

# Piece OF MIND

Winter 2015 Edition



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COMMUNITY MENTAL  
HEALTH AUTHORITY

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## Ending Stigma One Garden at a Time

Fighting the stigma of mental illness and developmental disabilities can take many forms, and Bayside Clubhouse in Saginaw got creative with their approach. This past summer, clubhouse members and staff adopted a garden at the Children's Zoo at Celebration Square and spent their time planting and decorating their space with an Alice in Wonderland theme.

"One of the goals at our clubhouse is community involvement," explained Bayside Staff Coordinator Tracey Roat. "We want to create opportunities for members to be involved in the community with activities they might not be able to do on their own. The idea to adopt a garden came up and clubhouse members were so excited at the chance to take on this project."

The Children's Zoo at Celebration Square offers groups and individuals the opportunity to adopt one of the gardens at their facility for a full operating season at no cost, with the understanding that the planting, decorating and maintenance of the garden is the responsibility of the individual or group. For two hours every week, Roat would take clubhouse members with her to tend to the Bayside garden and teach them about the complexities of growing plants — understanding why some flourished and some didn't fare as well.

"Members and staff loved this project," Roat said. "From picking out plants and maintaining them, to finding items in our boutique to repurpose for

the garden and decorating, everyone enjoyed contributing and seeing their work come to life. We're already making plans and ordering bulbs for a garden again next year."

The Children's Zoo holds contests for the gardens as well, letting visitors and the Horticulture Committee vote on their favorites. Bayside Clubhouse's Alice in Wonderland garden received third place in the people's choice award, which members were excited to share with friends and family when they came to the zoo.

"They were so proud of this garden and the recognition that it got," Roat said. "They were telling everyone they knew to go see it. It was awesome to see members get so invested in this project and excited about doing it again next year. And I think it's a great way to break down some of the stigma in the community — for people to see that individuals with mental illness and disabilities are more than their diagnoses and have the same interests and passions as others. This project was a huge success all around and we'll definitely be doing it again next season."

Bayside Clubhouse is a psychosocial rehabilitation program in Saginaw overseen by Training and Treatment Innovations, Inc. It follows the clubhouse model, assisting members with their employment, independent living and socialization goals.

*For more information on Bayside, find them on Facebook, visit the TTI website at [www.trainingtti.org](http://www.trainingtti.org) or call 989-799-1266.*





# Celebrating Disabilities and *Differences*

Throughout the month of October communities across the nation celebrate the accomplishments and potential of individuals with mental and physical disabilities in honor of National Disability Awareness Month. For the second year in a row, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) has proudly participated in the festivities as well, hosting an event at The Dow Event Center for consumers, their families, community partners and leaders.

On October 8, SCCMHA celebrated not only National Disability Awareness Month, but also the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Medicare/Medicaid with a live show by the duo Handicap This! Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Mike Berkson and Tim Wambach travel the country sharing their story about adapting, overcoming and thriving despite Mike's diagnosis of cerebral palsy. Their show uses humor and real-life scenarios to reshape the stigma that wrongfully equates disabilities to inequality.

"The feedback I've heard from consumers and community members alike has been overwhelming," said SCCMHA Self Determination Supervisor Nancy Clark. "Everyone loved hearing Mike and Tim share some of their story and struggles without holding back. I think a lot of people who attended could relate on some level and found it refreshing to hear the reality of living with a disability in a positive tone. And I think those who attended that didn't have as much experience with disabilities found it to be eye-opening. They saw that individuals with disabilities are people first and have just as much potential as anyone else."

Attendees were treated to appetizers and refreshments and had an opportunity to gather information on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Medicare/Medicaid. Representatives from Michigan Sports Unlimited were also on hand to demonstrate some of their specialty equipment designed to enable individuals with disabilities to participate in sports and physical activities.

"Our goal with this event was to bust some of the stigma surrounding individuals with disabilities and give consumers an opportunity to hear from someone who lives an amazing life despite their disability," Clark said. "I think we achieved that goal and then some. I'm looking forward to continuing this tradition and spreading the word about the amazing potential of people who happen to have a disability."

