



Niagara County Community Services Board
 Minutes
 Regular Meeting
 Date: Monday – April 20, 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 | | X |
| Donald Jablonski, Board Member | | X |
| James Muehlbauer, Board Member | | X |
| Eric Zapalowski, Board Member | X | |
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| <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 | |
| Michelle Abraham, NCDMH Clinics Program Director | X | |
| Christopher Bopst, Esq (Asst. County Atty) | X | |
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1) **Dr. Annette Dobrasz, Board President, called the Community Services Board (CSB) Meeting to order at 6:04 PM.**

2) **Meeting Minutes:**

Ronald Barstys, PhD motioned to approve the March 23, 2026 Minutes as presented, Robin Stevens seconded the motion; the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board

3) **Membership Review**

Introduction of new Board member Eric Zapalowski.

a. **Membership Review**

- No new Community Services Board applications received.

b. **Sub-committee Review**

- No new sub-committee member(s) applications received.

Subcommittee Meeting Review Highlights / Informational – March 25, 2026 CSB Joint Subcommittee Meeting Minutes (Draft). Review by Deputy Director Myrla Gibbons Doxey:

- Strong participation noted, with almost 50 attendees.
- Key Discussion Points:
 - Transportation: Ongoing need identified. Discontinuation of transportation services by Save the Michaels has created a gap. Connect Niagara is redesigning services, impacting access. Medicaid transportation is limited to medical appointments (not court, NA/AA meetings, etc.). Discussion regarding re-engaging Connect Niagara and community providers to address routes, awareness, signage, and education of its use. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey will take lead on this.
 - Housing: Continued shortage of available affordable housing for individuals in need.

4) **Director's Report**

➤ **Correspondence** – Review by Director Kelemen:

Key Updates:

Save the Michaels (STM):

- Closure of Recovery Community Center and the separate drop-in center.
- STM unable to continue prior level of support.
- Transfer of ownership agreement established with Recovery Center of Niagara for the Newfane House of Hope Reintegration Program.
- STM continues staffing temporarily while the transfer of ownership process occurs.
- Management services agreement in place to support transition.

Evergreen Health Services:

- Mobile team currently providing expanded harm reduction services in Niagara County.

NYS OASAS:

- Evaluating the need for a Recovery Community Center in Niagara County.

Salvation Army:

- Discussion regarding the discontinuation of Code Blue services and local impact.

Funding Opportunity:

- Upcoming RFP for opioid abatement funds, focused on criminal justice diversion and reentry services.
- Letters, Memorandums & E-mails: Correspondence listed on separate page, attached

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

***CON – #264021 Transfer of ownership – STM Newfane House of Hope 820 to Recovery Center of Niagara (operating certificate 270912378).** Proposal reviewed by Director Kelemen.

Motion to approve transfer ownership by Robin Stevens; seconded by Suzanne Diez. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

*** EzPar** – No new business

Informational – Review by Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey

- **Child + Family Services** – Prior Consult Scheduled 4/30/26 for dedicated Niagara County ACT Team with 36 slots
 - **Endeavor Health Services** – Niagara Falls Parole Satellite change in operating days from half day on Wednesdays and full business day on Thursdays to only Mondays. Change due to office no longer having space available on Wednesdays and challenge with agency staffing on Thursdays. No impact on number of clients served. Two staff already assigned to location will be assigned on Mondays to continue to meet client need.
 - **New Directions Youth & Family Services** – Home Based Crisis Intervention Services began 3/20/26. Current team of 3 staff who can serve 2 – 3 youth on a caseload each. Pending hire of a fourth staff. Team serves Erie and Niagara County and current caseload consists of Erie County youth. The program does not maintain a wait list given the nature of the program and its eligibility criteria. Program will be working with Niagara County SPOA to ensure Niagara County youth in need of HBCI services have access.
 - **Promesa Inc. – Alba De Vida (Acacia Network)** – NYS Mobile Medication Unit (MMU) with Horizon Health Services Residential Programs. Agency proposes to provide Methadone Treatment to individuals determined appropriate for such that are in residential treatment at Horizon Residential programs. For residents that may enter residential treatment on Methadone, MMU will be resuming their currently prescribed medication and providing take home for them during their residential stay. This would take collaboration with their home outpatient treatment provider (OTP) program. For treatment continuation upon residential discharge, both Horizon and the MMU will reconnect the resident back to their home OTP program or link them with an OTP referral, when necessary, upon discharge to provide continuity of care.
- **Corporate Compliance** – Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey reports that the Department is utilizing MedTrainer to complete the monthly exclusionary checks, which require staff, contractor, intern and volunteer (i.e. CSB and subcommittee members) date of birth when checked. Confidential Assistant Hubert-Bickel will follow up individually with Board members to obtain such.

