

**Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health Authority Board
Board Meeting – September 11, 2025**

I. Call to Order

Chair Eric Lawson called the meeting to order in the Board Room at 3:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum

Present: Bob Adrian, Lester Buza, Jennifer Graham, Charlotte Helman, Eric Lawson, Lloyd Peltier, Terry Small

Absent: Bonnie Cornelius, Lynnette Grzeskowiak (Excused), Dana Labar (Excused), Kara Bauer LeMonds (Excused)

Staff & Guests: Carolyn Bruning, Rebekah Duhaime, Erin Fletcher, Jason Lepper, Nena Sork, Brenda Stanton, Jen Walburn, Jennifer Wiczorkowski, Kayla Wikaryasz

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance as a group.

IV. Appointment of Evaluator

Terry Small was appointed as evaluator of the meeting.

V. Acknowledgement of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were acknowledged.

VI. Information and/or Comments from the Public

None were presented.

VII. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Lester Buza, supported by Lloyd Peltier, to approve the minutes of the August Board meeting, as presented. Motion carried.

VIII. Les Buza

Les announced that he would be resigning from the Board and this would be his last meeting. He has been on the Board over the course of 30 years and through four directors. He hopes the Board keeps moving in the right direction as there is a lot going on. He thanked the Board, stating it has been a good 30 years. Nena Sork thanked him for his leadership.

IX. Consent Agenda

Though an additional handout for the Consent Agenda was originally noted on the agenda, no handout was needed beyond what was included in the Board packet.

Moved by Terry Small, supported by Lloyd Peltier, to approve the September Consent Agenda. Roll Call: Ayes: Bob Adrian, Lester Buza, Jennifer Graham, Charlotte Helman, Eric Lawson, Lloyd Peltier, Terry Small; Nays: None; Absent: Bonnie Cornelius, Lynnette Grzeskowiak, Dana Labar, Kara Bauer LeMonds. Motion carried.

X. September Monitoring Report

1. Budgeting 01-004

Brenda Stanton reported on the Statement of Revenue and Expense and Change in Net position for the month ending July 31, 2025, with 83.33% of the year elapsed. Many back payments have been received but aren't reflected on the July report. A budget adjustment will not be done due to the extra funds received. The staff retention payment will show on next month's report. The Change in Net Position is at \$526,536, which are local funds that can be kept. Medicaid and Healthy Michigan Funds combined are underspent by \$845,577. General Funds are overspent by \$23,057 which is an improvement of over \$50,000 from the previous month. Behavioral

Health Home is underspent by \$77,911, which are local funds that can be kept. Connie Cadarette and Nena are monitoring spending closely.

Moved by Lloyd Peltier, supported by Charlotte Helman, to approve the September Monitoring Report.
Motion carried.

XI. Board Policies Review

1. General Executive Constraint 01-001

Lloyd stated the policy looks good as is and is appropriate.

2. Compensation and Benefits 01-008

The Board agreed that the policy is complete and thorough.

3. Committee Structure 02-006

The Board reviewed and requested a revision under the Executive Committee to add “research” before the product.

Moved by Terry Small, supported by Charlotte Helman, to approve the revisions to the Committee Structure Policy. Motion carried.

4. Executive Director Search Process 03-005

Terry stated it clearly shows the order of how things should be done. Bob Adrian thinks the Agency is good at preparing internal staff for succession planning, and they also received outside applicants during the last change of Executive Director. Policies will be revised as necessary due to the upcoming title change from Chief Operations Officer to Chief Administrative Officer.

XII. Linkage Reports

1. NMRE Board

Eric reported discussion of the MDHHS bid-out of the PIHPs continued. An injunction to stop the RFP was filed. Nena reported that the Michigan House Oversight Committee met with the Director of MDHHS, Elizabeth Hertel, on September 9. The Representatives asked many pertinent questions regarding the RFP. Nena stated there are many ongoing advocacy efforts. The full session can be found online, with questions about the RFP starting at the 28:00 mark. The NMRE and NorthCare Network can't bid on the RFP, as PIHPs were barred from bidding. An Urban Cooperative Agreement (UCA) has been created under the name Bridge Health so they could bid as a last effort if other measures, like the injunction, don't work.

Eric discussed Board policy regarding public comment. He would like to add to the Chairperson's Role Policy, further clarifying Board action after public comment. Eric proposed the following language be added to the policy: “If a Board member has a question or concern about anything presented in a meeting, the Board may direct the Chair through a motion and vote to gather more information and report back to the Executive committee or the full Board.” The Board would have to direct the Chair to further investigate any issues.

