



Niagara County Community Services Board
Minutes
Regular Meeting
Date: Monday – March 17, 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	
Thomas Gerbasi, MD, Board Member	X	
Candace Butcher, Board Member		X
Ronald Barstys, PhD, Board Member	X	
Suzanne Diez, Board Member	X	
Richard Abbott, Board Member		X
Betsy Farkas, Board Member		X
Donald Jablonski, Board Member		X
Rev. Francis Kadryna, Board Member		X
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	
Kimberly Hubert-Bickel, NCDMH Confidential Assistant	X	
<u>Guests</u>		
Rita Cuda, Sr. Vice President Child & Family Services at BestSelf Behavioral Health	X	
Richard Updegrove, Niagara County Manager	X	
Claude Jorge, Niagara County Attorney	X	
Christopher Bopst, Niagara County Assistant Attorney, Compliance	X	

- 1) **Burt Marshall, Board President, called the Community Services Board (CSB) Meeting to order at 6:03 PM.**
- 2) **Meeting Minutes**
 - A. Dr. Ron Barstys motioned to approve the January 27, 2025 minutes as presented, Dr. Annette Dobraz seconded the motion; the minutes were approved by the Board.
- 3) **Membership Review**
 - A. Membership Review – Nothing new to report.
 - B. Sub-committee Review – Nothing new to report.
 - **Sub-Committee Assignments – CSB Members**
- 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** – None
 - ***EzPar** – BestSelf Behavioral Health – Establish School-Based Satellite Clinics in the following district schools:
 - Lockport School District at Aaron Mossell Junior High School. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey presented a summary of the EZPAR application. The agency is seeking to establish a school-based satellite one day per week on Wednesday, 8:30am – 5:30pm utilizing the same clinician who currently works at the other two district school-based satellite clinics at Charles Upson and Emmet Belknap Schools. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey noted that the agency reports beginning in-community services in late September 2024; currently serving seven (7) clients, five (5) of which were existing clients at Emmet Belkap who transitioned to Aaron Mossell this school year for continuity of care purposes.

Motioned by Dr. Ron Barstys and seconded by Dr. Annette Dobrasz, to approve the EzPar. Motion was approved by the Board.
 - N. Tonawanda School District at Spruce Elementary School. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey presented a summary of the EZPAR application. The agency is seeking to establish a school-based satellite clinic two (2) days per week on Mondays, 8:00 am – 3:30pm and Wednesday 9:30 am – 5:00pm utilizing the same clinician who currently serves the school-based satellite at Drake Elementary School. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey notes the agency reports beginning in-community services in February 2024 after N. Tonawanda administration requested a clinician to see clients on an as needed basis due to limited referrals at Drake Elementary satellite. The Clinician began serving three (3) clients biweekly on Fridays and did not begin serving additional clients until late August 2024. M. Gibbons Doxey noted that there is no longer a full serving child and adolescent clinic in N. Tonawanda.

Motioned by Dr. Ron Barstys and seconded by Dr. Annette Dobrasz, to approve the EzPar. Motion was approved by the Board.

- Niagara Falls School District at Cataract Elementary School. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey presented a summary of the EZPAR application. The agency is seeking to establish a school-based satellite clinic three (3) days per week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 8:30 am – 3:30 pm utilizing the same clinician at the Niagara Falls High School site. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey notes the agency reports beginning in-community services in early October 2024 and is currently serving 24 clients. Additionally, this school location also has an established school-based satellite operated by Gateway-Longview.

Motioned by Dr. Ron Barstys and seconded by Dr. Annette Dobrasz, to approve the EzPar. Motion was approved by the Board.

- Niagara Falls School District at the High School. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey presented a summary of the EZPAR application. The agency is seeking to establish a school-based satellite clinic two (2) days per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:00 am – 3:30 pm utilizing the same clinician at the Cataract Elementary School site. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey notes the agency reports beginning in-community services in early October 2024 and is currently serving 16 clients.

Motioned by Dr. Ron Barstys and seconded by Dr. Annette Dobrasz, to approve the EzPar. Motion was approved by the Board.

Rita Cuda, Sr. Vice President of Child & Family Services at BestSelf Behavioral Health was a guest attending this CSB meeting to answer any questions or concerns.