➤ **Annual Reports**

Outpatient Clinic (2025): Overview provided by NCDMH Clinics Director, Michelle Abraham with the following key points:

- Year of operational change and new leadership at Niagara Falls clinic.
- Admissions increased; discharges decreased.
- Focus on engagement and trauma-informed care.
- Implementation of Streamline Electronic Health Record system in 2025.
- Dr. Laurie's satellite office closed due to declining numbers.
- Expansion of children's services.
- Exploration of new programming for adjustment disorders.

- Inclusion of non-billable services to demonstrate need and potential future billing opportunities.
- Emphasis on sustainable workflows under new leadership.

No questions raised.

Court Report (2025): Overview provided by Director Kelemen with the following key points:

- 62 competency orders (730 evaluations) completed.
- Additional family court evaluations conducted.
- Movement toward electronic documentation.
- Ongoing collaboration with Prime Care at Niagara County Jail.

No questions raised.

➤ **Program/Systems Updates:** Director Kelemen shared that NCDMH recently applied for the SAMHSA CMHI System of Care Grant. Award decisions expected within approximately 180 days.

5) President's Report - No new business.

6) Executive Session – Executive Session began at 7:18pm, ending at 7:22pm for NCDMH Compliance Program First Quarter 2026 Report follow up.

Eric Zapalowski motioned to enter Executive Session; Kelly Biehls seconded the motion. Executive session began at 7:18pm.

Kelly Biehls motioned to adjourn the Executive Session; Suzanne Diez seconded the motion. Executive session adjourned at 7:22 pm.

7) Meeting Adjournment

Kelly Biehls motioned to adjourn the meeting; Suzanne Dietz seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

Future CSB Meeting Date:

- CSB Meeting: May 18, 2026
- CSB Subcommittee Meetings: May 19, 2026

***Voting Items**

Distributed Items at Meeting:

- a. Agenda
- b. *CSB Draft Meeting Minutes for March 23, 2026
- c. Current 2026 CSB Membership Roster

Niagara County Community Services Board
Correspondence Listing, Agenda Item 4-1 - Director's Report
Meeting Date & Time: Monday, April 20, 2026 at 6:00 pm

- A. Niagara County Community Services Board Meeting Notices:
 - 1. Niagara County Community Services Board Monday, April 20, 2026 Meeting Notice - dated, April 10, 2026.
 - 2. Notifications to two County Newspapers regarding April 20, 2026 Meeting scheduling Notice - dated, April 10, 2025.
- B. Correspondence from Laura Kelemen, Director, Niagara County Dept. of Mental Health, to Michelle Abraham, Outpatient Clinics Program Manager, Niagara County Dept. of Mental Health regarding Prior consult on NCDMH EZPAR application, dated March 20, 2026.
- C. Correspondence from Paul Carver, Deputy Licensing Director, NYS OMH, to Brandy Vandermark-Murray, President, Horizon Health Services, Inc., regarding PIP Operating Certificate # 6034190A, dated March 16 2026.
- D. Correspondence from George Maziarz, Board President, Save the Michaels of the World, to Community Services Board, regarding Authorization of transfer, dated March 26, 2026.
- E. Correspondence from Joel Basch, CEO, Recovery Center of Niagara, to Kimberly Benshoff, Upstate Regional Director, NYS OASAS regarding Outline of steps for management agreement, dated March 27, 2026.
- F. Correspondence from Kevin Kelly, Regional Office Program Manager, OASAS, to Admira Spahic, Regional Director, Beacon Center, regarding Corrective action plan, dated April 9, 2026.
- G. Correspondence from Laura Kelemen, Director, Niagara County Dept. of Mental Health to Amy Skrken, VP of Compliance, Recovery Center of Niagara, regarding Certification Proposal-Prior Consult, dated April 13, 2026.
- H. Correspondence from Kimberly Benshoff, Upstate Regional Director, NYS OASAS, to Amy Skrken, VP of Compliance, Recovery Center of Niagara, fully executed agreement, dated April 14, 2026.