportation and General Logistics and Utility Supervisors

Written by: Jennifer Keilitz

We want to recognize the work that Jennifer Hunt and Stephen Esckilsen did during the pandemic. In Saginaw, many people with limited or no transportation found it difficult to obtain groceries or go to the bank. Jennifer and Stephen stepped up and assisted those consumers in need of transportation for these necessities during the shutdown. Thank you both for assisting consumers across the network.

EXTENDED HOURS EXTENDED CARE

SAGINAW COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

MORE HOURS. MORE CARE.

COVID-19 has Increased the Demand for More Care. We are Responding with More Hours.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) is responding to an increased need for services with expanded hours at multiple locations. As people grapple with how to deal with stress and anxiety caused by the pandemic, behavioral health services have never been more important. To increase access to care, SCCMHA is extending case management, clinical and crisis service hours, including mental health and substance use disorders, to better serve consumers and our community.

Hours have been extended at all SCCMHA locations, including our main site on **Hancock Street** and the **Towerline** and **Bay Road locations**. These facilities will now be open on **Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

Additional hours will provide greater access to services that include case, clinical and crisis management with services like evaluation, screenings, treatments and referral. Substance use intervention services are also available. SCCMHA is committed to getting our community through this crisis with important supports and services.

Many in our community are dealing with the effects of emotional stress and anxiety that are the result of living through the COVID-19 pandemic. It was imperative that we extend our reach with extended hours.

– Sandra Lindsey, *SCCMHA CEO*

For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit **sccmha.org** or call **989.797.3400** or **800.258.8678**. Crisis Services remains open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays, at **989.792.9732** or **800.233.0022.**

What has been happening with Day Activities?

Written by: Jennifer Keilitz

Many consumers as well as case holders are wondering what is happening with the various day activity programs within Saginaw County. The weeks of March 9, 2020 and March 16, 2020 all day activity programs closed due to lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as thermometers for temperature checks and sanitation supplies to assure the safety of consumers and staff. These closures were also prompted by the Executive orders from Governor Gretchen Whitmer. Once PPE became available, each program had to put together a reopening plan that included education of staff as well as sanitation protocols.

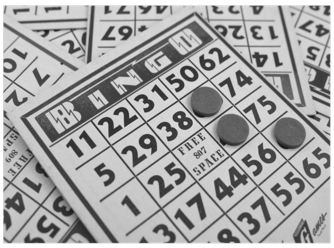
Bayside Lodge continued to serve consumers for the temporary employment sites until the sites shut down on March 20, 2020. During the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" mandate, staff continued to engage members in virtual events, as well as porch delivered meals to members and checked on members (socially distanced, of course) to make sure they were doing well. Around June 15, 2020 Bayside Lodge opened to 10 member attendees per day and they transported 6 members per day in order to assure social distancing in the vehicles and proper sanitation of the vehicles after transport. Members who wish to attend should contact the Bayside Lodge to assure they have the space for attendance as they are only allowed so many consumers in the clubhouse at one time due to social distancing requirements.

Friends for Recovery made telephone contacts with their members at least once a week. The initial opening for services started around June 15, 2020 with 10 members attending 9am-12pm and 10 members attending 1pm- 4pm. No transportation is provided to their members to get to the center, all members find their own transportation to attend. More recently they have been going to the YMCA once a week and they just started yoga and dance at the Friends for Recovery site. It is hopeful they will be able to start going out for bowling as this is a favorite activity of the members. They continue to have groups to talk about depression when enough members wish to participate. It is important for members to contact Friends for Recovery if they wish to attend as only so many consumers can attend at any given time due to social distancing requirements.

Guardian Angels reopened around June 15, 2020 for a limited number of consumers at each site. The program is not providing transportation at this time. Many of the activities they have been providing include activities that can be completed at their centers and they are allowing other consumers to participate virtually to connect with friends and for social engagement. The virtual activities include tours of museums, zoos and aquariums, exercise classes such as chair exercise and dance, bingo, trivia, and learning about different animals through books and video. Soon, Guardian Angels will be having virtual tours of monuments and significant locations around the world. Guardian Angels is additionally completing porch drop offs with items that consumers can use to participate in craft activities and prepare snacks.

