



Niagara County Community Services Board
 Minutes
 Regular Meeting
 Date: Monday – February 23, 2026
 Time: 6:00 pm

LOCATION: Niagara County Department of Mental Health – 475 South Transit Street, Ste. 500
 Lockport, NY 14094

ATTENDANCE:

	PRESENT	EXCUSED
Dr. Annette Dobrasz, Board President	X	
Robin Stevens, 1 st Board VP, 1 st Term	X	
Kelly Biehls, 2 nd Board VP, 1 st Term	X	
Stephanie Donovan, Board Member		X
Ronald Barstys, PhD, Board Member	X	
Suzanne Diez, Board Member		X
Richard Abbott (Leg.), Board Member	X	
Betsy Farkas, Board Member		
Donald Jablonski, Board Member		X
James Muehlbauer, Board Member	X	
<u>Niagara County Mental Health Administration</u>		
Laura Kelemen, LCSW-R, NCDMH Director	X	
Myrla Gibbons Doxey, LMFT, NCDMH Deputy Director	X	
Kimberly Hubert-Bickel, NCDMH Confidential Assistant		X
Tracey Zayac, Account Clerical III (covering for Kim H.-B.)	X	
Guest - Gary Lisowski, Esq (Asst. Cnty Atty for MH)	X	
Guest - Christopher Bopst, Esq (Asst. Cnty Atty)	X	

1) Dr. Annette Dobrasz, Board President, called the Community Services Board (CSB) Meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

2) Meeting Minutes:

Robin Stevens motioned to approve the January 26, 2026 Minutes as presented, Dr. Ron Barstys seconded the motion; the Minutes were unanimously approved by the Board. Minutes to be affirmed at next CSB Meeting.

3) Membership Review

a. Membership Review –

- Ful Board - Eric Zapolowski – Mr. Zapolowski was referred to apply to the CSB by Robin Stevens. Mr. Zapolowski is a licensed pharmacist with many years of experience working with individuals in the community and would be of great benefit to have on the Board and a subcommittee. Robin Stevens, CSB 1st Vice President provided background, along with her recommendation. If approved, his application will be sent to the Legislature for voting. Motioned by Dr. Ron Barstys, seconded by Kelly Biehls to approve and submit application. Unanimously approved by the Board to recommend appointment to CSB – will forward to Legislature.
- Tracy Fricano Chalmers - received application for Alcohol & Substance Abuse Subcommittee – currently works as Niagara County Health Dept., Director, Public Planning and Emergency Preparedness / Public Information Officer. Ms. Chalmers was recommended to apply by Laura Kelemen and Myrla Gibbons-Doxey. Cannot sit on CSB Board due to not being a Niagara County resident. Motioned by Dr. Ron Barstys, seconded by Robin Stevens to unanimously approve this application and forward recommendation to Legislature.
- Tara Porter – Received application requesting to be on the Mental Health Subcommittee. Tara has long standing residency of Lockport and is the Director of Compeer Niagara Program for adults and youth through the Mental Health Association. Dan Colpoys of The Mental Health Association referred Tara Porter for subcommittee. Dr. Ron Barstys, seconded by James Muehlbauer to approve application and forward recommendation to the Legislature.
- Laura Lloyd – Application was received back in December and recommendation was forwarded to the Legislature. It has not been brought to a Legislative Meeting at this time. Ms. Lloyd is a peer advocate with New Directions. Laura Kelemen will follow up on this application.
- Vivian Gerard, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner – Application received requesting to be on Incident Review Committee. Past employee of NCDMH as a registered nurse. Highly recommended for committee by current Board members. No objections for approving this application. No conflicts of interest.

b. Sub-committee Review –

- 2026 CSB Subcommittee Meeting Schedule – Reviewed Subcommittee Meeting schedule. Tentatively:

March 25th – Joint Subcommittees – 2:30pm – 4pm, Public Safety Training Facility (N/O BOCES not available).

Tuesday 5/19/2026 – Individual subcommittee meetings – at NCDMH Lockport site, 475 S. Transit Street

Thursday 9/24/26 – Joint Subcommittees 2:30pm – 4pm, N/O BOCES

Thursday 11/19/26 – Individual subcommittee meetings – at NCDMH Lockport.

Advanced notices will be sent out to members in the very near future.

