



**Northern Lakes
Community Mental
Health Authority**

**Board of Directors
Packet**

October 19, 2023



Administrative Office, 105 Hall Street, Suite A,
Traverse City, MI 49684

BOARD AGENDA

The Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority Board will meet on October 19, 2023 at 2:15 p.m. at Northern Lakes Community Mental Health 105 Hall Street, Traverse City MI and Virtual at: 1-810-258-9888 ID 986 665 315#

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ID #</u>	<u>ITEMS</u>	<u>POLICY #</u>
2:15 p.m.		Confirmation of Quorum Pledge of Allegiance Appoint Timekeeper Consideration of Agenda Conflict of Interest Declaration	
2:20 p.m.		Consent Agenda - Board Consideration of Board Consent Agenda* 1 Board of Directors Minutes – September 21, 2023 – <i>Approve</i> 2 Committee of the Whole Minutes – September 21, 2023– <i>Approve</i>	
2:30 p.m.		Ownership Linkage – The Public speaking to the Board A. Citizen Comment (May be limited to three minutes by Board Chairperson) B. Ownership Communication	1.1, 3.1
2:40 p.m.	3	Chief Executive Officer’s Report - Brian Martinus Chief Financial Officer’s Report – Audit Just Beginning – First Stage of Audit Report will be given at the November meeting	
2:50 p.m.		Northern Michigan Regional Entity Report	3.4
2:55 p.m.		Assurance of Organizational Performance – Is NLCMH performing correctly as per the Policy Governance of the Board A. Receipt of CEO Monitoring Reports CEO Response to Monitoring Reports (Please Read his Response!) 4 1.0 Consumer and Community Ends (Internal Inspection) * 5 2.3 Compensation of the Employed Workforce (Internal Inspection) * B. New Operational Worries – Only pertains to 1.0 and 2.3	3.0, 3.2
3:05 p.m.		Board Means Self-Assessment –n October Monitoring Assignment 6 3.0 Global Governance Process/Ownership Linkage (Direct Inspection) 7 4.0 Global Governance – Bd/CEO Linkage (Direct Inspection)	3.2, 4.2
3:15 p.m.		Governance Policies Discussion and Assessment A. <u>Ends</u> -	3.1

B. Executive Limitations

C. Governance Process/Ownership Linkage-(Board Means) 3.4

- 8 a. RRAC Draft Minutes – October 11, 2023 - desk packet
b. Board Retreat Minutes – October 2, 2023*
c. Board Vote on Policy Governance*

C. Board/CEO Linkage

3:25 p.m. Citizen Comment 1.1, 3.1

(May be limited to three minutes by Board Chairperson)

3:30 p.m. **Announcements/Board Members Reports/Board Association**

3:40 p.m. **November 16, 2023 Agenda Planning – Cadillac**

3:45 p.m. **Meeting Evaluation/Comments/Adjournment**

NOTICE: If any person with a disability needs accommodations, please call the CEO's Office three days prior to the posted meeting date.

NEXT MEETING: November 16, 2023

* Action Items, ** Action from Committee of the Whole, *** Action Other



Administrative Office, 105 Hall Street, Suite A, Traverse City, MI 49684

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2023

2:15 p.m.

Board Members Present: Ben Townsend, Greg McMorrow, Mary Marois, Al Cambridge, Pam Babcock, Kate Dahlstrom, Ruth Pilon, Tom Bratton, Carol Blake, Ty Wessell, David Freedman, Dean Smallegan, Penny Morris, Tony Lentych

Absent: Sherry Powers, Eric Ostergren – all advance notice given

Others Present: Brian Martinus, Interim Chief Executive Officer; Stacy Maiville, Executive Secretary; Dean Baldwin, Network Administrator; Darryl Washington, Northern Health Care Management Director; Nancy Stevenson, Chief Operations Officer; Dan Mauk, Chief Information Officer; Chris Biggar, Finance Manager Andy, Jeremiah Williams, Information Technology Supervisor, Neil Rojas, Human Resource Manager; Eric Kurtz, CEO NMRE; Richard Carpenter, Brad Neuder, Sara Bush, Robin Walter, Sheryl Dey

Virtual –Curtis Cummins, Medical Director; Jessica Williams, Performance Improvement Specialist; Aimee Horton Johnson, Office Administrator; Terri Henderson, Service Information Specialist; Lisa Holmes, Clinical Review Manager; Amanda Ritchie, Improvements Coordinator, Deb Freed, Public Relations; Alyssa Heider, Recipient Rights Specialist; Hilary Rappuhn, Project Coordinator; Melanie Schopieray, Customer Service Specialist - Quality Improvement & Compliance; Tiffany Fewins, Administrative Assistant; Kari Barker, QI Compliance Director; Andrew Waite, Dave Simpson, Marsha Brown, Teresa Cooper, Kareen Conley, Laura Argle, Guest, Judi Crane, Kerreen Conley, Christina Hasty, Heather Sleight, Melissa Bentgen, Kellee Hoag, Kaitlyn Reinink, Angela Griffis, April Weinrick, Lauren Franklin, Andrew Waite, Lori Stendel, Jordan Byington, Aaron Fader, Stacey Kaminski, Cindy Evans, Carlton Ketchum, Kiley Fields, Deb Freed, Jennifer Hemmes, Joanie Blamer, Lori Barnard, Misty Wright, Erika Solomonson, Candace Kauska-Dietrich

Call to Order: Mr. Ben Townsend called the meeting to order at: 2:15 p.m.

