



Office of Addiction
Services and Supports

Office of
Mental Health

Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities

2023 Goals and Plans Form

Schoharie County Community Services Board

Goal 1: To continue to strengthen the collaboration between established agencies in order to increase ease, access, and support for youth and families.

Goal 2: To build a continuum of services throughout the county that promotes wellness and support for youth and families.

Goal 3: To work towards the establishment of safe, affordable and accessible housing within the county. It should include single and multiunit apartments, houses and sober-living units.

Annual and intermediate plans for addiction services:

Overall, addiction needs continue to increase in Schoharie County. There has been a total of 28 overdoses, 6 of which were fatal per OD mapping. Schoharie County's current projected population for 2022 is 29,106 persons. According to NYS DOH it lists Schoharie County's fatal overdose rate at 9.6% in April 2021 and NYS rate is 4.4%. This data and our decrease in population suggests our fatal overdoses are proportionally high. Schoharie County's rate for non-fatal overdoses is 81.5 individuals per 100,000 and NYS non-fatal overdose is 55.0 based on Opioid Emergency Department visits in 2020. In addition, the rate of opioid ED visits increased in 2020 after decreasing for a couple of years.

Schoharie County Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (SCCASA) is seeing an increase in their referrals for peer, family support and recovery-coaching services. Individuals are utilizing these services for on-going support, to connect to self-help meetings, like AA or NA, or family support groups. Some of these individuals are looking for treatment options. SCCASA will assist these individuals by providing local and out of county options, depending on their needs.

Schoharie County Chemical Dependency Clinic (SCCDC) has served 307 unique adult individuals this year. Opioid and alcohol use disorders are the primary diagnoses. SCCDC served seven youth this year so far. Primary diagnoses for youth are psychoactive substances and cannabis. SCCDC has served 91 unique individuals for Medication Assisted Treatment which include buprenorphine, naltrexone, and vivitrol. Schoharie County Chemical Dependency Clinic has a Certified Peer Recovery Advocate (CRPA) on staff. It is a relatively new position; it has been very beneficial to our community and clinic. The CRPA has served 51 unique individuals this year including individuals linked to treatment as well as those in the community taking first steps towards their recovery. The CRPA is assisting with clients who may become "lost to contact" closings with the hope of bridging any gaps/barriers the individual has in

their life with the goal of keeping them connected to the community and services. The CRPA assists with transportation needs to individuals on-going appointments and can often assist in transporting individuals to inpatient or residential programs.

Individuals who are working on their recovery face many barriers in our community. Housing and transportation are the primary barriers per clients and individuals surveyed in the community. Schoharie County is in a housing crisis. There are limited rental options, single family homes and there is no shelter in the community. What limited rental units available are priced above what many can afford, especially for those relying on DSS or Social Security Income or the working poor holding multiple part time jobs. DSS was placing individuals in the hotels in our community, but these are no longer viable. Individuals in need of shelter are now being placed out of county. This is impacting those with both addictions and mental health diagnoses significantly in terms of stress and anxiety. It is also making it more difficult to keep these persons engaged in the community where their family, friends and supports are and where their services are being provided. Another major barrier is the lack of transportation options available to those in the community. While we have public transportation, it runs on a limited schedule throughout the week. Public transportation will work with individuals and agencies in the community to meet as many needs as possible, but limitations remain. Recently a local cab company went bankrupt, and services were stopped abruptly. This service had a good reputation among clients and providers in terms of reliability and responsiveness to client needs in real time. This abrupt shuttering left many individuals in the community without any transportation to many of their appointments for the first week or so after it occurred. Schoharie County Office of Community Services met with Schoharie County Public Transportation to see how to improve upon this system. Barriers faced by public transportation include phone number and addresses for clients that are no longer valid, voicemails not being set up or full and the online MAS system does not flag for them any same day or next day scheduled appointments for individuals. They manually go through their scheduling system all day long, utilizing essentially a full-time employee to do this work.

An on-going goal in this county would be working towards sober living environments through safe, accessible, and affordable housing in this county. This would be done in conjunction with various partners, specifically, Department of Social Services and RSS with some oversight by SPOA/LGU. Presently, DSS is working to get a homeless shelter in Schoharie County, and this would benefit our community significantly just from a cost-benefit analysis. But more than this, Schoharie County needs housing that individuals and families can live in and feel empowered in their own lives. It would be nice to see some of the opioid settlement monies being allotted to building up the communities and providing some structural enhancements. In the meantime, the goals would be to continue to provide peer, case management and outpatient services to those in the community that are utilizing the principle of person-centered and harm reduction

Annual and intermediate plans for developmental disability services:

Schoharie County ARC/Lexington has made some great strides in the community for

the individuals and families they serve. They have invested in their community-based residences and facilities to provide up to date adaptive tools, environments, and programming. They offer a full continuum of services to their consumers.