*If you would like to learn more about Handicap This!, visit their website at [www.handicapthis.com](http://www.handicapthis.com) or visit their YouTube channel. To learn more about services that SCCMHA provides to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, visit our website at [www.sccmha.org](http://www.sccmha.org).*





## Expanding Services and Impact

One of the many values that Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) works to uphold every day is to provide the highest quality innovative mental and behavioral health services to as many eligible individuals and families in Saginaw County as possible. Through strategic partnerships and creative funding throughout the years, we have been successful in providing these services to many people despite the constant financial struggle to meet the continually growing needs of the community. While we are certainly proud of the work that we have accomplished, we couldn't be happier to see our services now expanding and creating opportunities to serve even more of the Saginaw community.

In September, SCCMHA officially released a "Request for Information" seeking new providers to develop and manage additional case management and supports coordination team services for adults with serious mental illness and/or adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The timeline for implementing these new service teams is set for the beginning of January 2016.

"SCCMHA provides a lot of services to a lot of different individuals and families," said Ginny Reed, SCCMHA Director of Network Services and Public Policy. "But we're at capacity right now. Staff, caseloads and programs are maxed out. With this request for

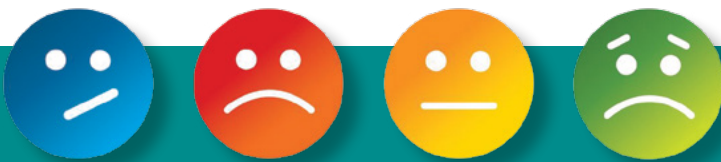
information and additional planning that is taking place behind the scenes, our ability to serve more of the community is going to grow quite noticeably. Not to mention the expanded choices that consumers are now going to have when it comes to their services and supports."

Other SCCMHA service areas currently being looked at for expansion include programs for persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders, additional Community Health Workers through Saginaw Pathways to Better Health and the Saginaw Community Care HUB, increased presence of mental health professionals in City Schools, peer support for youth currently receiving services, supports for youth transitioning out of services and more.

"It's exciting to be making these moves to serve more people," said Sandra Lindsey, SCCMHA CEO. "After a decade of advocating, we are finally getting our fair share of Medicaid dollars to provide these needed services. For a long time we weren't receiving nearly enough funding to meet the needs of the community, but now we are getting pretty close to the state average for Medicaid funding. That is going to have a huge impact on the amount of people we are going to be able to provide support to."

Currently, SCCMHA assists approximately 5,000 Saginaw County citizens each year, but with the expansion planning taking place we hope to increase the number of people served by roughly 3,000.

*For more information on all of the services and supports offered by SCCMHA and our partner agencies, visit our website at [www.sccmha.org](http://www.sccmha.org).*



## Yes, Seasonal Affective Disorder is a Real Condition!

By: Anne Marie Tadeo, MD

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that is related to changes in the seasons. Most people with SAD experience symptoms that start in the fall and continue into the winter months, sapping their energy and making them feel moody.

But did you know there are actually two types of SAD? Winter depression or "winter blues" is more commonly experienced, but individuals do experience symptoms of summer depression as well.

Winter depression usually starts in the late fall or early winter months and is more often than not related to changes in the amount of sunlight that our bodies absorb. Lack of sunlight increases the body's production of Melatonin, which in turn

increases the need for sleep. This can lead to depressive symptoms such as oversleeping, low energy levels, lack of motivation and craving sweets or starchy foods. Individuals experiencing winter depression are usually prescribed a treatment that includes light therapy for 30 to 60 minutes a day.

Summer depression typically begins in the late spring to early summer months and is usually related to changes in heat and humidity rather than light, as is the case with winter depression. Symptoms appear as decreased appetite, weight loss, insomnia, increased agitation and anxiety. The majority of individuals with summer depression experience mild to moderate symptoms which subside after the season changes.

Unfortunately, around 6% of people who experience SAD may need hospitalization at least once in their lifetime. Don't brush off that yearly feeling as simply a case of the "winter blues" or a seasonal funk that you have to tough out on your own. Take steps to keep your mood and motivation steady throughout the year and don't be afraid to ask for help if you feel overwhelmed.

