



Niagara County Community Services Board
Minutes
Regular Meeting
Date: Monday – August 3, 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 (via WebEx)	
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	
Donald Jablonski, Board Member		X
James Muehlbauer, Board Member	X (via WebEx)	
Eric Zapalowski, 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	
Christopher Bopst, Esq (Asst. County Atty)	X	

- 1) **Dr. Annette Dobrasz, Board President, called the Community Services Board (CSB) Meeting to order at 6:08 PM.** The meeting was recorded due to two members (Robin Stevens and James Muehlbauer.) participating via WebEx.
- 2) **Meeting Minutes:**
Kelly Biehls motioned to approve the June 15, 2026 CSB Meeting Minutes as presented, Suzanne Diez seconded the motion; the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.
- 3) **Membership Review**
 - a. **Membership Review** No membership updates were reported; however, a comprehensive membership review will be conducted in September.
 - b. **Sub-committee Review**
 - No new sub-committee member(s) applications received.
 - **Upcoming meetings:**

CSB Joint Subcommittee and Provider Meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 24, 2026 2:30pm – 4:00 pm at ONBOCES Sanborn Conference Center.

Individual Subcommittee Meetings are scheduled for Thursday, November 19, 2026 at the Lockport Administrative offices – 475 South Transit Street Lockport.

Meeting notifications will be distributed by Senior Planner, Nicholas Kester.
- 4) **Director's Report**
 - **Correspondence** (Letters, Memorandums, and Emails)
Director Kelemen reviewed correspondence received from Northpointe Council and Cazenovia Recovery regarding requests to the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) to retain prior year surplus revenues through the "Do Not Apply" process. The Board was advised that, following Medicaid and Medicaid Managed Care reimbursement changes, providers have requested permission to retain surplus revenues to support agency sustainability, capital improvements, facility renovations, and continued program operations. Both agencies expressed concerns regarding OASAS denial of these requests and the lack of clear guidance regarding allowable uses of surplus funds. The matter remains under review with OASAS.
 - **Certificate of Need (CON) / Prior Approval Reviews (PAR)**

CON –
 - **Heritage Christian Services** Application # IRA-063026-1-WNY to increase capacity from five to six individuals at 7237 Townline Rd, North Tonawanda, NY. The application was approved by OPWDD on July 23, 2026. This was an informational item and required no Board action.
 - **NYSARC Wayne County** Application # CL-050426-FL-2 -Article 16 clinic closure at 1555 Fashion Outlet Boulevard, Niagara Falls, NY. The Board previously reviewed information on this anticipated application. No objections were submitted and required no Board action.
 - * **EzPar** – no new business
 - * **CPAR** – no new business
 - * **NCDMH SAMHSA CCBHC-IA grant application** - Director Kelemen presented the draft application and project abstract for the SAMHSA Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic-Improvement and Advancement (CCBHC-IA) Grant, requesting Board approval.

The proposed four-year grant would provide approximately \$1 million annually to strengthen treatment for individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. Proposed initiatives include expanding care management services, hiring a Certified Peer Recovery Advocate, and increasing evidence-based training opportunities.

Dr. Ronald Barstys motioned to approve submitting of the grant application, James Muehlbauer seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Informational – Review by Director Laura Kelemen and Deputy Director Myrla Gibbons Doxey

- **Child and Family Services** – EZPAR #4882 establishing a Youth ACT Program in Niagara County was recommended for approval by OMH July 30, 2026.
 - **Dale Association** – Administrative Action #12209 approving additional PROS hours by appointment was approved July 17, 2026.
 - **Evergreen Health Services** – Change Request # 59983 – Specialty Mental Health Care Management closure for Program Code Change only; no change to services.
 - **Horizon Health Services**
 - Administrative Action #12253 – Starpoint School District School Based Satellite Clinic Hours Updated operating hours for the Starpoint School District School-Based Satellite Clinic to align with Family Support Center hours.
 - Change Request #60006 – Specialty Mental Health Care Management Closure for Program Code Change only; no change to services.
 - CPAR Prior Consult – CCBHC Pine Ave, Niagara Falls space expansion. Prior consultation was reviewed regarding expansion of the Pine Avenue CCBHC site, including nine additional offices. A formal CPAR application will be presented for Board approval at a future meeting.
 - **Niagara County Department of Mental Health** – Administrative Action # 12239- changed the Lockport High School School-Based Satellite Clinic operating day from Thursday to Tuesday, effective September 1, 2026. OMH approved this July 29, 2026.
 - **Save the Michaels Application # 264021** – Status update provided regarding the transfer of ownership of the Newfane House of Hope to Recovery Center of Niagara, LLC. The application remains under OASAS review. A management services agreement is currently in place to ensure continued operations.
- **Corporate Compliance** - No new business. The department continues to monitor regulatory and compliance requirements and implement updates as needed.

➤ **Program/Systems Updates:** Review by Director Laura Kelemen and Deputy Director Myrla Gibbons Doxey

- **HHUNY (Health Home of Upstate NY) Adult Health Home Designation and transitions** - BestSelf advised that regional Health Home transitions are underway, with four Health Homes expected to transition out during 2026. HHUNY will serve both as an MSO to BestSelf and a Health Home more directly responsible for supporting Care Management Agencies. Additional information regarding regional impacts will be provided as available.
- **NYS proposal to sunset Adult Behavioral Health HCBS** - The Board received an overview of New York State's transition from Adult Behavioral Health Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to CORE Services. The transition is intended to reduce eligibility barriers, improve access to services, and increase utilization for individuals with complex behavioral health needs.

