



Niagara County Community Services Board
Minutes
Regular Meeting
Date: Monday - January 27, 2025
Time: 6:00 pm

LOCATION: Dept. of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Administrative Offices, Shaw Building, Health Department Conference Room, 1st Floor, 5467 Upper Mountain Road, NY.

ATTENDANCE:	PRESENT	EXCUSED
Burt Marshall, Board President	X	
Annette Dobrasz, EdD, 1 st Board VP	X	
Stephanie Donovan, 2 nd Board VP	X- Webex	
Thomas Gerbasi, MD, Board Member	X	
Candace Butcher, Board Member		X
Ronald Barstys, PhD, Board Member	X- Webex	
Suzanne Diez, Board Member	X	
Richard Abbott, Board Member	X	
Betsy Farkas, Board Member	X- Webex	
Donald Jablonski, Board Member		X
Rev. Francis Kadryna, Board Member	X- Webex	
Robin Stevens, Board Member		X
Kelly Biehls, 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	
Tracey Zayac	X	
<u>Guests</u>		
Lisa Schrader, Deputy Superintendent of Lockport City School District	X	

1) **Burt Marshall, Board President, called the Community Services Board (CSB) Meeting to order at 6:07 PM.**

2) **Meeting Minutes**

- A. Dr. Annette Dobrasz motioned to approve the December 2, 2024 minutes as presented, Dr. Thomas Gerbasi seconded the motion; the minutes were approved by the Board.
- B. Informational – Reviewed December 19, 2024 CSB Individual Subcommittee Planning Meeting Minutes.

3) **Membership Review**

- A. Membership Review – Director, Laura Kelemen announced that Stephanie Donovan was re-appointed by the legislature for her 2nd term. Robin Stevens also was appointed to return to the Board. Dr. Dobrasz will check with Robin Stevens regarding transportation for Candace Butcher to be able to attend CSB meetings.
- B. Sub-committee Review – Director, Laura Kelemen reported we received an application for Mark Baetzhold.

- **Sub-Committee Assignments – CSB Members**

(Subcommittee applications, further discussion during January meeting. Each Subcommittee may include up to three CSB members. Subcommittee members to be determined in January.)

4) **Director's Report**

- **Correspondence was reviewed by Laura Kelemen, Director.**

- Letters, Memorandums & E-mails:
 - Correspondence listed on separate page, attached

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

***CON** – NYSARC Inc. – Cattaraugus Niagara Counties Chapter (DBA InTandem) – Close and decertify Site Based Prevocational Services located at 1555 Fashion Outlets Blvd, Niagara Falls, NY: Deputy Director, Myrla Gibbons-Doxey reviewed the CON with the Board regarding the closure. This was voted on electronically but needed confirmation vote at CSB Meeting for Minutes. Board discussed concern about time frame in which CON was submitted, particularly expressing that agencies and OPWDD should contact department early in the process, not after the fact. Myrla Gibbons-Doxey has since spoken with the agency about prior consult expectations per regulatory requirements and drafted a response letter to be sent to OPWDD regarding timeliness of reviews.

***EzPar –**

- NCDMH – Establish an OMH-Licensed School Based Satellite Clinic in the Lockport City School District High School. Lisa Schrader, Deputy Superintendent of Lockport City School District was a guest attending this CSB meeting to answer any questions or concerns. Motioned by Dr. Annette Dobrasz and seconded by Mr. Richard Abbott, to approve the EzPar. Motion was approved.

Informational –

- Jewish Family Services – establishing non-traditional school-based services in the Niagara Falls City School District – more info expected to come from agency. Anticipate open date: September 2025. Staffing plan not yet understood. Although this would not be a licensed NYS

Office of Mental Health (OMH) program, it is important to note LGU and CSB general concerns with agencies that continue to expand services when recruitment of staff remains problematic.