Confirmation of Quorum: Yes

Timekeeper: Tom Bratton

It was requested to add item “D” (Letter to State Legislator) under Governance Process/Ownership Linkage.

MOTION:	Approval of the Agenda as Amended
RESULT:	ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	P. Morris
SECONDER:	C. Blake

Conflict of Interest Declaration: None.

MOTION:	Accept the Consent Agenda with removal of the Committee of the Whole Minutes
RESULT:	ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	T. Wessell
SECONDER	D. Freedman

Ms. Dahlstrom requested to remove the COW minutes. She requested clarification regarding transportation of consumers. The CEO and Board members clarified the parameters of transportation for Ms. Dahlstrom. The Committee of the Whole minutes were left as written.

MOTION:	Accept the Committee of the Whole Minutes for August 17, 2023, as written
RESULT:	ADOPTED. 13- Y, 1-N
MOVER:	G. McMorrow
SECONDER	R. Pilon

Ownership Linkage:

Citizen Comment: None.

Chief Executive Officer's Report:

Brian Martinus, Interim Chief Executive Officer, gave the Chief Executive Officer's Report.

Mr. Martinus spoke about the grant for the Drop-in center in Grayling. The new HR Manager, Neil Rojas, was introduced. Mr. Martinus reminded the Board about the upcoming Board Retreat and reviewed dates of note. Protocol and its effectiveness were discussed. There was dialogue among members regarding the possibility of finding an alternative to Protocol.

For safety concerns, the Crisis Welcoming Center hours have been reduced to 8am-5pm due to two recent incidents where staff were threatened with weapons.

Chief Financial Officer's Report:

Chris Bigger, Finance Manager gave an update on the financials. The staff retention pay was paid out in August. The agency was also recently able to assist Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network with general funds.

Northern Michigan Regional Entity Report: Recent NMRE updates were briefly discussed. At the last NMRE Board meeting, the Rehmann Group audit and 988 was discussed. There was also an incentive to cut down on gambling.

Receipt of Board Monitoring Report & CEO Response to Monitoring Report:

MOTION: The Board finds the organization in 100% in compliance with policy 2.1 Consumer Services.
RESULT: ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: C. Blake
SECONDER: P. Morris

A. New Operational Worries:

Ms. Pilon mentioned that she would like a solution for members to hear each other better during meetings. The chair asked Brian to look into the issue.

Ms. Dahlstrom referenced a recent incident in the community.

B. September Monitoring Assignment:

The Board was given policy 1.0 & 2.3 as the September monitoring assignment.

Board Means Self-Assessment:

A. Receipt of Board Monitoring Report & CEO Response to Monitoring Report:

MOTION: The Board finds the organization in 90% in compliance with policy 4.2 Accountability
RESULT: ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: P. Morris
SECONDER: C. Blake

Mr. Wessell stated that there could be a better way to state the compliance of policies. Mr. Townsend mentioned they can look into that down the road.

Governance Policies Discussion and Assessment:

A. Ends: None

B. Executive Limitations: None.

C. Governance Process/Ownership Linkage:

a. NLD Update & Minutes –

NLD draft minutes were presented in the packet. No NLD updates were given.

b. Ad Hoc Budget Committee Minutes

MOTION: Approve the August 3, 2023 Budget Committee Minutes
RESULT: ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: A. Cambridge
SECONDER: G. McMorrow

There was a brief discussion about the conclusion and success of the Ad Hoc Budget Committee.

Mr. Cambridge felt the committee was a success and the Board now has a better understanding of the budget as result. Mr. Freedman commented that there should be a standing Finance Committee. There was discussion around this topic. Mr. Cambridge suggested that there could be a Budget Committee next year.

D. Letter to state legislator: The Board read over the letter that would be sent to the legislators about Mental Health Parity. The letter was discussed, and the Board agreed to send it out.

MOTION:	Send the letter to the legislators
RESULT:	ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	K. Dahlstrom
SECONDER:	D. Freedman

Ownership Linkage:

Citizen Comment: Carlton Ketchum – Would like the Board meetings to be archived and available to view via video, online afterwards at the convenience of individuals.

MOTION :	Motion to enter into closed session pursuant to Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act to consider and discuss attorney-client privileged communication from NLCMHA’s legal counsel since information or records subject to the attorney-client privilege are exempt from disclosure under Section 13(1)(g) of the Freedom of Information Act.
Roll Call Vote:	Yes- C. Blake, T. Bratton, A. Cambridge B. Townsend , D. Smallegan, R. Pilon, P. Babcock, K. Dahlstrom, P. Morris, M. Marois, G. McMorrow, D. Freedman, T. Wessell, T. Lentych
Result:	ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	P. Morris
SECONDER	D. Smallegan

Board entered back into open session.

MOTION:	Authorizing Brian and attorney to meet with GTI’s CEO and their attorney to discuss resolution of lost payment.
RESULT:	ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	A. Cambridge
SECONDER:	G. McMorrow

MOTION:	Suspend the RFP search and Hire Rehmann Group for CFO Services.
RESULT:	ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	T. Lentych
SECONDER:	M. Marois

Announcements/Board Member Reports/Board Association:

Board Retreat is October 2, 2023, at the Cadillac Gym. 10am-4pm.
 Mr. Townsend reminded the Board that members cannot exceed three absences in a twelve-month period and will be writing a letter Roscommon about the Board member that has been absent.

Ms. Babcock praised the first responders of Roscommon County and their participation during the recent truck event.