Schoharie County Early Intervention reported earlier this year that Early Intervention needs OT, PT and Speech providers for birth to age 5. Schoharie County Early Intervention has reached out to other neighboring counties, but a lot of them will not travel to us. The current providers here in Schoharie County have very high caseloads and they are expecting an influx in referrals. They are also still looking for a part-time service coordinator, but because COVID vaccinations are mandatory, people are not applying. Early Intervention did implement a new program where the service provider will stay with the child/family up to age 21. Transportation continues to be an issue and children are not able to get to their programs.

Schoharie County Department of Social Services work with many families who struggle to get access to and approval for OPWDD services. Once approved for services such as higher level of in-home services, response from OPWDD is slow.

Some of the barriers that this population continues to face is a lack of access to crisis services. Crisis services will respond to these calls but individuals, families and their providers often feel that the person in crisis is rarely admitted to a higher level of care, and this often leaves everyone feeling frustrated with the system. There are no substantial changes to their situations and so it creates a vicious cycle for everyone involved and yet the individual in need is left without any substantial intervention. In the past, there has been START (Systematic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources and Treatment) but this program seems to be no longer available in the county. Another concern is that services for youth in the community remain hard to access or not available at all. A goal here would be for individuals with intellectual disabilities to have access to wrap-around crisis services that include service coordination, respite, skills training, nursing services, behavioral supports, counseling, and psychiatric assessment/medication management. Families continue to struggle in terms of transitions. There currently seems to be a gap in services for teens who are aging out of high school so we plan on having more discussions with local School Social Workers to discuss ways we may be able to bridge those gaps. OPWDD remains a challenging system to engage with and gain access to services.

There is still a significant workforce shortage around finding individuals who are qualified and have the skills to do this work. It takes a certain special kind of individual who wants to do this work as it can be challenging, yet incredibly rewarding. The salaries for this type of work are low and do not attract those looking for employment in the OPWDD field. An ongoing goal would be to develop the workforce utilizing local resources, such as working the various SUNY institutions. SUNY was recently given a reward of monies to help in training the much-needed Human Services Field workforce.

Annual and intermediate plans for mental health services:

Mental health needs are continuing to increase in Schoharie County. Over the past few years, there have been significant stressors common to everyone: political uncertainty in our country, COVID, Mpox, RSV, rising inflation and overall cost of living with wages remaining stagnant or in some instances, jobs/wages disappearing. But individuals in our community are reaching out for assistance more than ever and this is a positive trend. It would seem that stigma around both mental health and addiction services is decreasing ever so slightly. Schoharie County Mental Health Clinic has served 919 unique adults this year. Primary diagnoses with this population are general anxiety disorder and major depressive disorder. There are 67 individuals with dual diagnoses, but this seems especially low, given the overall correlation between mental health and addictions and the number of individuals being served. A lot of individuals who come in for treatment, end up with some form of case management or peer services, even if for a brief period and it is a benefit to the client and therapist. Adding in these supports ultimately assist the individuals in their recovery goals.

In adult services, the PROS programs were not taking referrals for a significant part of this year, limiting options for increased services. Clinicians attempted to build in house intensive services to meet the needs of the clients, but this was challenging and is not the same as some of these more intensive programs available. Clinicians are reporting significant challenges around finding beds for both adults and youth in need of higher levels of care. Often, individuals are being transported to hospitals and end up spending more time in the Emergency Department before being discharged home with few to no interventions being utilized during this timeframe. In some instances, even if the individuals met criteria to be admitted, there were often no beds available. Crisis needs are increasing and the system itself is overloaded and does not meet the overarching needs of most individuals. One goal here would be to work towards a continuum of care in the county that truly builds in buffers along the way, so that we are not responding to crisis after crisis and instead are truly building up an individual's recovery. Mental illnesses are major killers; suicide is trending up not down. There are 47,000 suicides deaths in the United States or one suicide every eleven minutes. Part of this continuum of care would be reducing the individuals' symptoms, while creating the safety net around them that includes people, place, and purpose along with access to basic needs. Schoharie County has a housing crisis, and this impacts a significant number of our clients on a daily basis. Clients are often referred to SPOA to get on a list to access OMH housing but with 39 beds in total, the wait can be long. In the meantime, clients are encouraged to link to other programs for assistance, but these resources are limited. Rentals and other housing options are extremely limited. Clients and families facing homelessness are often "couch surfing" or placed out of county since there are no shelters and the hotels here that had been used by DSS are no longer an option. A goal here would be to continue to collaborate with DSS and other providers to find real solutions that meet the needs of our residents. DSS is currently looking into getting a shelter in our community and the Office of Community Services is in support of this project and actively engaged in the process. DSS along with other providers were able to get a Warming Center up and running November 1, 2022, and this has a capacity for ten individuals.