# Open Table — New Opportunities

For many living in poverty, the path back to a self-sustaining lifestyle is difficult, if not impossible, to navigate. Life becomes a cycle of searching for supports to get from Point A to Point B, making planning for long-term achievements very challenging. In 2005, Jon Katov and members of his church in Phoenix, Arizona, had a chance encounter with a homeless man that inspired them to use their vocational and life experiences and networks to help him re-engage in the community. Out of this experience the Open Table concept was formed and has since spread throughout the nation.

Open Table is a collaboration of faith communities, government, business and non-profits working together through a shared community model to help an individual living in poverty transition back into an independent life in the community. Table members, together with the individual or family being helped, establish goals and accountability, develop an overall plan and implement it.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has officially endorsed the Open Table model and created a pilot program to begin implementing it on a national level. The pilot program identified three communities throughout the United States that had great potential for implementing the model successfully, and Saginaw, Michigan, is one of those sites.

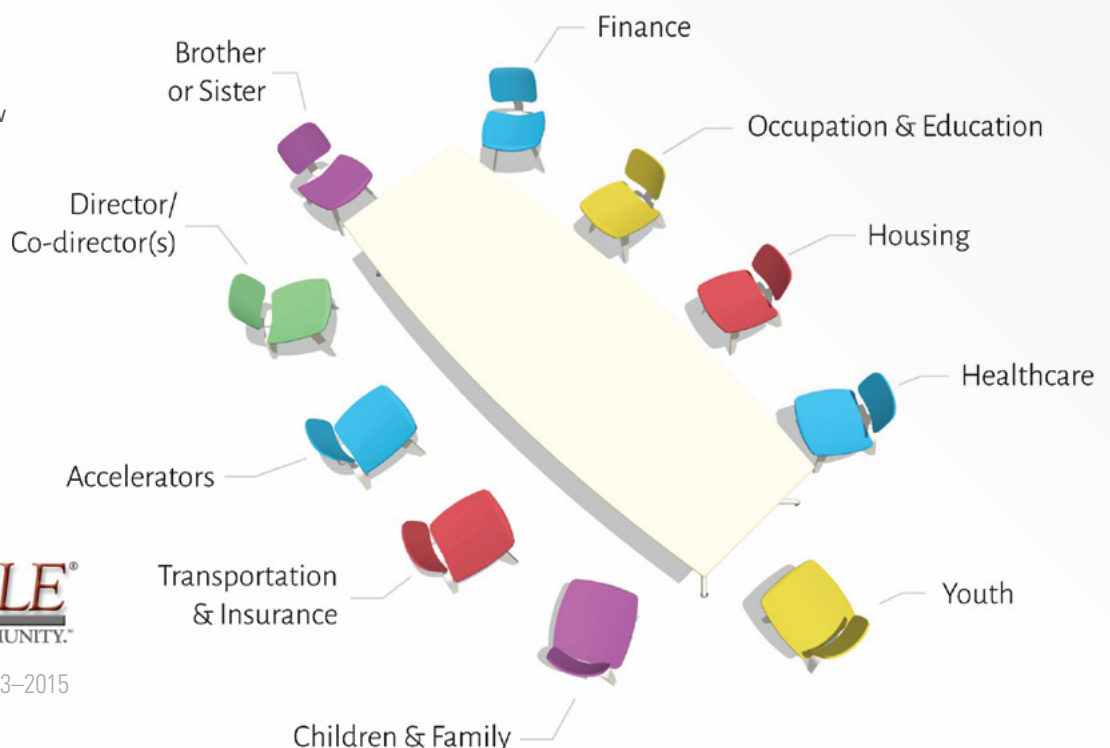
In Saginaw, 12 faith communities have signed on to participate in the pilot which is being backed by Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority: Ames United Methodist Church, Bethlehem Temple Apostolic, Greater All Nations Prayer Tower, Hopevale, Jacob's Ladder, Mt. Olive Institutional Missionary Baptist Church, New Life Ministries, Rhema Word Ministries, Saginaw Islamic Center, Victorious Believers Ministries, World Outreach Campus and Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. These congregations will be working with families that have a youth or child experiencing complex

emotional and behavioral challenges in partnership with Saginaw MAX System of Care. The goal of this approach is to provide families with the resources to not only help their child, but to help the family unit as a whole overcome the obstacles of poverty in the community.