Agenda Planning October, Traverse City:

November or December - Protocol discussion.

Meeting Evaluation/Comments:

- #1 – We spent our time on the most important governance topics – Excellent
- #2 – We encouraged diversity of viewpoints- Excellent
- #3 – Our decisions were made collectively – Excellent
- #4 – The Board used it’s time effectively – Excellent

To improve effectiveness of the Board, Mr. Townsend stated that members need to speak up.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ben Townsend, Chairperson

Sherry Powers, Board Secretary

Stacy Maiville, Executive Secretary



Administrative Office, 105 Hall Street, Suite A, Traverse City, MI 49684

**Committee of the Whole Meeting
Minutes**

September 21, 2023

12:30 PM

Ben Townsend called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Ben Townsend, Greg McMorro, Mary Marois, Al Cambridge, Pam Babcock, Kate Dahlstrom, Ruth Pilon, Tom Bratton, Carol Blake, Ty Wessell, David Freedman, Dean Smallegan, Penny Morris, Tony Lentych

Absent: Sherry Powers, Eric Ostergren – all advance notice given

Others Present: Brian Martinus, Interim Chief Executive Officer; Stacy Maiville, Executive Secretary; Dean Baldwin, Network Administrator; Darryl Washington, Northern Health Care Management Director; Nancy Stevenson, Chief Operations Officer; Dan Mauk, Chief Information Officer; Chris Biggar, Finance Manager Andy, Jeremiah Williams, Information Technology Supervisor, Neil Rojas, Human Resource Manager; Eric Kurtz, CEO NMRE; Richard Carpenter, Brad Neuder, Sara Bush, Robin Walter, Sheryl Dey

Virtual –Curtis Cummins, Medical Director; Jessica Williams, Performance Improvement Specialist; Aimee Horton Johnson, Office Administrator; Terri Henderson, Service Information Specialist; Lisa Holmes, Clinical Review Manager; Amanda Ritchie, Improvements Coordinator, Deb Freed, Public Relations; Alyssa Heider, Recipient Rights Specialist; Hilary Rappuhn, Project Coordinator; Melanie Schopieray, Customer Service Specialist - Quality Improvement & Compliance; Tiffany Fewins, Administrative Assistant; Kari Barker, QI Compliance Director; Andrew Waite, Dave Simpson, Marsha Brown, Teresa Cooper, Karen Conley, Laura Argle, Guest, Judi Crane, Kerreen Conley, Christina Hasty, Heather Sleight, Melissa Bentgen, Kellee Hoag, Kaitlyn Reinink, Angela Griffis, April Weinrick, Lauren Franklin, Andrew Waite, Lori Stendel, Jordan Byington, Aaron Fader, Stacey Kaminski, Cindy Evans, Carlton Ketchum, Kiley Fields, Deb Freed, Jennifer Hemmes, Joanie Blamer, Lori Barnard, Misty Wright, Erika Solomonson, Candace Kauska-Dietrich

Public Comment: None.

Office of Recipient Rights Director's Report:

The ORR report was included in the packet and referenced.

Services for Adult with Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders:

Brad Neuder gave a presentation about his experience as Community Liaison for those in crisis.

To receive these services, one must live within the Traverse City limits, and meet two of the three criteria: substance abuse, mental health, or homelessness.

Sarah Bush explained the Mobile Med Clinic, what it does, who can call, and the services it offers. The goal of Mobile Crisis is to divert from the emergency room and get individuals connected to services in the community.

The team also explained the process they use while providing services to those living in the Pines. Robin Walter spoke about the jail diversion program with a focus on pre and post diversion. The program works with sixty-four different organizations within the community, including the courts, probation officers, and law enforcement.

Audit Discussion: Richard Carpenter spoke about the upcoming audit that will be done by the Rehmann Group. The goal of the Rehmann Group is to identify that things are on the right path and help make any necessary corrections. The group is not there to say “I gotcha” but is there to help make recommendations and improvements if needed.

The group will focus on finance, human resources, contracts, procurement policies, and produce an employee engagement survey. The audit will start sometime over the next couple of weeks, will go until the end of October, and will collaborate with staff.

Agenda Planning:

Next meeting is October 19, 2023, Traverse City

Meeting Evaluations/Comments:

- #1 – We spent our time on the most important governance topics – Excellent
- #2 – We encouraged diversity of viewpoints –Excellent
- #3 – Our decisions were made collectively - Excellent
- #4 – The Board used it’s time effectively – Excellent

Other/Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy Maiville
Executive Secretary

Interim Chief Executive Officer's

Report to the Board

October 19, 2023

Citizen Comment: None

Grants of Significant Value: None

Northern Michigan Regional Entity (NMRE) Oversight Audit: Rehmann Group started conducting the audit of Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority as part of the NMRE oversight of NLCMHA. Upon conclusion of the audit a final report will be issued to the NMRE Board and then distributed to the NLCMHA board. This is part of the continued NLCMHA oversight agreement with the NMRE.

ProtoCall Update: Attached is the Protocol Utilization Report for the past 14 months, as requested by Board of Directors.

Center for Mental Wellness Update: Architect and design team has met and has drafted initial plans that will be finalized based on existing structure of the building. Project is scheduled to be completed by December 2024 target date.