- **Lockport Recovery Community Center** – Director Kelemen reported on the completion of a community needs assessment and community forum supporting the need for a Recovery Community Center in Lockport. OASAS agreed with the findings and intends to issue an RFP. Community Services Board input during the procurement process was requested.
- **NCDMH Grant Awards**
The department received the following awards:
 - National Council TTA Center/MTM-Revenue Cycle
 - National Council TTA Center/MTM- No Show Management/Centralized Scheduling Development
 - SAMHSA Children’s Mental Health Initiative (CMHI)

The CMHI Grant will provide approximately \$700,000 annually for four years to strengthen Niagara County's Children's Network of Care (CNOC).

Planned initiatives include:

- Expansion of family engagement services.
 - Increased provider education and training.
 - Development of a countywide resource network.
 - Implementation of the NAVI wellness application for youth, providing evidence based mental wellness resources, crisis support, safety planning, and connections to local services for all Niagara County youth, including those attending private or home schools.
 - Board members discussed staffing needs, grant-funded positions, salary determinations, and opportunities to educate future professionals through CNOC University and partnerships with local colleges and student teachers.
- **Child Advocacy Center of Niagara** - Director Kelemen reported that the Child Advocacy Center experienced a 46% reduction in funding after not receiving an Office of Victim Services award. Discussion focused on the significant impact of the funding loss and potential alternative funding opportunities, including OMH, OASAS, and other available resources.
 - **New Children’s SPOA Funding** - The Board received an update regarding new Children's Single Point of Access (SPOA) funding resulting from the State's children's services settlement. The department is participating in upcoming meetings to determine allowable uses of the funding, including opportunities to leverage future grant applications.
 - **NYS Suicide Prevention Center Annual Conference** - Director Kelemen announced that Deputy Director Myrle Gibbons Doxey and Community Coalitions Coordinator Connie Desmarais were invited to present at the New York State Suicide Prevention Center Annual Conference in Ithaca on September 29, 2026, highlighting Niagara County's work in rural behavioral health initiatives.

5) **President’s Report** – No report

6) **Executive Session** Second Quarter 2026 NCDMH Corporate Compliance Report – reviewed by Deputy Director Myrle Gibbons Doxey.

Ronald Barstys motioned to enter Executive Session; Kelly Biehls seconded the motion. Executive session began at 7:31pm.

Ronald Barstys motioned to exit the Executive Session; Kelly Biehls seconded the motion. Executive session adjourned at 7:49 pm.

7) **Meeting Adjournment**

Richard Abbott motioned to adjourn the meeting; Kelly Biehls seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:52pm.

Future CSB Meeting Date:

- CSB Meeting: Monday, September 21, 2026

Niagara County Community Services Board
Correspondence Listing, Agenda Item 4-1 - Director's Report
Meeting Date & Time: Monday, August 3, 2026 at 6:00 pm

A. Niagara County Community Services Board Meeting Notices:

1. Niagara County Community Services Board Monday, August 3, 2026 Meeting Notice - dated, July 27, 2026.
 2. Notifications to two County Newspapers regarding August 3, 2026 Meeting scheduling Notice - dated, July 27, 2025.
- B. Correspondence from Kristi Yerger, President/CEO, Northpointe Council, to Megan Schmitt, regional Coordinator, OASAS Western Regional Office, regarding request for Part 822 "DO NOT APPLY" surplus retention approval, dated July 15, 2026.
- C. Correspondence from Kristi Yerger, President/CEO, Northpointe Council, to Megan Schmitt, regional Coordinator, OASAS Western Regional Office, regarding request to "DO NOT APPLY" 820 program, dated July 15, 2026.
- D. Correspondence from Myrla Gibbons Doxey, Deputy Director, Niagara County Dept. of Mental Health, to Maria Torgalski, Director, NYS OPWDD, regarding Heritage Christian Svcs. application to change capacity, dated July 22, 2026.
- E. Correspondence from Tammy Scherer, Director, Office of Mental Health, to Joseph Ruffolo, President and CEO, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, regarding Operating Certificate, dated July 20, 2026.
- F. Correspondence from Jen Leumer, CFO, CAZ Recovery, to NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports, regarding Part 820 residential reintegration request to "not apply" 2025 surplus revenue, dated July 20, 2026.
- G. Correspondence from Megan Schmitt, Regional Office Coordinator, NYS OASAS, to Save the Michael's of the World, regarding regional office review report, dated June 16, 2026
- H. Correspondence from OPWDD, Regional Office, Marisa Geitner, Executive Director, Heritage Christian Services, regarding CON back-end approval letter, dated July 23, 2026

Newspaper Articles:

1. Buffalo News, "Suicide nearly led feds to pull funds from psych center", by Dan Herbeck, dated 6/28/26
2. Buffalo News, "Here's how we can help youths who are stressed out", by Julie Tinker, dated 7/1/26
3. Buffalo News, "Environmental disasters-like radioactive waste-can take a mental health toll, experts say", by Mackenzie Shuman, dated 7/27/26
4. Buffalo News, "Report on treatment reveals severe problems", by Rob Kent, dated 7/27/26

Webex Meeting Recordings

Part 1

Webex meeting recording link:

<https://niagaracounty.webex.com/niagaracounty/ldr.php?RCID=2545dcf94feb0a0bf4a8b6fa9a8ba6e2>

Password: FhVb3vnp

Part 2 (meeting adjournment)

Webex meeting recording link:

<https://niagaracounty.webex.com/niagaracounty/ldr.php?RCID=933d26f3e2ef12e989be8537c2b4b02c>

Password: xTtE8Tp2