"The Open Table project in Saginaw is moving full steam ahead," said Pastor Hurley Coleman, Jr., Open Table Coordinator and pastor for World Outreach Campus. "The feedback we have received from leaders at SAMHSA, from Jon Katov himself, and most importantly from the individuals participating in Open Table here in Saginaw has been overwhelmingly positive. We're just getting started and the transformations we are already seeing are inspiring. The future is looking bright for Saginaw and I couldn't be more proud to be a part of the movement that is helping to turn things around."

*To learn more about the Open Table initiative happening in Saginaw, you can view an informational video at <https://vimeo.com/143957724>. Open Table Coordinator Pastor Hurley Coleman, Jr. also welcomes questions about involvement opportunities and can be reached at 989-752-7957.*

## Open Table Family Model



**OPEN TABLE**  
FROM POVERTY TO COMMUNITY.™

© Open Table 2013–2015



# Shaking It Up to Shake Off Stigma

Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) launched a new anti-stigma campaign in November with a series of digital ads that can be found on mlive.com along with a host of other websites. But these aren't your average advertisements.

"Our creative strategy came about after discovering many individuals with mental illness frequently hear insensitive phrases when referring to their mental health status," said Sandra M. Lindsey, CEO of SCCMHA. "We don't believe people were trying to be mean-spirited when they were saying these things — they just didn't know what to say. We decided to use these phrases in our campaign to course correct the public and offer positive, helpful alternatives."

The goal of the campaign is two-fold: to reduce mental health stigma and to provide resources for people who may need help.

"Through the offering of positive alternatives to commonly used, but negative phrases, we hope the public becomes more knowledgeable about mental health misconceptions," said Lindsey. "For those struggling with the symptoms of mental illness, the ads offer more information on how and where to get help."

Using eye-catching colors and design, each ad places emphasis on a commonly-used phrase that is often directed at those suffering from mental illnesses. These phrases are used to grab attention and then immediately course correct the remark by offering positive and helpful alternatives. For example, many people who were interviewed heard the phrase "snap out of it," suggesting that mental illness is a question of willpower. The ads offer a more helpful phrase — "This must be difficult. I'm here for you."

After clicking on the ads, the user is taken to a landing page that gives an emergency hotline phone number, which is active 24 hours per day, a non-emergency phone number and further information about SCCMHA's network of services.

"We hope that by taking a bold approach to addressing sensitive topics, we will create a new conversation regarding mental health misconceptions, and ultimately help more people reach out for help if they are struggling with mental health issues," said Lindsey.



## A Safe Space for Those in Crisis

For those experiencing a crisis, finding a safe place to work through the situation is imperative. However, for some, finding that safe place isn't always possible, leading to interactions with police officers and unnecessary emergency room visits. A new approach to crisis intervention that is emerging in the mental health care world is called the Living Room model and Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) is proud to be participating in this innovative practice.

Since this past May, SCCMHA's newly remodeled crisis and intake area on the first floor of their Hancock Street facility has been utilized by staff and consumers with much positive feedback.

The redesign of this area is part of a large scale project in partnership with Health Delivery, Inc. (HDI) and Advanced Care Pharmacy to integrate primary healthcare into daily operations at SCCMHA, creating a healthcare hub for consumers. The goal of the project is to provide a "one-stop-shop" for consumers to take care of all of their health needs in once place, creating a space where physical health professionals and mental health professionals can easily communicate with each other about treatment options and consumers can have multiple needs addressed at once. This helps eliminate barriers that many consumers face when trying to address all aspects of their health and well-being.

The Living Room model portion of this project is designed to provide a calming environment for someone when they are experiencing emotional distress — a place where the individual is able to rest in an atmosphere that looks more like a living room than a medical facility. Each room is equipped with a couch, reclining chair and television, and mental health professionals are available throughout the visit to provide support and assistance while long-term plans are made. The access and crisis unit at SCCMHA also has a prep room where healthy snacks and warm blankets are made available to consumers utilizing the rooms.

"We want visitors to feel safe and welcome here," said SCCMHA Central Access and Intake Supervisor Kristie Wolbert. "We're here to help prevent crisis situations from escalating and having an environment like this where they feel at home certainly makes a big difference in achieving that goal."

