

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



A LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Dear Citizens of Northeast Michigan,

We are pleased to share our Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) with the residents of Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Presque Isle counties. Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health Authority (NeMCMHA) is mandated by the Michigan Mental Health Code to provide services to the specialty populations of adults with a serious mental illness (SMI), children with a serious emotional disturbance (SED), individuals with an intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD), and individuals with substance use disorders (SUD). In the face of multiple challenges, including staffing shortages and an ever-increasing demand for our services, staff have remained mission-focused.

This annual report will highlight the numerous achievements of this organization, the staff and provider network, and, most importantly, the people we are privileged to serve. The stories and programs highlighted in this report show the dedication of the behavioral health professionals at NeMCMHA, and that of the community partners we work collaboratively with to provide care to the individuals and families we serve. The need for effective and caring behavioral health services has never been greater for Northeast Michigan.

In FY24, NeMCMHA intervened in over 489 crises and completed 609 assessments for inpatient psychiatric hospitalization. Our psychiatrists and mid-level providers saw 1,334 individuals for psychiatric evaluations and/or medication reviews throughout the year.

LETTER CONTINUED

Our case managers, nurses, employment specialists, community living support staff, and peer recovery staff are all focused on supporting individuals in their recovery and their ability to live in our communities. We provided these services to over 2,140 individuals who live in the counties of Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Presque Isle.

This year we licensed and opened a new five-bed Adult Foster Care home for individuals with I/DD, continued to provide high quality trainings to our staff and the community, participated in panel discussions and suicide prevention events, provided free naloxone kits to reduce the number of deaths due to opioid overdose, and continued to be the safety net for the communities we serve through our 24/7 crisis program.

Our Board of Directors and staff play a crucial role in bringing these services to the lives of the individuals with disabilities and mental illness that we serve. This work fulfills our Mission that empowers people to live and work independently and our Vision to be the innovative leader in effective, sensitive mental and behavioral health services.

It is in the very origins of a community mental health services program to advocate for others. We advocate for the rights and independence of developmentally and intellectually disabled people, we fight against stigma and discrimination for those who suffer from mental illness, and we support and welcome to our Agency individuals trapped in their addictive behaviors.

In a speech, Maria Shriver recognized caregivers as the “unsung heroes in our society because of their invaluable contributions, selflessness, and dedication to caring for others, often without recognition or appreciation.” This quote embodies the staff here at NeMCMHA and the work they do in our four counties each and every day.

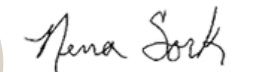
It is our privilege to live and work in Northeast Michigan. The Board of Directors and staff look forward to serving the citizens of Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Presque Isle counties in the coming year.

Sincerely,




Eric Lawson
Board Chair




Nena Sork
Executive Director

OUR VISION

To provide comprehensive services and supports that enable people to live and work independently.

OUR MISSION

Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health Authority will be the innovative leader in effective, sensitive mental and behavioral health services. In so doing, services will be offered within a culture of gentleness and designed to enhance each person's potential to recover. We will continue to be an advocate for the person while educating the community in the promotion of mental and behavioral health.

OUR VALUES

- A Person-Centered focus shall be at the heart of all activities.
- Honesty, respect and trust are values that shall be practiced by all.
- We will be supportive and encouraging to bring out the best in one another.
- Recognition of progress and movement toward a continuously improving environment is a responsibility for all.
- We prefer decision-by-consensus as a decision-making model and will honor all consensus decisions.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The NeMCMHA Board of Directors saw two new Board members appointed during FY24. Dana Labar, representing Presque Isle County, joined the Board in January, and Kara Bauer LeMonds, representing Alpena County, joined in April. Both Dana and Kara bring a wealth of knowledge and varied experience to the Board.



Dana Labar

Presque
Isle County



**Kara Bauer
LeMonds**

Alpena County

FREE NARCAN DISTRIBUTION

In 2024, NeMCMHA partnered with the Overdose Prevention Engagement Network (OPEN) to provide a compassionate approach to public health and individual well-being by providing free access to naloxone. Naloxone (Narcan) is a lifesaving medication that rapidly reverses opioid overdose. OPEN is committed to partnering with organizations around Michigan, like NeMCMHA, to keep our communities safe. OPEN formed in 2016 in an effort to change the trajectory of the opioid epidemic. It began by disrupting the cycle of dependency where it begins most commonly - with a prescription to manage acute pain after surgery.

OPEN is working to reduce opioid-related deaths by expanding access to naloxone among high-risk populations. Our collaboration with OPEN is to distribute naloxone and get it into the hands of patients, family members, caregivers, and communities who are working to reduce opioid overdoses. Naloxone is a nasal spray that temporarily reverses the dangerous effects of an opioid overdose related to drugs such as fentanyl, heroin, or prescription opioids. The FDA approved it to be sold over the counter and anyone can carry naloxone.