SVRC started virtual services around July 13, 2020. During the summer and Fall they conducted virtual tours that allowed consumers to see the animals at the zoo and explore local scenery in places such as Frankenmuth, Bronners, and the Midland Tridge. Currently SVRC virtual activities include hosting weekly fitness sessions of chair yoga and chair exercises, a weekly cooking group where consumers can make a healthy snack with supplies they have at their own homes, and playing games with other consumers. The games include Bingo, Wheel of Fortune, Trivia, and the most popular: Uno!

Community Ties North (CTN) and **Community Ties South (CTS)** started virtual programming November 23, 2020. CTN has about 17 consumers attending from adult foster care homes and private homes. CTS has about 11 consumes attending from adult foster care homes and private homes. Consumers are attending anywhere from 1-4 times per week and can attend more than once per day if they so choose. Some of the activities that are provided are Bingo Classes, Card games, virtual tours of museums, and other locations they might have visited previously with discussion about the tour and what they might have liked about the tour. Exercise class and sign language are some of the other activities that are offered. Classes run roughly about 30-40 minutes.



Provider Manual Updates

Written by: Jennifer Keilitz

As all of you know the provider manual is an attachment to your contract with Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA). The table of contents indicates those relevant policies that your specific provider type is responsible for knowing and implementing. On January 12, 2021 we sent communication electronically to all providers and their corporate entities letting them know of updates that have occurred since the publication of the provider manual in the Fall of 2019 for your 2020 contract. If you were unable to access, we have developed a link noted here that will not require you to have access to Sentri. If your downstream programs do not have internet access, we ask that you print copies and ask that staff replace old copies of the updated policies with the updated policies.

Business Partnerships : Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (sccmha.org)

Because of the ever-changing rules and regulations, it is our intention to publish updates to the provider manual on a quarterly basis. Along with these updates we will publish the highlights of changes. In the past providers have asked us to highlight changes so time is not spent figuring out the relevant changes. We took this under advisement and are doing just that. For your updated contracts in 2022 it is our intent to publish a full manual that will be available to providers electronically. We will not publish compact disks for our next full manual. Again, we ask that for those who do not have access to the internet that copies of the manual are provided to staff.

Bayside gets a new look

Written by: Jennifer Keilitz

For those of you that do not know, Saginaw County Community Mental Health owns several buildings in the complex where Bayside Lodge, Friends for Recovery, and Housing Resources are located. On October 18, 2019, the health department came to do their regular inspection and determined that some of the floors and other appliances needed to be replaced. Due to the number of changes that were already happening SCCMHA and Bayside Lodge members agreed to do some updates at the same time. Construction started in late April to early May 2020 during the pandemic when limited consumers would be in attendance. Please see pictures of the newly updated Bayside Lodge.

Staff Spotlight

Meet Linda Paeglis

Written by: Linda Paeglis

Linda Paeglis is SCCMHA's Health Education Consultant, a certified Health Coach with a B.S. and a M.A. degree. Before joining SCCMHA last year, she ran the Diabetes Prevention Program at the YMCA in Bay City. She has improved her personal health with changes in lifestyle and she is excited to guide others in their wellness pursuits.

Whole Person Care is the focus of this grant-funded position. It recognizes the bi-directional relationship between physical health and behavioral health, along with the important role lifestyle choices play on overall wellness. Education and support to help promote healthier outcomes regarding tobacco use and obesity are the primary focus, as these factors often lead to many diseases and a shorter lifespan. Adults with SMI (severe mental illness) and children with SED (severe emotional disturbance) are two of the focus populations.