4) Director's Report

➤ Correspondence – Review by Director:

1. Letters, Memorandums & E-mails:

- Correspondence listed on separate page, attached

➤ *Certificate of Need (CON) / Prior Approval Reviews (PAR)

*CON – No new business

*EzPar – No new business

Informational –

- **Catholic Charities Monsignor Carr Institute** –
 - i. Administrative Action #11785 – Lockport Clinic site relocation from Bewley Building Suite 300 to 81 Walnut St. Verbally approved by OMH regional office to open for business today.
 - **Child & Family Services Youth Assertive Community Treatment (YACT)**
 - i. Dedicated Niagara County Team with 36 slots pending EZPAR application and New Office Location secured at 1522 Main Street in Niagara Falls.
 - **New Directions Youth & Family Services** –
 - i. Administrative Action #11821 – Remove CFTSS Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) Services from service offering pending OMH review.
- **Corporate Compliance** – Department has engaged outside consult Foxpointe Solutions (division of Bonadio Group) they are in the process of conducting Compliance Program Effectiveness review (modeled after how an OMIG or other regulatory body would conduct). Robin Stevens raised questions about a report from a news outlet related to allegations of misused Opioid funds in a different county. Director Kelemen explained the different Opioid Settlement Funds and how these are administered through the Department.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment Annual Report – Gillian Henry Game, Community Services Supervisor, along with Sierra Clark, Senior Licensed Clinician, presented 2025 AOT Annual Report, distributed prior to meeting for review. Director Kelemen discussed developments related to the AOT program focused on expanding use of Enhanced Voluntary Agreements (EVAs) to either assist with stepping down from AOT or preventing need for court orders. State has provided some funding beginning in SFY 2026. Working on developing program design and budget for these new services and expectations.

Program/Systems Updates

- NYS OASAS – Opioid Settlement – Regional Abatement Dollars Audit. Director Kelemen informed the CSB that NYS OASAS is conducting an audit of Counties' use of abatement dollars. Their audit includes request for Policies and Procedures related to purchasing, distribution of the dollars, fiscal tracking and responsibility. Niagara County is among the 2nd cohort of counties being audited. Will keep the Board apprised of any concerns or recommendations from this audit.
- OMH AOT Funding and Priorities (FY 2026) – see notes above.
- Hope Speaks Niagara Community Coalition – Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey distributed the revised and final Logo that incorporated feedback received from the Board and Coalition members. The chosen tagline for the Coalition is “Ending Stigma. Building Hope. Saving Lives.” A Website was created as part of the NCDMH site for the Coalition that can be accessed via the main Department page and the previous Niagara County Suicide Prevention Coalition Facebook page was transitioned to Hope Speaks Niagara Community Coalition. The restructured coalition continues to be solidified and the next meeting of the whole was scheduled for today but due to various member cancelations is rescheduled to March 9, 2026 at 1:00 pm at Orleans/Niagara BOCES Sanborn Conference Center.

- NFMCC –Discussion of leadership changes within NFMCCs Emergency Department – including Chief Nursing Officer, Emergency Department Director and Coordinator. These individuals are from Catholic Health System. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey provided a brief recap of a recent meeting with Emergency Department leadership. The Department will continue to build effective working relationships with the hospital.
- New Directions Youth & Family Services – Home & Community Based Intervention (HBCI) Services. The agency is establish the program and onboarding the team currently. Anticipated launch sometime in March 2026. More information to come once Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey and SPOA staff meet with the agency to learn more.
- NACBHDD (National Association of County Behavioral Health and Disability Directors) - State of the State Presentation – Director Kelemen has been elected to this national board. She has also been asked to present at their Spring Legislative and Policy Conference in Washington DC as part of a panel. Director Kelemen provided this presentation to the CSB for their awareness and input. Board responded positively with no suggestions for additional input.

5) President’s Report - No new business.

6) Executive Session – No Executive Session needed.

7) Meeting Adjournment

James Muelhauer motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ron Barstys seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Future CSB Meeting Date: March 23, 2026

***Voting Items**

Distributed Items at Meeting:

- a. Agenda
- b. *CSB Draft Meeting Minutes for January 26, 2026
- c. 2025 Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Annual Report
- d. Current 2026 CSB Membership Roster