Community Connections/Meetings:

- October 2nd, NLCMHA Board Retreat
- October 3rd, Leelanau Commissioner Presentation
- October 4th, Recovery Celebration
- October 4th, David Wood-Bartley Presentation
- October 11th, RRAC Meeting – 10:00-11:30
- October 12th, Law Enforcement Meeting
- October 17th, NMRE Operations Committee Meeting
- October 19th, NLCMHA Board Meeting
- October 23 & 24th, CMHA Fall Conference
- October 25th, NMRE Board Meeting
- November 1st, NLD Meeting – 10:00-11:30
- November 6th, NMRE SUD Oversight Meeting
- November 9th, Law Enforcement Meeting
- November 13th, CMH/DHHS – 6 County Collaborative Meeting
- November 16th, NLCMHA Board Meeting
- November 15th & 17th, PTO – Brian
- November 17th, NLCMHA Art Show Reception
- November 21st, NMRE Operations Committee Meeting

Rehmann Group/CFO Update: As of October 1, 2023, per contract that the Board voted on last month, Richard Carpenter of the Rehmann Group assumed the role of the Chief Financial Officer and all the duties of the CFO.

Internal Updates: New lactation rooms available for nursing mothers, employee handbook development, and review of policies. Recent emphasis on employee morale and wellness. Sweater Weather Celebration – good staff attendance (95) and celebration baskets were sent to all board-operated AFC homes for those employees. Looking at other opportunities to boost employee morale and encourage wholeness for the employees as individuals. New Partnership with NMC for Internships and hiring on social workers. New HR staff member whose focus will be on recruiting and retaining employees.

Other Updates: The insurance agency has paid \$100,000 to be given to GTI for lost funds. Currently working with GTI to make right additional lost funds.

NOW Newsletter NLCMHA Email Blast: In our most recent email blast we shared information on the following topics:

- **Employee anniversaries**
- **New hires**
- **Staff changes**
- **Office & Townhall meetings**
- **David Woods Bartley speaking event**
- **Upcoming events**
- **RCA spotlight**
- **Community events - Spinning for a cause, Mental Health Summit, Out of Darkness Suicide Walk, Crawford Roscommon Suicide Prevention Coalition's Walk**

Media Coverage: There were some articles in the last month. I am attaching a word document of that article to this report and links are included below should you want to access them yourselves:

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/upcoming-event-to-shine-light-on-mental-health-stigma/article_4291f0d8-5171-11ee-84c5-9fb74dee2ea9.html

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/four-people-share-their-stories-during-mental-health-awareness-event/article_2f1b4e34-52fa-11ee-9989-b3a9dbab0789.html

<https://www.munsonhealthcare.org/about-the-system/news-media-relations/news/news-details?news=1596>

<https://news.yahoo.com/costly-email-hack-suspensions-plague-003600982.html>

www.record-eagle.com/news/northern-lakes-costly-email-hack-suspensions-plaguecommunity-mental-health-authority/ar9cle_2dc019d4-5bec-11ee-aa24-2f03031fa7dc.html

<https://www.9and10news.com/2023/10/02/traverse-city-police-investigate-fraudcase-impacting-two-tc-agencies/>

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/housing-issues-compounded-for-those-with-mental-health-issues/article_deb235bc-6149-11ee-94f0-47f100f00137.html

<https://www.manisteenews.com/news/article/munson-healthcare-launches-voices-youth-mental-18403983.php>

https://www.record-eagle.com/opinion/letters_to_the_editor/lettergamalski/article_d141b744-647e-11ee-9811-9bbb4a75a8f5.html

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Martinus, Interim CEO



Monthly Utilization Report

Customer: 354

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority

Month	Total Number of Incoming Calls	Total Number of Calls Answered	Speed of Service			Average Length of Call (min)	Accessibility	
			Number of Call Answered within 30 seconds	Percentage of Calls Answered within 30 seconds	Average Speed of Answer (sec)		Abandonment Rate*	Calls Abandoned Before 30 seconds
<i>Sep 2022</i>	991	827	649	73.3	47	9.0	6.6	100
<i>Oct 2022</i>	827	697	590	81.2	29	5.0	4.1	100
<i>Nov 2022</i>	939	856	782	89.7	21	4.4	1.8	66
<i>Dec 2022</i>	1374	1154	1053	88.2	22	3.8	3.4	78
<i>Jan 2023</i>	969	902	831	89.9	19	4.5	2.4	45
<i>Feb 2023</i>	848	745	654	85.6	24	5.3	2.5	84
<i>Mar 2023</i>	1245	1150	1053	90.2	20	3.6	1.5	78
<i>Apr 2023</i>	1532	1438	1307	89.6	20	3.1	1.4	73
<i>May 2023</i>	845	755	710	91.6	14	4.5	2.6	70
<i>Jun 2023</i>	1097	967	916	92.8	16	5.2	2.0	71
<i>Jul 2023</i>	1415	1350	1310	96.9	11	4.4	0.1	63
<i>Aug 2023</i>	654	596	585	97.2	10	5.1	1.0	52
<i>Sep 2023</i>	939	857	823	95.4	14	5.0	0.7	76
Past 13 mo's	13675	12294	11263	88.6	20	4.7	2.2	956

***Definitions**

Number of Calls Answered within 30 seconds: Total number of all incoming calls not terminating prior to 30 seconds that were live answered.

Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds: Percentage of all incoming calls not terminating prior to 30 seconds that were live answered.

Abandonment Rate: Percentage of all incoming calls not terminating prior to 30 seconds that terminated after 30 seconds prior to receiving a live answer.