Since opening the newly constructed area, SCCMHA Access and Intake staff has been conducting approximately eight scheduled intake interviews per day and crisis interventions are provided as needed. Construction at SCCMHA's Hancock facility is still ongoing — Phase II of the project began this past summer and focuses on renovating the area on the first floor that once housed the Family Services unit. Once completed, the new area will include space for Health Delivery, Inc. operations as well as SCCMHA psychiatry staff, injection nurses, clinical nurses and a laboratory.





# Mind Your Mind This Holiday Season

By: Mary Baukus, MSW, LMSW, SCCMHA Wellness Coordinator

The holiday season has added pressures: cold weather, shorter periods of daylight and changes of routine that can make emotional and mental wellness challenging. What can we do to keep our emotional health and wellness a priority this holiday season? Try the following tips for a more peaceful holiday season:

- Allow yourself some “me” time. No matter how much you have on your plate, taking five (or more) minutes for just you can significantly reduce your stress-reaction. Use this time to clear your head and focus on your breathing. After this little break, you may feel ready to take on your next challenge.
- Get adequate sleep. If you don’t sleep well, you will not feel well. Lack of sleep can lead to irritability, increased anxiety and overall increased struggles with managing emotions. Make getting 7-8 hours of sleep per night a goal during the holiday season and throughout the year.
- Exercise daily. Even as little as 25 minutes of exercise can give your brain a boost and improve your mood despite the cold weather and darker days of the season.
- Eat a balanced and healthy diet. Choosing to eat well can provide the energy you need to get things checked off your holiday list.
- Hold at least one focused, connected and meaningful conversation each day. Having a meaningful conversation in our tool box of coping skills can help us with the sometimes much-needed reassurances during this stressful season.
- Start (or resume) a hobby. This idea may help reduce your holiday-related anxiety by distracting you and giving you something else to focus on for a short while.
- Ask for help when you need it. We all can’t be “perfect” at everything all of the time. Seek the support you need, when you need it to make this holiday season the best one yet.

## Addressing the Mythological Link Between Mental Illness and Violence

An inevitable consequence of the violence that flashes across our television screens and social media feeds on an uncomfortably regular basis is the need to understand why. When the media cover stories like the shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, or in a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, the first thing people want to know is why and how something like this could happen. More often than not “mental illness” becomes part of that conversation. It’s a natural reaction, to try and put unthinkable acts into neat boxes that we can understand, but acts of violence are often very complicated and don’t always have a clear explanation. Instead of trying to take what little information is available and place blame, a more helpful option is to focus on what we can do to help prevent someone from reaching a point where they feel violence is the answer.

The reality is that only 3-5% of crimes involve individuals with mental illness — they are actually far more likely to be victims of violent crime than to be responsible for it. When media and political figures cite “possible mental health issues” as a cause for violent acts, they are reinforcing the inaccurate stigma that people with mental illness are dangerous, violent and should be feared. This stigma marginalizes the hard work and progress that the vast majority of individuals with mental illness have accomplished in their own lives and may prevent individuals from getting the help they need because they don’t want to be labeled as dangerous or unstable. The need to have an answer for acts we can’t explain has the potential to be very harmful and keeps us from focusing on what we can do to make a real difference.

So where does that leave us and what can we do? The first step in being a solution to any problem is education — understanding what the issue is and how you can help. When a violent act is committed on any scale, there are often warning signs along the way that might have served as opportunities for someone to speak up and ask the right questions to get the individual the support they need before violence becomes an option.

Mental Health First Aid is an internationally-recognized resource available in the Saginaw County region through Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) for people who are looking to learn the skills needed to be the person who speaks up when they sense someone is in crisis. It is an evidence-based training for youth and adults that teaches participants risk factors and warning signs related to mental health and addiction. The course teaches strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help.

To date SCCMHA has trained approximately 900 police officers, educators, professionals, leaders and community members in either youth or adult Mental Health First Aid. Join us in changing the conversation that unfairly links mental illness and violence. End the stigma.

