

**Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health Authority Board  
Board Meeting – August 14, 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: Bonnie Cornelius, Jennifer Graham, Lynnette Grzeskowiak, Dana Labar, Eric Lawson, Kara Bauer LeMonds, Lloyd Peltier, Terry Small

Absent: Bob Adrian (Excused), Lester Buza, Charlotte Helman (Excused)

Staff & Guests: Carolyn Bruning, Connie Cadarette, Rebekah Duhaime, Erin Fletcher, Kay Keller, Liz Kowalski, Jason Lepper, Brooke Paczkowski, Jen Walburn

**III. Pledge of Allegiance**

Attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance as a group.

**IV. Appointment of Evaluator**

Jennifer Graham 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 Dana Labar, supported by Kara Bauer LeMonds, to approve the minutes of the July Board meeting, as presented.*** Motion carried.

**VIII. PIHP Bid Out**

Nena reported that MDHHS had sent out notification that they would be doing a request for proposal (RFP) on the PIHPs in May and that they would not let the regional entities bid. While many of the CMHs downstate can contract out many of their services, there are no organizations in this area that could provide services at the level the Agency does. The CMHs can provide services to the most at-risk populations as they receive governmental immunity when the Mental Health Code is properly followed. These same populations would not be able to find care in the private sector as the risk is too high for private providers. This will leave the most severe cases without care. The current PIHPs are also able to operate with a very low administrative overhead of between 2-4%. If private organizations were to take over, that administrative overhead could increase to 15% without them being required to provide rationale.

An injunction is being filed to stop the bid-out process. If the injunction doesn't go through, the NMRE will join with the U.P. to form a UCA as one large, rural region that could then bid on the RFP. The funds used for these legal proceedings are non-Medicaid. Nena asked those who would like to advocate for the CMHs to reach out to the governor and Curtis Hertel. The RFP closes at the end of September. Nena will be meeting with each of the four county commissions to discuss the bid-out with them and ask them to sign a resolution opposing it. She has already received signed resolutions back from two county commissions.

***Moved by Terry Small, supported by Lloyd Peltier, to allow NeMCMHA to join in a lawsuit for an injunction against the RFP for PIHPs as it strips the CMHs of their statutory obligation.*** Roll Call: Ayes: Bonnie Cornelius, Jennifer Graham, Lynnette Grzeskowiak, Dana Labar, Eric Lawson, Kara Bauer LeMonds, Lloyd Peltier, Terry Small; Nays: None; Absent: Bob Adrian, Lester Buza, Charlotte Helman. Abstain: None. Motion carried.

**IX. August Monitoring Reports**

**1. Budgeting 01-004**

Connie Cadarette reported on the Statement of Revenue and Expense and Change in Net position for the month ending June 30, 2025, with 75% of the year elapsed. Back payments from the rate changes are coming in and will be shown on the July report. Back payments from HABS Support Waivers are included in the June report. Medicaid is underspent by \$484,468 and Healthy Michigan is overspent by \$179,929, for a total underspent amount of \$304,539. The Change in Net Position is at \$372,640, which are local funds that can be kept. General Funds are overspent by \$80,104, which is a \$10,000 increase from May. Behavioral Health Home (BHH) funds are in the positive at \$49,555, which are also local funds that can be kept.

**2. Financial Condition 01-005**

Connie reviewed the Statement of Net Position and Change in Net Position which shows the balance of accounts. The unrestricted net position is at 42 days of cash due to back revenue received.

**3. Staff Treatment 01-003**

Kay Keller reviewed the Turnover by Department report with the Board. There may be upcoming changes on the report regarding how Casual employees are listed.

**4. Treatment of Individuals Served 01-002**

Liz Kowalski presented the quarterly Recipient Rights Report to the Board, which included complaint summary data. There are seven members on the Recipient Rights Advisory Committee, including two Board members to meet the Mental Health Code requirements. The committee also acts as an appeals committee. The department has been completing many of their required annual site visits this summer.

*Moved by Jennifer Graham, supported by Bonnie Cornelius, to approve the August Monitoring Reports.*  
Motion carried.

**X. Board Policies Review**

**1. Chairperson's Role 02-004**

Eric and Nena reviewed how the Board speaks as one voice, with the Chair as the head. Board members agreed the policy is sufficient as is.

**2. Board Members' Per Diem 02-009**

The Board agreed they are following the policy and that it does not require any revisions.

**3. Board Self-Evaluation 02-012**

No revisions were requested and the Board agreed they are appropriately following it.

**XI. Linkage Reports**

**1. NMRE Board**

Eric attended the NMRE Executive Committee meeting, and they discussed the PIHP bid-out and legal challenges. Updated reports on the budget deficit at Northern Lakes CMHA show a smaller deficit than originally anticipated.