Please direct questions to your ProtoCall Point of Contact

**Calls
Abandoned
After 30
seconds**

58

30

16

40

22

19

17

21

20

20

2

6

6

277

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/upcoming-event-to-shine-light-on-mental-health-stigma/article_4291f0d8-5171-11ee-84c5-9fb74dee2ea9.html

Upcoming event to shine light on mental health, stigma

By Rick Charmoli Cadillac News

CADILLAC – There has been a concerted effort to educate the community and connect people with services who are living with mental health issues.

There also has been an effort put into trying to reduce the stigma related to seeking mental health services and help the community try to normalize issues related to mental health. Thursday, an event is scheduled to try to accomplish all those things.

From 9:30 to 11 a.m. Thursday, the Baker College Student Center will host a community event entitled, “A Day in the Life of ...” The point of the event is to give those in attendance an inside look into the lives of people with lived mental health experiences.

Last March, a mental health symposium was held in Cadillac to bring various community groups and people together to discuss what they are seeing in their professions. The idea behind the event was to allow the Human Service Leadership Council, which hosted the event at Baker College of Cadillac, to provide programming to not only its members but also community members to help spread awareness about what is going on within different agencies and nonprofits regarding mental health.

Although the premise of the mental health symposium was simple, once it was completed the people who attended the roughly two-hour session also knew it was vital for the community to find solutions to the issues associated with mental health and mental illness.

After the spring event, the idea was that a second event would be held in May during the annual Mental Health Awareness Month, but it was determined to not be a good time.

Various events were occurring in May through Northern Lakes Community Mental Health and other agencies, such as Club Cadillac and National Alliance on Mental Illness that would have been a scheduling conflict for those groups.

August was looked at, but with schools gearing up for the new year it again was going to be a scheduling conflict. With all that, it was determined that the second event would be held in September.

The main difference between this event compared to the last one is Thursday's event is open to anyone and discusses the challenges people face who are living with mental illness.

Instead of the panel consisting of various personnel from area groups and agencies that have a direct connection with mental health issues, Thursday's event will have four speakers who will discuss their personal experiences with mental health. They include Northern Lakes peer support specialist Ashley Thompson, first responder and Green Lake Township Fire Chief Daryl Case, parent Kristen Kenny and Club Cadillac member Gayle Bottoms.

Human Services Leadership Council of Missaukee and Wexford Counties Coordinator Shari Spoelman said Thursday's event is a unique opportunity for people to hear from those who have lived experiences of mental health issues. She also said they are often talked about but rarely is there a chance to hear from those who have gone through challenges in their lives related to mental health.

"One of the panelists will talk about the experiences she has had with a child," she said. "From a parent's perspective, it is helpful to hear from other parents who have had similar challenges."

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health operations manager for Crisis Services Stacey Kaminski was one of the panelists at the spring event but as a member of the Human Leadership Council, she helped to find and select the four speakers at Thursday's event.

She said the idea was to find speakers who could talk about their stories and journeys and talk about how they got to where they are in their lives. Kaminski said that is one way the event could help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health or receiving mental health services.

“It doesn’t matter where you are in life, you might have those (mental health) experiences,” she said. “Everyone has mental health and you have to care for your own mental health. It is not a curse. It is a part of life.”

Kaminski said each of the four speakers will speak for about five minutes to tell their stories to those in attendance. She also said an anti-stigma video will be shown followed by a time for a Q and A with the audience.

Cadillac Area Community Foundation Executive Director Doreen Lanc also has been involved in the process of bringing this event to life. Lanc said a top priority for the community is to improve the conversation about mental health and there is no shame in asking for help.

“We need to keep community resources and support for mental health very visible,” Lanc said. “It is crucial for anyone dealing with mental health or emotional problems they do not have to deal with this alone.”

The mission of the leadership council is to achieve a collective vision of quality of life in communities within Wexford and Missaukee counties through the provision of leadership in the design, delivery and oversight of health, education and human services. Mental health is likely one of the biggest facing this and other communities across the state and country.

To register for the event, you can go [here](#).

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/four-people-share-their-stories-during-mental-health-awareness-event/article_2f1b4e34-52fa-11ee-9989-b3a9dbab0789.html

Four people share their stories during mental health awareness event

- By Rick Charmoli Cadillac News

CADILLAC — Four people from different walks of life told their stories to a group of mostly strangers.

One speaker was a parent. One speaker was a first responder. Another speaker was a person who struggled with addiction. The last speaker was a person who struggled with mental health issues.

While their stories were quite different and life's journey, so far, took them on different paths, all four were connected by how mental health impacted their lives.

The four speakers, Northern Lakes Community Mental Health peer support specialist Ashley Thompson, first responder and Green Lake Township Fire Chief Daryl Case, parent Kristen Kenny and Club Cadillac member Gail Bottoms, all told personal accounts of how mental health issues affected their lives, health and families.

They were part of a community event Thursday entitled, "A Day in the Life of ..." The point of the event was to give those in attendance an inside look into the lives of people with lived mental health experiences. It was held at Baker College of Cadillac.

FROM PSYCH WARD TO SUCCESS STORY

With a southern drawl, Bottoms, who hails from Tennessee, started the panel of speakers.

She spoke about how she didn't learn much about her mental health issues until 2015. It was during that year, and after many toxic relationships, she admitted herself into a psych ward. Anxiety, depression and identity disorder were all part of her diagnosis. Eventually, Gail said post-traumatic stress disorder joined the party.

Gail said eventually she decided to take charge and made the move to Michigan and Cadillac. It was at this point that she found Club Cadillac.

Club Cadillac is a community for people with diagnosed mental health issues and it works to enable members to reach their full potential as respected and productive members of society.