NeMCMHA has placed naloxone distribution boxes outside each of our offices (Alpena at Johnson St., Alpena at Fletcher St., Hillman, and Rogers City) for access to free naloxone nasal spray. A box of naloxone retails for \$35-\$50 and we are able to provide it to anyone, no questions asked, for free. The distribution boxes are continually resupplied and can be accessed 24/7 without needing to sign for the medication or give any personal information.

A person cannot get high from, or become addicted to, naloxone. More than 730,000 naloxone kits have been distributed in Michigan, with over 6,600 reported overdose reversals.

The New York Times reported there were an estimated 80,391 overdose deaths in 2024. This was a 27% drop from 2023, with about 30,000 fewer deaths. We are hopeful that this product we provide for free has saved a child, parent, partner, friend, or sibling from the pain and suffering of losing their loved one to an overdose. Despite these improvements, overdose remains the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18-44, underscoring the need for ongoing efforts to maintain progress.



2024 MENTAL HEALTH MOVEMENT 2K | 5K | 10K RUN-WALK



In 2023, we introduced a new community event, the Mental Health Movement 5K Run-Walk. The goal of this event was to raise awareness and reduce stigma for mental health across our four-county catchment area. Due to the resounding success of that first year's event, the Mental Health Movement committee added two additional timed races to the event in 2024: a 2K and a 10K. We had 209 participants join us on a foggy Saturday morning for another successful event! The new 2K route runs along a portion of the original 5K route, and the 10K route utilizes the Alpena Bi-Path along the west side of the city following the river. All participants received finisher medals and commemorative mugs. There is never a shortage of willing staff volunteers, which makes the event run smoothly and efficiently. This is an event we hope to continue to grow as the years come.

MDHHS AND CMH COLLABORATION

In the Spring of 2024, NeMCMHA and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) partnered to develop a Donated Funds Agreement (DFA). This new position provides services to mutual clients of NeMCMHA and MDHHS. The DFA is employed and supervised by MDHHS, while the cost of the position is shared by both agencies. The DFA's role is to maintain a caseload of mutual clients with a Medicaid spend-down or clients identified as a complex benefit case. The DFA is also available to NeMCMHA staff for benefit training, case consultation, troubleshooting, and benefit application assistance.

This addition to NeMCMHA has proven very effective. Staff have benefited from the education provided pertaining to the application process including learning about the many Medicaid categories, Medicaid retroactive payment requests, changes in asset limitations, annual income limits, spend-down submission processes, and more. Our DFA has assisted our organization in recouping Medicaid payments, correcting errors within benefit cases, ensuring entitled benefits are received, and verifying individuals remain in the correct Medicaid categories. The DFA has also significantly reduced staff time spent problem-solving disruptions in benefits cases.

With this ongoing collaboration, NeMCMHA is able to continue exercising fiscal responsibility while providing medically necessary services and ensuring benefit retention to improve the quality of life for individuals served.