At Schoharie County Mental Health Clinic, 494 unique youth have been served this year, with 213 being seen in their schools. Primary diagnoses with this population are anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. Schoharie County has clinicians in five of the six schools in the county. This has been a huge success. It really helps with getting youth into services and maintaining them. Parents and youth are spending less time missing work or school or struggling to find transportation to these appointments. One goal here would be starting to work with the sixth school in the county in the upcoming year since this school has expressed interest. Staffing adjustments make this more feasible in the new year. In one of the schools, a psychiatric nurse practitioner goes to the school and sees the children who need medication management. Clinicians are seeing an increased need for higher levels of care, such as inpatient hospitalization, residential treatment facilities and youth who cross over between systems due to increased symptomology and a lack of resources in the community. In one instance, neither OMH nor OCFS could assist a teenager in trouble until the youth in question committed a crime even though he had recently assaulted a teacher. Neither system was able to meet this youth's needs even with multiple meetings involving all the providers, family, and youth as well as working directly with the children's specialist in the field office. Schools in the county reported an increase in significant behavioral and emotional health needs as children and youth returned to school after being remote/quarantined during the pandemic. Teachers and other providers in the schools are facing significant burn out and are struggling to help the children/youth acclimate back into this setting with its boundaries.

DSS has reported 363 CPS investigations, 51 children in foster care and 31 children placed in residential care as of July 2022. DSS is struggling to find adequate placements for children and youth particularly with the higher level of care needs. DSS is continuing to see an impact from mental illness and addiction. DSS sees a lot of parents who are afraid to set boundaries with their children as well and who want to be more friend than parent. A goal here is to expand on an existing role in Schoharie County Mental Health Clinic to work with high-risk youth and families in collaboration with DSS and Probation. Currently there is discussion between this office and DSS about adjusting the current job description and looking for more of a behavioral intervention specialist. This individual would work intensively with the youth and family to help the youth/family identify skills and tools to employ in these stressful situations in real time when possible. Another goal is to start a parenting group utilizing a Triple P program housed at both Schoharie County Mental Health and Schoharie County Chemical Dependency Clinic to engage with individuals and families accessing services who would benefit from this type of intervention. SCCAP and Community Maternity Services provides some parenting training as well but adding to the choice in the community would be a benefit to the community.

Over the past year, Schoharie County has worked diligently to expand the NYS initiative for System of Care (SOC) utilizing funds that were awarded to Schoharie County Office of Community Services. This initiative is one that is working to address and reduce potential needs expressed within the community as well as to expand service options. A team was developed to increase collaboration among agencies to begin to strengthen

supports within the community for these individuals and to address needs to help reduce confusion, barriers, and challenges for the youth and families. In September 2022, NYS Office of Mental Health assisted with facilitating an all-day workshop in the county that included providers from many community-based organizations and schools as well as family members who have been impacted by mental illness or addiction to identify goals and action steps that could be implemented within the county. One of the main goals of the workshop is to decrease the silos of the various agencies in the community that impact children and families and increase collaboration among them. Areas of focus resulted in goals addressing the following: development of a coordinated site or newsletter that houses information of the available resources for youth and their families, treatment providers/services available, community-based agencies and their programming, and family and youth focused as activities around Schoharie County (one time or on-going), increased education and resources associated with Mental Health First Aid training and SOC as a whole, and developing universal consent that would allow increased communication among agencies following appropriate HIPPA, and State and Federal laws. Stake holders have agreed that this work will be continued after the grant award runs out in December 2022 because this is invaluable to our youth and their families and our providers.

LGU Representative Name: Sarah Nies

LGU Representative Title: Director of Community Services

Submitted for: Schoharie County Community Services Board



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2023 Needs Assessment Form

Schoharie County Community Services Board

Case Management/Care Coordination Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

Crisis Services Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

Employment/volunteer (client) Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

Housing Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Adults Only

Need description (Optional):

Inpatient Treatment Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

Non-Clinical Supports Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

Outpatient Treatment Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

Prevention Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

Residential Treatment Services Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

Respite Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

Transportation Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Adults Only

Need description (Optional):

Workforce Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional):

LGU Representative: Sarah Nies

Submitted for: Schoharie County Community Services Board