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SCCMHA and Saginaw County 10th Probate Court announce release of First Responder's Guide for Behavioral Interventions

Saginaw, MI — Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) and the Saginaw County Probate Court are proud to release the ***Saginaw County First Responder's Guide for Behavioral Interventions***.

This guide is a comprehensive handbook outlining a collaborative approach that includes community partners using best practices with the goal of safely and efficiently resolving a behavioral health crisis in Saginaw County and connecting individuals with follow-up services.

The First Responder's Guide provides shared principles and operational protocols to support consistent, equitable and effective crisis response across Saginaw County jurisdictions and agencies, while reducing duplication of resources.

The guide highlights community resources and various ways to address specific situations pertaining to behavioral health crises, such as

- The inpatient admission process
- Children/youth and families in crisis
- Substance use and co-occurring disorder treatment
- The role of law enforcement in mental health emergencies
- Working with other agencies/programs, such as CAN Council, adult and child protective services, Mobile Response and Stabilization Services, MMR and community paramedics, suicide prevention, victim services, outpatient behavioral health services, and additional community agencies

A memorandum of understanding was signed by community partners as a formal recognition of a commitment to work together for the benefit of Saginaw County citizens.

This is the fifth version of the First Responder's Guide, which was first developed in 2007 and was last updated in 2018, when it was also made available electronically.

According to SCCMHA Mental Health Supervisor Nancy Johnson, over the last 20 years, policies and protocols have evolved with community needs, as well as the inclusion of new programs and Saginaw County agencies.

"Individuals in a behavioral health crisis are the most vulnerable citizens in our community and a unified approach helps us to better understand each other's role," Johnson said. "When we sit down at the table and come together, it benefits the entire community and promotes effectively meeting the needs of a person experiencing a behavioral health crisis."

Usage of the First Responder's Guide will assist agencies in helping individuals and families navigate these crises and connect with the necessary agencies to provide assistance in a safe and effective manner.

"With help from local community partners, including the courts and first responders, SCCMHA has the opportunity to utilize the unique skill set and expertise of each agency to promote the highest level of quality intervention for the well-being of our citizens and the Saginaw County community," Johnson said.

Saginaw County Probate Court Honorable Patrick J. McGraw highlighted the importance of quality relationship amongst Saginaw County's community partners.

"The expertise of the community mental health and the strong partnership of the courts, law enforcement and many of our other community partnerships allow us to produce a guide that is to the benefit of the most vulnerable citizens in our community," McGraw said.

The Saginaw County First Responder's Guide for Behavioral Intervention can be found on the SCCMHA website at <https://www.sccmha.org/our-services/crisis-intervention-services/saginaw-county-first-responders-guide-for-bh-interventions.html>.

SCCMHA is headquartered at 500 Hancock Street in Saginaw. It provides numerous multidisciplinary behavioral and disability treatment and support services, including evaluations, screenings, active evidenced based treatment directly, as well as through a large, contracted provider network.

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