*If you are interested in participating in a Youth or Adult Mental Health First Aid training, visit the SCCMHA website at [www.sccmha.org](http://www.sccmha.org) or contact Continuing Education Supervisor Dawn Heje at 989-797-3451 or [dheje@sccmha.org](mailto:dheje@sccmha.org) for information on upcoming classes and to register.*



# Quality in the Age of Electronic Healthcare

Technology enables us to communicate with each other — to share our lives online, to research, analyze and think. It empowers us to open our minds and make informed decisions. Technology has also created opportunities for more up-to-date tracking and communication between patients and medical professionals in the health care world, making diagnosing and treating illnesses of all kinds more thorough and collaborative. Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) has long been a leader in innovative medical practices for consumers and community partners, and now the process of ensuring the quality of everything we do is getting an update to match the innovation of our practices.

“In our line of work, we have three main goals that we try to accomplish in everything we do,” explained Linda Tilot, SCCMHA Director of Care Management Quality Systems. “Improve the health of the people we serve, improve the experience of those receiving services from us, and improve the quality of care that we provide. Our plan for ensuring quality in our services was originally created when technology didn’t play that big of a role in how we served people. The landscape of how healthcare is administered has changed dramatically over the years and our plan to oversee the continued quality of our services needed to evolve as well.”

SCCMHA’s quality program is currently restructuring into a model that contains a primary governance body with multiple committees that are tasked with overseeing and implementing quality projects for specific subjects such as continuing education, quality of life, outcomes measurement, wellness and more. Staff members who interact more closely with consumers on a day-to-day basis will largely be responsible for sitting on these committees and implementing projects that will realistically impact the three main goals of improving health, service experience and quality of care.

“The most important aspect of this restructuring is that it is not centrally controlled,” said Tilot. “There will be a main governance structure that oversees the entire quality assurance program at SCCMHA, but by and large the on-the-ground staff will be responsible for developing and implementing the projects with the management team providing support on the process of implementing projects and measuring their effectiveness. These on-the-ground staff members have a better understanding of what consumers and our partners want and need because they interact with them on a daily basis; because of this they can better understand what projects will make the most impact and difference.”

The Quality Governance Group, which will serve as the main governance body of quality projects implemented at SCCMHA, will hold its first meeting in January 2016. It is expected that the implementation of the restructuring of the quality program as a whole will take a full year to complete, but SCCMHA is excited to have a more effective process in place that will continually find new and impactful ways to enhance the quality of everything we do.





## The Fundamentals of Wellness at SCCMHA

At Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) we believe that wellness is fundamental — not just mental wellness, but physical and emotional wellness also. You can't be healthy and whole if all areas of your well-being aren't addressed.

SCCMHA's Wellness Committee, made up of staff from various departments in the agency, meets throughout the year to plan and implement projects with the overarching goal of improving consumer and staff health and wellness. Projects over the past year included monthly wellness messaging, wellness classes for consumers, working with case managers to ensure wellness is incorporated into consumers' individualized care plans, physical activity challenges for staff and much more.

At the beginning of October, SCCMHA Wellness Coordinator Mary Baukus published a review of the 2015 Fiscal Year Wellness Plan which highlighted the goals, strategies and accomplishments of the past year. In addition to the review, the Fiscal Year 2016 Wellness Plan was also published, which outlines the committee's goals for the upcoming year and how they plan to achieve them.

"The Wellness Plans that we put together definitely give us a sense of structure and direction for the coming year," Baukus said. "Wellness can mean many things to different people, so having a plan in place helps keep us focused on the fundamentals of wellness and how those can be integrated into the culture of our agency. They are also great tools for us to track progress and evaluate any adjustments that we might need to take in the coming year."

*For more information on how SCCMHA incorporates wellness into our operations and the outcomes of wellness initiatives, visit our website where you can review both the Fiscal Year 2015 Wellness Plan Review and the Fiscal Year 2016 Wellness Plan at [www.sccmha.org/healthcare-partnerships/wellness/](http://www.sccmha.org/healthcare-partnerships/wellness/).*

SCCMHA will be closed for the holidays on these dates.

December  
**Thursday, December 24**  
**Friday, December 25**  
**Thursday, December 31**

January  
**Friday, January 1**

24-hour Crisis Intervention Services will be available 24/7 despite the SCCMHA offices being closed. Contact **989-792-9732** for help.