In February, Linda will join forces with staff from Transition Age Youth Services (TAY) to offer Whole Health Action Management (WHAM). This is a peer-centered, strengths-based program providing guidance for setting wellness goals. Future plans include implementing WHAM with adult consumers. Also, a smoking cessation program will begin in February for consumers who attend Bayside Lodge, aiming to reach other consumer populations in the future. More Whole Person Care initiatives coming in 2021 and beyond! Please contact Linda for more information: lpaeglis@sccmha.org or (989) 272-0234.

Meet our Dietitians

Written by: Jessie Huber and Stephanie Hughes

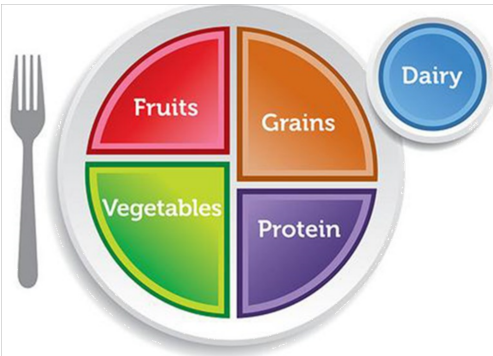
Jessie Huber (pictured on top) and Stephanie Hughes (pictured on bottom) are both Registered Dietitian Nutritionists at SCCMHA. Together they have combined work experience in a variety of settings including community nutrition, school based health, acute and long term care.

Stephanie and Jessie work with individuals to create positive nutrition related goals. These goals help consumers improve independence, increase self-esteem, and decrease disease complications through nutrition based interventions. Nutrition services can be offered in one on one or group settings, in the office or the home, or in the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic appointments are being offered through telehealth services.

Nutritional services that are offered through SCCMHA must be related to the consumer's mental health. Consumers may benefit from nutrition counseling for a variety of reasons including weight changes, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, picky eating, and obtaining a general nutrition education. Nutrition counseling may include meal planning, grocery or farmer's market tours, working with food models, learning healthy cooking, label reading, and budgeting. Goals are individualized and counseling is tailored to meet the needs and peak the interest of consumers.

Individuals that have difficulty chewing, swallowing or have choking episodes would benefit from services from a referral for a swallow evaluation. Individuals struggling with eating disorders would benefit from services from a therapist. A dietitian may be added to the team treatment of eating disorders if the therapist deems it appropriate.

Jessie and Stephanie are excited to support consumers as they strive for their health goals in 2021!



Special Thank You!

Written by: Jennifer Keilitz

Saginaw County Community Mental Health wants to thank each and every staff that have worked in the residential facilities during the pandemic. We consider all of you special hero's! We thank all the staff that worked extra shifts in order to care for the vulnerable consumers that needed care and compassion. Thank you to those staff that drove from Sandusky to Chesaning, or from Genesee County to Chesaning to help cover shifts. We appreciate staff that worked 24 hour shifts to help care for the consumers in residential facilities. Thank you for all of the sacrifices made during this pandemic. We appreciate all of you.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Written by: Jennifer Keilitz

Some of you have heard that vaccinations are coming to long term care facilities and this includes our adult foster care homes. Distribution of vaccines will be through Walgreens pharmacy, CVS pharmacy, and more recently Genoa Healthcare located at SCCMHA. These entities will contact the AFC home and discuss how many consumers and staff want the vaccination. Vaccination is optional so please make sure you and/or the case holder is discussing the option of vaccination with consumers.

There are resources available on the CDC website Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC as well as on the various public health sites to help staff, consumers and/or guardians make an informed decision. On January 7, 2021 information was sent out by Jenna Brown from SCCMHA on this topic of vaccination with several posters attached to help educate staff and consumers on the vaccine. The pharmacies will be obtaining the consents for the vaccination so be prepared with contact information for each guardian in the home.