Moved by Terry Small, supported by Bob Adrian, to approve the revision to the Chairperson's Role Policy.
Motion carried.

XIII. Operations Report

Erin Fletcher reported on operations for the month of August. There are 345 children under the age of 18 open to services. Home-based services served 30 children in the month of August, MI Adult served 50, and Outpatient Counseling served 112 (28 children). There were 43 hospital prescreens completed, with 15 adult admissions. Peer Support served 52, (6 children). In August, a total of 978 unduplicated individuals were served (114 children). Nena clarified that entire families are served, but there may only be one child open to services.

XIV. Board Chair's Report

1. Setting Perpetual Calendar

There were no comments or issues with the proposed calendar.

2. Board Self-Evaluation Report

The Board reviewed their 2025 Self-Evaluation Report and discussed ways to improve, including noting Board member participation when they attend Agency events outside of Board meetings. The Board noted ways the presentation of data could also be improved for next year.

Les Buza left the meeting at 3:59 p.m.

3. Final Approval of FY26 Strategic Plan

Moved by Terry Small, supported by Jennifer Graham, to approve the FY26 Strategic Plan. Motion carried.

4. CMHA Fall Board Conference

Board members to let Rebekah Duhaime know if they plan to attend.

XV. Executive Director's Report

Nena reported the annual staff survey opened on August 18 and there is a return rate of 41% so far. Previous surveys had many questions concerning the Agency's Social Security opt-out, and Nena was able to bring in an expert presenter from Traverse City to cover the topic. The presentation was recorded so all staff can view it. Nena attended NMRE Ops, the Rural and Frontier Caucus meeting, and the Directors' Forum in Lansing. Employee Recognition and All Staff Training went well, with over 200 staff participating in the on-site training. She will be meeting with the Union as they requested an economic opener.

Nena reported that the CMHA has asked for PIHPs and CMHSPs to pay a special assessment to the CMHA to provide more revenue to cover legal fees. The NMRE has already voted against paying a special assessment. The money would have to come out of local funds, which are difficult to generate.

Moved by Terry Small, supported by Lloyd Peltier, to reject the CMHA's request for a special assessment. Roll Call: Ayes: Bob Adrian, Jennifer Graham, Charlotte Helman, Eric Lawson, Lloyd Peltier, Terry Small; Nays: None; Absent: Lester Buza, Bonnie Cornelius, Lynnette Grzeskowiak, Dana Labar, Kara Bauer LeMonds. Motion carried.

The new CAO, Kara Steinke, and the new Deputy Clinical Director both start on Monday.

XVI. Information and/or Comments from the Public

A staff member asked for clarification that the underspent Medicaid funds cannot be used for legal fees, which Nena confirmed.

XVII. Information and/or Comments for the Good of the Organization

Jennifer Graham stated she was given the opportunity to be on a lived experience panel at a recent crisis training for staff at the Agency. At her request, Nena provided an overview of how crisis calls and contacts are handled by the Agency. The State dictates which degrees are required for handling crises. In the past, only MSWs were allowed to do crisis contacts, but it has now been expanded to include BSWs and RNs with proper training. There is a meeting every Monday morning where they debrief each crisis contact from the weekend. There are always a clinical supervisor and a medical provider on-call outside of business hours that the crisis worker on-call can contact and staff are never making decisions alone. There are nine staff on rotation for on-call, and they have one weeknight every nine weeknights and one weekend every nine weekends. There are also three casual staff that pick-up shifts. Staff who work a certain number of on-call hours are provided with four hours of leave time the next day. All staff are provided with training and do extensive shadowing before doing crisis on-call on their own.

Lloyd suggested all Board members try to attend the CMHA conference.

XVIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NeMCMHA Board is scheduled for Thursday, October 9, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

1. October Agenda Items

The proposed October agenda items were reviewed.

XIX. Meeting Evaluation

Terry reported everyone was prepared and given time to talk. He was satisfied with what they accomplished and reported conversation and the provided materials were good. He commented on the violence of the last couple of days and how those emotions also affected him with today being 9/11 and the resignation of a long-standing Board member.

XX. Adjournment

Moved by Terry Small, supported by Lloyd Peltier, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. This meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

[signed by Bonnie Cornelius October 10, 2025]
Bonnie Cornelius, Secretary

[signed by Eric Lawson October 10, 2025]
Eric Lawson, Chair