It was through Club Cadillac that she was able to find her tribe and with the support she needed, she said she was able to go from the psych ward to a success story.

She currently serves on the Club Cadillac Advisory Board, spends as much time as she can at the clubhouse when it's open and recently was hired for a job. She ended her time by saying she was proud of how far she has come since 2015 and urged everyone in attendance to never be silent or stigmatized when it comes to talking about mental health issues.

STORY OF RECOVERY

Kristen said her son Anthony was sweet during his early childhood, but when mental health issues started surfacing her life and role as a mother would change.

When he started kindergarten, Kristen said that is when the first signs of mental health issues started to surface. Anthony's teacher said she was concerned about his mental health. Before his elementary school graduation, Kristen said her son would be expelled from school and that is when a thick wool blanket became draped over their home.

Things progressively got worse.

When Anthony was diagnosed, Kristen said it was like rain started to fall on that thick wool blanket covering her home. It became heavy and hard to move. The worst part was the way that figurative blanket would drip on every part of her life, which symbolized how her son's mental illness was impacting all facets of her life.

As he grew, that heavy, wet, thick, wool blanket remained and when he reached high school and it was determined that Anthony was severely mentally ill, Kristen said that is when a downpour started. The social isolation she and Anthony felt only got worse.

As a parent, she said she thought she had to let go of the hopes and dreams she had for her son. There were more hospitalizations, meds and therapy appointments. She was still trying to work, all while she was wading through the water that was rising all around her.

When Anthony had a full psychotic break, Kristen said that is when her home and life were flooded. She was left only able to tread water. Her daughter and Anthony's sister described it like her brother was dying over and over again. They would see a glimpse of Anthony only for it to be gone.

At this point, trying to have a career was no longer possible. She no longer could care for him and that is when a group home was introduced. At that point, Kristen said she was drowning.

It was in that group home, however, that Anthony started to heal, slowly. Eventually, he was able to leave the group home and come back to Kristen. While the wet, wool, blanket remained during that time, Kristen said when Anthony returned, he was like an umbrella. Eventually, the water subsided and the rain stopped. The blanket that had been placed on her home and life dried and it was removed.

While her story is unique to her family and Anthony, Kristen said the thing people should take from what she said is that it is a heroic story of recovery. Recovery is possible.

THIS IS THE HAPPY PART

Ashley's turn on the microphone was the perfect example of her life's journey.

She mentioned she was anxious about speaking on Thursday. You could tell she was anxious by her demeanor. Much like in the story she eventually told, she was able to overcome her anxiety. Ashley's life story included her anxiety, drugs, criminal history and finally redemption.

Ashley said her mother was caring but a very anxious person. Looking back at her childhood she showed signs of a similar path. For example, she could remember not wanting to eat chips out of a bag because she was fearful that the germs on her hands would kill her family.

She also said she became focused on picking up and organizing her younger siblings' toys. She said it got to the point that she would become upset or mad when they tried to play with them.

She also said remembered the first time she found hydrocodone. Her friends had some and they all took them together. While they were using it recreationally, Ashley said she wasn't. She didn't take them to get high but to feel normal. It turned her head off and shut down her anxiety.

Ashley said she eventually dropped out of school, continued her drug use and became pregnant. While she didn't use it while she was pregnant with her first child, it didn't take long for her to get back to old habits once she had her baby.

She continued her drug use and started dealing. She said she was running drugs from Muskegon. She wanted to quit but didn't have a way out. When she didn't have her children, she lived in a tent and sold drugs out of it.

At one point, she bought a gun for her dealer because he couldn't as a felony. Her record was clean. He was arrested after he assaulted someone with a gun that was purchased under her name. It was at that point that Ashley said she got on the radar of law

enforcement. She eventually was arrested for providing a weapon to a felony and spent nine months in jail.

During that time she utilized community mental health services and that is when things started to change. She met and connected with a peer support specialist. She remembered telling that person she wanted to do what she did but didn't think she could because of her criminal record.

Ashley said the peer support specialist told her she believed she could do anything she wanted and she was right. Ashley is a peer support specialist for Northern Lakes, is married and they have a 3-year-old daughter. She talked about her life now and how all her children are together, which led her to shed some tears even though she said it was supposed to be the happy part.

In the end, she told those in attendance to live a life of hope and love.

SUCK IT UP

The final speaker was Daryl who spoke about his life as a first responder and how it was the family business.

He said he has been a firefighter for 32 years and been a paramedic for 28. Both his parents were in the profession and he grew up in the culture of suck it up and move on. Regardless of what he dealt with in the last call he had to put a smile on his face and move on to the next call.

He said that changed when he was at work one day and he got a call saying he needed to head home to his mom's house. Although he said there isn't a way someone could die or kill themselves that he hasn't seen, what he had to witness at this call changed him.

His brother, who also was a first responder, had killed himself.

Growing up in the culture of suck it up and move on, Daryl said there was no counseling and no conversations. At the time he didn't realize it by coping mechanism was work. He said many first responders have addictive personalities. He started off coping by working 110-hour work weeks but later moved to alcohol.

He said it was legal. It helped him to sleep and he would stay at home to do it. Eventually, he got arrested and went to jail. He finally got time off from work but that was because he got fired. It took that, however, to get him to seek help. Now he is never embarrassed about talking about mental health.

That is the message he shared with the people who attended Thursday's event but also the message he shared as a peer support specialist.

"It's OK to not be OK," he said.