Informational –

- BestSelf Behavioral Health satellite closures:
 - Roy-Hart High School school-based satellite – Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey reported that due to BestSelf recruitment efforts being unsuccessful to staff the school-based satellite position, the District elected to end their partnership. NYS Office of Mental Health approved the agency's Administrative Action to close the satellite effective 2/18/25.
 - Wheatfield Pediatrics satellite – Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey reported that BestSelf notified the LGU that Wheatfield Pediatrics hired behavioral health counselors and longer have room for the agency's satellite office and services. The agency will be submitting an administrative action to close this site.
- Catholic Charities Monsignor Carr Institute – Administrative Action to expand population served to adults at the Lockport and Niagara Falls locations. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey shared she recently met with Justin Fax, new Practice Director of Behavioral Health Services who shared the agency's plan expand caseload, capacity, volume of services and population served to adults at their Niagara County locations. J. Fax explained that the agency currently serves approximately 30-40 Niagara County individuals virtually in their Domestic Violence Offender Program and would like to offer these service in person along with the array of clinic services as appropriate to other adults interested in clinic services. This will further assist the agency programs with fiscal viability. NYS Office of Mental Health approved the Administrative Action on 3/17/25.
- New Directions Youth & Family Services - Administrative Action to add designation of Youth Peer Support Services to their Children's Mental Health Rehabilitation Program in

Niagara County. Deputy Director Gibbons Doxey reported this service will expand upon the array of Child and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS) offered by the agency. NYS Office of Mental Health supported the Administrative Action on 3/14/25 with effective date 7/1/25.

- Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center – Director Kelemen reported that there is an Administrative Action to construct a seclusion room on the psychiatric inpatient unit. This is a regulatory requirement. There is also an exemption request because rules require a seclusion room on each inpatient unit, Memorial is seeking to have one seclusion room to serve both units. The Department has no objection to this request. It was noted during our monthly call with NFMMC and OMH that NFMMC is making progress on its goals under the enhanced monitoring.
- **Corporate Compliance** – Christopher Bopst, Assistant County Attorney was present, per the Board’s request. He shared with the Board information on his role with the county including providing oversight of Mental Health and Public Health Medicaid Compliance Programs and offering legal guidance as needed. County Attorney Claude Jorge spoke about Chris’ role. County Manager Updegrove and CA Jorge spoke about completed litigation (class action lawsuit with settlement) related to business email compromise that occurred several years ago. Director Kelemen reminded the Board that in this situation, an email had been compromised through phishing scheme. It did not appear that any PII or PHI was accessed, but the County in an abundance of caution had offered credit monitoring. All required notifications were made. Additional safeguards have been put into place, including multifactor authentication.
- **Programs / System Updates, provided by Director Kelemen –**
 - Opioid RFP - County Direct, Attorney General Settlement, Restricted Funds. For the RFP 2024-50. There were a total of 13 responses received. The project review committee recommended to fund five projects with the available funds. Resolution was approved by Community Services and Admin Committees, will be presented to the legislature on March 18, 2025.
 - 988/Crisis Services Staffing Re-design – Update. The Department continues to work in concert with Human Resources and Civil Service to address increased responsibilities with 988/Crisis Services. Significant positive movement has occurred and this will soon be presented to the Union for their review and approval of an MOU.
 - New Directions Youth & Family Services – Intent to Apply to NYS OMH HBCI RFP
 - Ambulance Services – MHL 9.45 transports. Effective March 24, all transports of individuals under MHL 9.45 and 9.41 will be directed to NFMMC (as per Sheriff and Emergency Management). This department and OMH have been working closely with the local hospitals to ensure a direct admission process to inpatient units at both ECMC and Brylin from NFMMCs ED – to ensure the process isn’t overly burdensome for youth/families. The shift is a result of further limited ambulance availability, including Mercy stating they will no longer be available for MHL transports. NFMMC, as a 9.39 hospital is required to evaluate all ages of individuals who present at their ED needing a MH evaluation (not just adults). If medical eval/stabilization is required, children and youth would still go to Children’s first. The department will monitor and address barriers and concerns as they arise.
 - Streamline Electronic Health Record – Go Live – The Department went live with Streamline our new EHR on February 24th. Acknowledgement to the entire team, especially Myrla for their tireless effort to make a successful launch. We are still working through some go-live issues. This is to be expected.

5) President’s Report – Nothing to report.

6) Executive Sessions –

Review Personnel Matter and Active Litigation

Dr. Annette Dobrasz motioned to enter into Executive Session; Dr. Ron Barstys seconded the motion; the Board entered into Executive Session at 7:00 pm.

Dr. Annette Dobrasz motioned to exit Executive Session; Ron Barstys seconded the motion; the Board exited Executive Session at 7:40 pm

Corporate Compliance 2025 1st Quarter 2025 Report Out

Dr. Annette Dobrasz motioned to enter into Executive Session; Dr. Ron Barstys seconded the motion; the Board entered into Executive Session at 7:50 pm.

Dr. Ron Barstys motioned to exit Executive Session; Dr. Annette Dobrasz seconded the motion; the Board exited Executive Session at 8:10 pm

7) Meeting Adjournment

Dr. Ron Barstys motioned to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Annette Dobrasz seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Next CSB Meeting Date: April 21, 2025