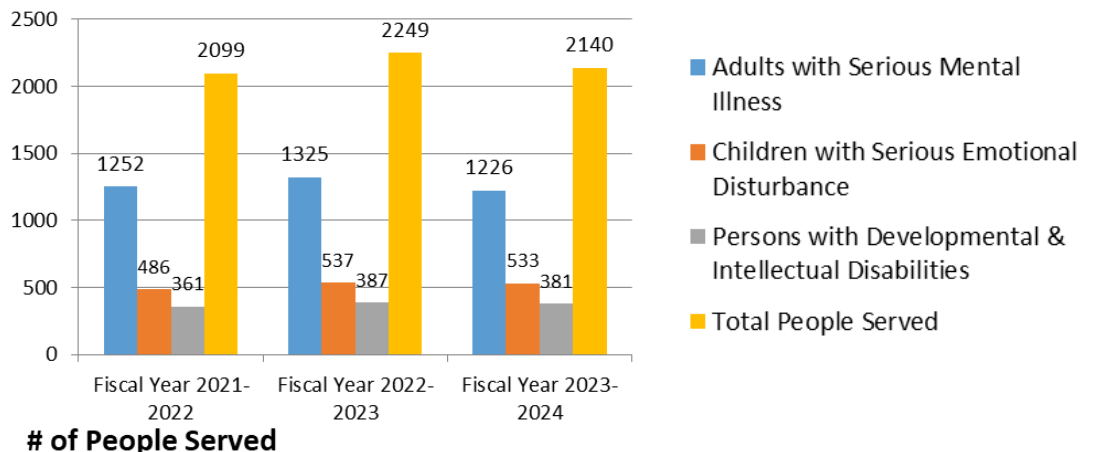
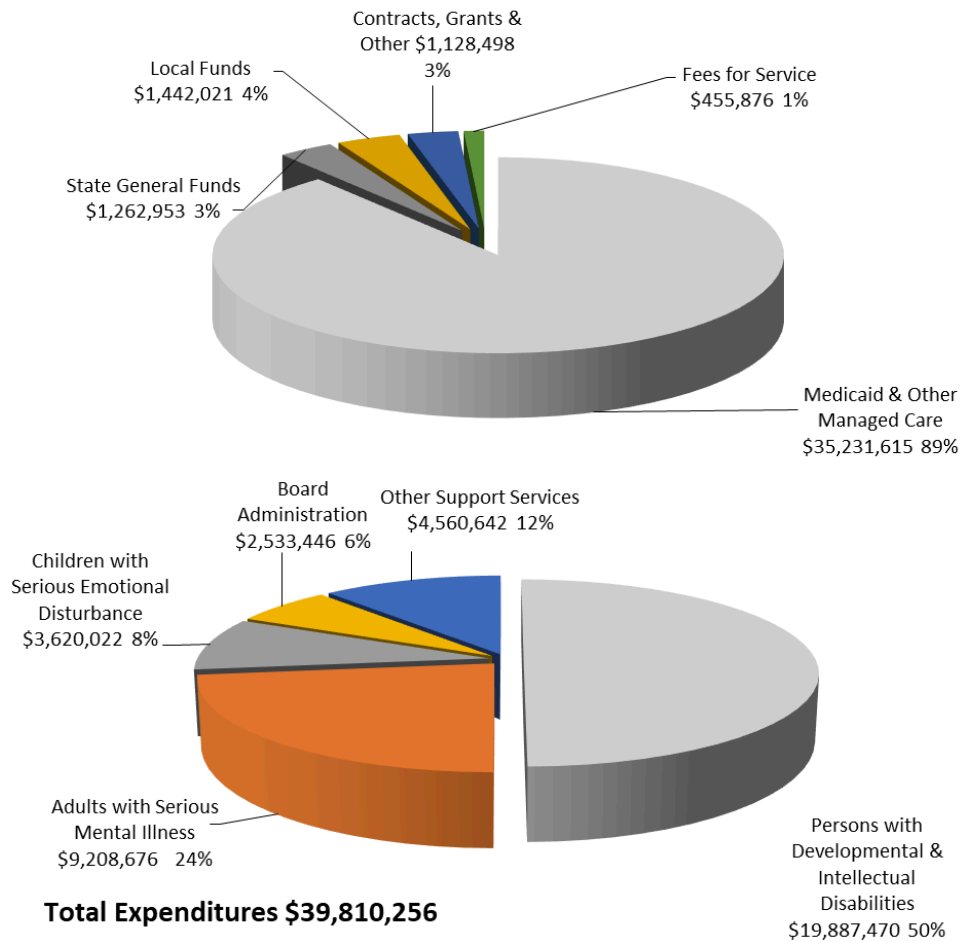


NeMCMHA SOURCES & USE OF FUNDS

October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024

Total Revenue: \$39,520,963.00

Post-retirement benefits are not offered at NeMCMHA.
Employee retirement savings are fully funded 401 plans.



A FRESH START FOR A GROUP HOME

Throughout the early 1980s, NeMCMHA was very active in the deinstitutionalization movement in Michigan for individuals with an I/DD designation. We opened our first six Adult Foster Care homes with a special license for the I/DD population in 1980, and we were able to return 24 individuals with disabilities back to our four-county area where they were originally from. In addition, NeMCMHA developed a residential program that allowed other counties to transfer their individuals, and their funding, to the Agency. This added an additional 150 individuals to our residential program. As a result of the effort to deinstitutionalize individuals with an I/DD diagnosis, we were operating 22 AFC homes in our four-county catchment area by the end of the decade.

With the State institutions closing, there was also a need to have a residential setting for individuals with a mental illness. We licensed our last specialized AFC home in 2004 when we expanded to specialized licenses for serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI) residential facilities. Due to attrition, we have slowly closed some of our I/DD residential group homes over the last 20 years. In 2024, following a 20-year hiatus, NeMCMHA licensed and opened a new I/DD group home located in Alpena. The home is a specialized AFC group home for five I/DD individuals.

Since 1984, NeMCMHA has served as the managing agent for the Blue Horizons group home, which was owned by the Blue Horizons Board, a nonprofit organization. After 50 years of operations, the Blue Horizons Board's funding was depleted, and it was forced to dissolve and close their group home. NeMCMHA applied for an AFC specialized license and was able to transition the current staff and residents to their new home while maintaining the relationships, routines, and daily living schedules that were familiar to them. The only things that changed were the physical home and the neighborhood. We expected tears when we showed up to help move, but, to our surprise, we were greeted with smiles and excitement about the new home.

2024 NEMCMHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bonnie Cornelius, Secretary, *Alcona County*

Terry Small, *Alcona County*

Robert Adrian, *Alpena County*

Lynnette Grzeskowiak, *Alpena County*

Judith Jones, *Alpena County*

Eric Lawson, Board Chair, *Alpena County*

Kara Bauer LeMonds, *Alpena County*

Charlotte Helman, *Montmorency County*

Lloyd Peltier, Vice Chair, *Montmorency County*

Lester Buza, *Presque Isle County*

Dana Labar, *Presque Isle County*

Gary Nowak, Past Chair, *Presque Isle County*



ACCREDITED IN 16 PROGRAMS