MOVING FORWARD

For Kristen, telling her story is important because everything she has gone through has to mean something. For her, the reason she had to experience what she did with her son was so she could share it with other people in hopes that it might lessen the load for them.

"I can take this and I can help someone else deal with it by sharing what I've learned," she said.

With events like the one held in March and then again on Thursday, Kristen said she is seeing a change in how people are talking about mental health. Even people she has casual relationships with are talking about mental health and it is starting to become more of an open conversation.

Moving forward, Kristen said she would like to see future events continue with community engagement regarding mental health and allow for more dialogue to occur.

“That’s what I think is needed. Ask me questions. Ask me anything,” she said. “I can always decline to answer. In my mind opening the conversation and allowing the audience to say, ‘What was it like when your son had a psychotic break.’ I want to tell you what’s happened to me, so you can become an advocate.”

For Gail, speaking Thursday was a way for her to bring awareness to mental health and that recovery is possible. While people who get injured from physical injuries need time to recover, Gail said so do people who have had a mental health issue. The point is that recovery is possible and she is proof of that.

Gail said people who maybe are like she was in 2015 and know something isn’t right but haven’t been diagnosed need to find someone to talk to and see what comes of that.

“Don’t stigmatize us. Don’t silence us just because we have a mental illness. We are capable of doing everything that everybody does,” she said. “We’re trying to stamp out stigma and don’t silence our mental health issues. Let it be known and get the help you need.”

<https://www.munsonhealthcare.org/about-the-system/news-media-relations/news/news-details?news=1596>

Munson Healthcare Receives \$5 Million Grant Toward Pediatric Behavioral Health Services

09.14.2023

The Michigan Health and Hospital Association (MHA) has awarded a \$5 million grant to Munson Healthcare toward adding much needed pediatric mental health and crisis services in northern Michigan.

The competitive grant funding was part of the Michigan Legislature's \$50 million appropriation in 2023 to improve behavioral health services for pediatric patients in the state. The MHA sent out a request for proposals earlier this year and received a total of 10 grant applications from six different regions of the state.

"This funding will play an important role in bringing pediatric mental health and crisis services to the children and youths in our community," said Laura Glenn, Munson Healthcare Chief Operating Officer. "We're grateful to the MHA for recognizing the great need for pediatric behavioral health services in our region."

The funding is in addition to \$5 million in American Rescue Act Funding awarded in June toward establishment of the Grand Traverse Center for Mental Wellness to be located on the Munson Medical Center campus. The additional \$5 million from the MHA will be used exclusively to provide pediatric programming at the center.

Over the past three years, there has been 25 percent increase in the number of children and youths admitted to Munson Healthcare Emergency Departments. Glenn said this funding will help toward goals to create greater access to pediatric mental health and crisis services over the next four years.

Since last fall, representatives from Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority, Munson Healthcare, Northern Michigan Regional Entity, Northwest Michigan Community Health Innovation Region (CHIR), Grand Traverse County and United Way of Northwest Michigan have been at work on the next phase of a plan to bring mental health, substance abuse disorder and crisis services to one location in Traverse City.

"Our community has created tremendous momentum over the last year toward bringing much needed behavioral health resources to northern Michigan," Glenn said. "This is another important step forward in driving change and improving access to mental health services for families and young people across the region."

<https://news.yahoo.com/costly-email-hack-suspensions-plague-003600982.html>

Costly email hack, suspensions plague Northern Lakes

Patti Randt Urgess and Mardi Link, The Record-Eagle, Traverse City, Mich.
Thu, September 28, 2023 at 8:36 PM EDT · 6 min read

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Sep. 28—TRAVERSE CITY — Two Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority executives were placed on administrative leave and the FBI and local police were contacted about an unrelated \$283,000 phishing scheme — the latest setbacks faced by the beleaguered organization.

Joanie Blamer, chief operations officer, and Lauri Fischer, chief financial officer, were placed on leave on or before Sept. 18 "pending an investigation," said Brian Martinus, interim CEO of Northern Lakes. He declined to comment further on the suspensions or give additional details.

Police said a hacker posing as a representative of Grand Traverse Industries sent an email to Northern Lakes falsely stating GTI's bank information had recently been updated and requested payment for services.

"CMH had sent the amount of money for services that GTI were providing," said TCPD Capt. Keith Gillis.

Officials on Wednesday confirmed Northern Lakes sent a \$283,000 payment in response to the unnamed hacker's request.

"That was an outside actor hacking into a computer system," Martinus said, adding that the case has been turned over to the FBI.

In addition, audits of Northern Lakes' financial and human resources departments are being conducted, Martinus said.

A third member of the organization's leadership team, Matt Leiter, who served as human resources director, was "let go" several months ago, Martinus said.

The administrative leaves, the significant financial loss and the audits of two crucial departments are the latest in an array of internal issues the organization has grappled with in recent years.

Blamer and Fischer returned a call to the Record-Eagle, but both declined to comment. Blamer said Northern Lakes has a policy that only the CEO can speak to the media and neither she nor Fischer wanted to violate the policy.

In 2021, two former employees filed complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accusing Northern Lakes of harassment and of fostering a hostile work environment.

The complaints were lodged after records showed Blamer and human resources staff directed an investigation into the personal lives of the two former employees.

The EEOC complaints were ultimately dismissed or settled, but not before Northern Lakes paid \$130,000 in legal fees to investigate the employees, clarify board rules and handle civil litigation.