For Saginaw County Public Health Department resources please follow link below:
Saginaw County Health Department (saginawpublichealth.org)

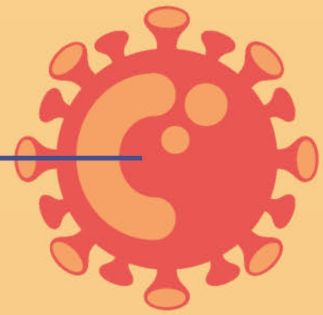
Just a reminder that we all need to keep up our efforts to keep everyone safe by continuing to wear our masks and continuing to complete routine sanitation efforts. It is important to continue these efforts even though vaccinations are offered, as not all persons are being vaccinated. Let's continue to do our part to keep consumers, our fellow staff members and our families safe.

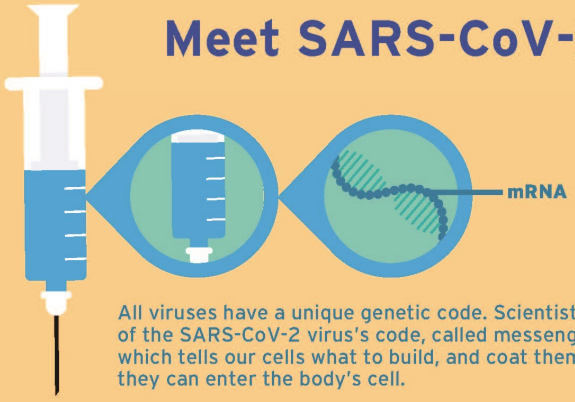
How mRNA vaccines work

Every virus is different.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2.

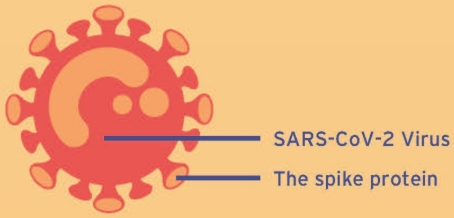
Meet SARS-CoV-2





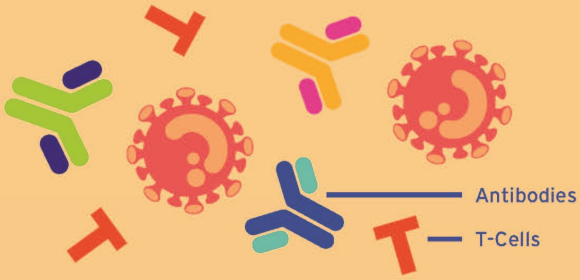
All viruses have a unique genetic code. Scientists take part of the SARS-CoV-2 virus's code, called messenger RNA (mRNA), which tells our cells what to build, and coat them in a lipid so they can enter the body's cell.

This is injected into the patient.



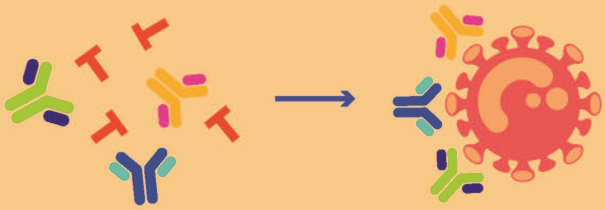
CREATE

The mRNA tells the cells to make a specific part of the SARS-CoV-2 virus: the spike protein.



LEARN

The immune system then produces antibodies and activates T-cells to destroy the spike proteins.



PROTECT

If you are exposed to the virus in the future, your immune system will quickly recognize the spike protein and has the antibodies and T-cells ready to begin destroying the virus.

The Benefit of Getting Vaccinated

The virus that causes COVID-19 replicates quickly. Without the vaccine, your body has to identify the virus, learn how to fight it and carry out an immune response. In the meantime, the virus can replicate to a level beyond what your immune system can handle — which means you feel sick. With the vaccine, your body can more quickly identify the virus and skip straight to starting its immune response.

mRNA technology isn't new.

mRNA vaccines are a product of decades of study on RNA therapies and treatment by medical scientists. mRNA therapies are being used to develop personalized cancer treatments, as well as vaccines for infectious diseases such as Zika virus. Researchers are also exploring whether mRNA treatments can be used as protein-replacement therapies for rare conditions such as the blood-clotting disorder haemophilia.

MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services