**2. Advisory Council**

Lloyd reported that the Advisory Council did not have a quorum, but they were able to go through most of the agenda. One member has moved out of state, but there will be one returning member and one new member at the October meeting.

**3. Endowment Fund Grant Awards**

The Endowment Fund Grant Awards mostly come from elective staff payroll deductions. The funds are used for employment/business purposes for individuals served.

**XII. Operations Report**

Erin Fletcher reported on operations for the month of July. The total of unduplicated individuals served was down a little for the month due to staff vacations and the holiday falling at the end of a week. Erin shared success stories from the autism program and employment services. The Board asked for a report on the total number of children being served by the Agency which Nena will provide next month.

**XIII. Strategic Plan: Approve and Finalize**

The Board finalized revisions to the FY26 Strategic Plan, including one new goal regarding staff wellbeing.

***Moved by Bonnie Cornelius, supported by Lynnette Grzeskowiak, to adopt the final revisions of the FY26 Strategic Plan.*** Motion carried.

**XIV. Board Chair's Report**

**1. Executive Director's Evaluation**

Eric commended Nena on her leadership, and the Board did not have any further questions or statements regarding Nena's performance. A positive Executive Director evaluation is based on the timeliness and content of the monitoring reports presented to the Board throughout the year.

***Moved by Kara Bauer LeMonds, supported by Lloyd Peltier, to deem the Executive Director's performance as positive for FY25.*** Motion carried.

**2. Begin Self-Evaluation**

The Board was asked to complete and return their forms to Rebekah Duhaime as soon as possible.

**XV. Executive Director's Report**

Nena reported on her activities over the last month, which included attending her regular meetings, the Employee Recognition Luncheon, and a probate hearing in Alcona County. She informed the Board that the new positions of Chief Administrative Officer and Deputy Clinical Director have been filled, and both will be starting mid-September. All residents have been moved out of the Harrisville group home. Rehmann will be conducting another staff survey this summer and they will also be running staff focus groups.

Nena received the General Funds contract for FY26 from MDHHS, which required her to sign prior to the Board meeting. The amount has not changed in the last few years, at around \$1.2 million.

***Moved by Terry Small, supported by Lloyd Peltier, to approve the signing of the General Funds Contract with MDHHS for FY26.*** Roll Call: Ayes: Bonnie Cornelius, Jennifer Graham, Lynnette Grzeskowiak, Dana Labar, Eric Lawson, Kara Bauer LeMonds, Lloyd Peltier, Terry Small; Nays: None; Absent: Bob Adrian, Lester Buza, Charlotte Helman. Abstain: None. Motion carried.

The Board previously discussed staff retention payments when they approved the COLA. There will be excess funds that cannot be carried over into FY26. Nena asked for discretion to provide one or two staff retention payments, which would keep the funds in the local communities. She asked the Board for permission to provide one retention payment between 1-3 % in the September 4 payroll and for leeway to provide a second payment in the last pay period of the fiscal year if there are additional funds available.

***Moved by Dana Labar, supported by Kara Bauer LeMonds, to allow Nena to make two staff retention payments of between 1-3% based on the budget.*** Roll Call: Ayes: Bonnie Cornelius, Jennifer Graham, Lynnette Grzeskowiak, Dana Labar, Eric Lawson, Kara Bauer LeMonds, Lloyd Peltier, Terry Small; Nays: None; Absent: Bob Adrian, Lester Buza, Charlotte Helman. Abstain: None. Motion carried.

Nena reported that the CARF survey was highly successful, with the Agency meeting 2,495 of the required 2,500 standards to be accredited in 17 programs. None of the five recommendations were for clinical programs. Nena shared some of the strengths of the Agency the CARF reviewers noted.

**XVI. Information and/or Comments from the Public**

None were presented.

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

Terry congratulated Nena and staff on a great survey report. Lloyd also gave kudos to staff.

**XVIII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the NeMCMHA Board is scheduled for Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

**1. September Agenda Items**

The proposed September agenda items were reviewed.

**XIX. Meeting Evaluation**

Jennifer reported Board members came prepared to govern and they were afforded opportunities to speak. She thanked everyone for providing information and stated she is proud to be on the Board. She said it is incredible to hear what Nena and staff are doing, because people don't know what all the Agency does.

**XX. Adjournment**

***Moved by Terry Small, supported by Lloyd Peltier, to adjourn the meeting.*** Motion carried. This meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

*[signed by Bonnie Cornelius October 9, 2025]*

Bonnie Cornelius, Secretary

*[signed by Eric Lawson September 11, 2025]*

Eric Lawson, Chair