- NYSARC Inc. – Cattaraugus Niagara Counties Chapter (DBA InTandem) – Prior Consult to close ICF homes (1 on Sy Rd in Niagara Falls, NY and 1 on Saunders Settlement Rd in Sanborn, NY) and convert to IRAs. InTandem intends to submit a CON to close their 2 ICF homes (12 residents per home) and convert them to IRAs without disruption to residents in program. Agency reports decision for conversion is related to long-term financial goals as reimbursement rates are better in IRAs vs ICFs; reduction in administrative burden so time can be invested in staffing efficiencies and individual care; and IRAs also serve individuals with complex needs. The agency reports converting one of their ICFs in Cattaraugus County prior to 2016 to an IRA and have seen success.
- **Corporate Compliance** – Covered in Executive Session.
- **Programs / System Updates, provided by Director Kelemen** –
 - 2024-50 RFP, Opioid Settlement Funds – Community Supports & Services. The county has received approximately \$1.8 million to date for designated restricted purposes from the Attorney General “direct” fund. As previously discussed, the legislature has provided direction on the use of these funds. Thirteen (13) proposals were received in response to the most recent RFP. The review committee is finalizing its work. More information to come.
 - 988/Crisis Services Staffing Re-design. After recent retirements/promotions in department we have had challenges filling the Phone Aide positions. The department has been evaluating this position related to job title, responsibilities, qualifications and pay rate. We have gathered information to evaluate what other 988 providers have re: titles, duties, qualifications and pay. We are coordinating with Human Resources and Civil service to address and are making considerable progress. Of note, employees with high school diploma were 100% unsuccessful, people with Bachelors Degree were successful, people with associates degrees and experience were mixed. Dr. Gerbasi brought up the idea of having a per diem staff to be able to cover when there are call-ins. Working with SUNY Niagara on bringing in student interns. Looking to abolish current Civil Service Phone Aide job description and recreate a new one with regards to criteria, pay rate, etc. This position is currently under the H.E.L.P. program.
 - Niagara/Orleans Trauma, Illness & Grief Consortium (TIG) – Update: Contracting with CCSI for 2025 to provide three (3) more training cohorts and assistance with implementation. Next cohort begins 2/11/25.
 - Mindly For Students. The Department is working on making a new Tier 1 prevention/intervention available to students in districts across the county who are interested in participating. Mindly for Students is an Evidence Based Single Session sign on mental wellness support, Tier 1 support being developed by suicide prevention experts and university researchers. Students can receive immediate support/coping skills for every day concerns or problems. Schools protocols for identifying and addressing risk can be incorporated into the Program. This program, designed for students ages 8 and up can ensure supports are broadly available for all and can help ensure those who need social work support can access the limited available staff resources. The department will be seeking legislature approval for the use of State Opioid Abatement funds to support this effort for interested school districts.

- NFMHC Emergency Department Collaboration Efforts. The Department, along with NYS OMH and Erie County DMH are working with ECMC, BryLin, and NFMHC to ensure the needs of youth and adolescents who are brought to our local emergency rooms/CPEP are being addressed. ECMC has complained about the volume of “Niagara County” youth being brought to CPEP and that NFMHC is a resource that should be used. NFMHC has expressed that it doesn’t have an inpatient unit, thus lacks the capacity to address the need in the ER. NFMHC as a 9.39 hospital is required to provide services through their ED for all ages. We are working on a direct admission process to the other local hospital inpatient units to ease the burden for youth/families who would otherwise go through a 2nd ED process. Effective February 1, 2025 youth 12 and under are directed to NFMHC (in addition to the adults who currently go there). The youth ages 13 – 17 will continue to be brought to ECMC until we can develop a protocol for direct admissions from NFMHC to ECMC.

5) President’s Report – Nothing to report.

6) Executive Session – Corporate Compliance 2024 Annual Review Report Out

Dr. Annette Dobrasz motioned to enter into Executive Session; Dr. Thomas Gerbasi seconded the motion; the Board entered into Executive Session at 7:25 pm.

Dr. Annette Dobrasz motioned to exit Executive Session; Dr. Thomas Gerbasi seconded the motion; the Board exited Executive Session at 7:50 pm

7) Meeting Adjournment

Dr. Annette Dobrasz motioned to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Thomas Gerbasi seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Meeting Recording can be accessed via the following:

<https://niagaracounty.webex.com/niagaracounty/ldr.php?RCID=83486f1d23b968a61c8e4c3bcc0e22f9>

Password: 52MwjprU

Next CSB Meeting Date: Tentatively – March 17, 2025