The legal fees were not initially included in board packets, and came from invoices three law firms submitted to Northern Lakes and the organization previously provided to the Record-Eagle in response to a Freedom of Information Act request.

The Northern Michigan Regional Entity manages Medicaid funds for behavioral health treatment in five CMHs covering 21 counties in northern lower Michigan.

Northern Lakes provides services in six counties — Crawford, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Missaukee, Roscommon and Wexford — and as many as 16 board members are appointed to three-year terms by their respective county commissioners.

NMRE began overseeing Northern Lakes in August 2022, with Martinus appointed interim CEO in October. That oversight was to include a search for a new CEO, as the agency has been without a permanent CEO for more than two years.

Blamer began serving as interim CEO in July 2021; she was twice named to the post permanently and, both times, the job offer was rescinded.

Searches done by Northern Lakes had yielded more than 50 candidates, only a handful of whom were interviewed, including Blamer and another candidate who was offered the job but declined it after salary negotiations went sour.

The lack of a CEO and the May 2022 decision by the Grand Traverse County board to sever the county from an enabling agreement with Northern Lakes and form its own agency prompted NMRE to provide oversight to make sure services were being delivered.

Grand Traverse County commissioners had sought to sever the agreement after what they called decades of poor service to some of the area's most vulnerable residents.

The CEO search has not been restarted, as leaders from the six Northern Lakes counties were in the process of rewriting an enabling agreement that created the agency about 20 years ago. Martinus said the next step is to rewrite bylaws for the agreement. Once that is done it clears the way for the search, he said.

The audits, approved by the NMRE board, are being conducted by the Rehmann Group of Traverse City and will include reviews of accounting policies and procedures, financial reporting, grant activities, recruiting and selection processes, employee relations, payroll processes and more, according to a document received by the Record-Eagle.

Martinus would not say whether the audits are connected to Blamer's or Fischer's administrative leave status. They are expected to be complete by the end of October and any decisions on whether to pursue further investigation will be made then, he said.

Martinus also would not say if the audits are connected to Leiter's departure.

Sometime in February, however, meeting minutes from a Northern Lakes board committee show, Leiter was no longer employed following a revelation by the organization's recipient rights director.

Recipient rights is an internal office of Michigan's community mental health organizations, whose staff are tasked with protecting the rights of people who receive mental health services.

Dec. 6, 2022, meeting minutes of the Recipient Rights Advisory Committee show Brian Newcomb, director of Northern Lakes' recipient rights office, "spoke about an issue and requested the required protections."

Newcomb, minutes show, stated that the human resources director had asked him to change the outcome of a neglect complaint his office had investigated and substantiated.

The case was a "Neglect 1" level case, minutes show, regarding behavior by an unnamed Northern Lakes worker against an unnamed person who received services from the organization.

Neglect 1 is the most serious form of abusive behavior the office investigates and, when substantiated, requires immediate termination, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The unnamed employee resigned rather than face disciplinary action, Newcomb told committee members, who then voted unanimously to task Martinus with investigating.

Leiter, who was not referred to by name in meeting minutes, was human resources director at the time of Newcomb's report and left about two months later, records show.

Martinus declined to comment on the reasons for Leiter's departure.

On Tuesday, Grand Traverse Industries Executive Director Cindy Evans questioned how officials determined the phishing scheme involved someone posing as a representative of the non-profit, but confirmed they have not recently been paid by Northern Lakes.

Grand Traverse Industries is a non-profit organization which, since 1974, has provided comprehensive services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Today those services include career training and job experience and the non-profit works through Northern Lakes to bill Medicaid for these services, Evans said.

Evans added Grand Traverse Industries is trying to work with Northern Lakes on securing payment.

Whether the \$283,000 will be recovered may partly depend on whether the email scheme originated from inside or outside the US, police officials said of the open investigation.

Traverse City Police Department has served search warrants on an unnamed bank or banks; recovery chances are better if the schemer is in the US, Capt. Gillis said.

https://www.record-eagle.com/news/northern-lakes-costly-email-hack-suspensions-plague-community-mental-health-authority/article_2dc019d4-5bec-11ee-aa24-2f03031fa7dc.html

NORTHERN LAKES: Costly email hack, suspensions plague community mental health authority

- By Patti Brandt Burgess pburgess@record-eagle.com and Mardi Linkmlink@record-eagle.com
- Oct 1, 2023

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<https://www.9and10news.com/2023/10/02/traverse-city-police-investigate-fraud-case-impacting-two-tc-agencies/>

Traverse City Police investigate fraud case impacting two TC agencies

TRAVERSE CITY — Traverse City Police are investigating a fraud case that's cost two Traverse City agencies thousands of dollars.

Captain Keith Gillis said a Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority staff member sent around \$283,000 to what they thought was Grand Traverse Industries.

It happened after an e-mail saying GTI had updated their banking information and wanted payments for services sent there.

Gillis said that e-mail was discovered to be part of a scam, after the money was sent.

That's when police were called to investigate. The case remains under investigation. No suspects and no arrests made yet.

9&10 News did reach out to Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority for comment but have not heard back.

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/housing-issues-compounded-for-those-with-mental-health-issues/article_deb235bc-6149-11ee-94f0-47f100f00137.html

Housing issues compounded for those with mental health issues

- [By Rick Charmoli Cadillac News](#), Oct 3, 2023

CADILLAC — The lack of housing and affordable housing are issues across the country, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that both also are issues in the Cadillac area.

A recently released housing analysis highlighted just how dire the situation is. In a healthy market, the vacancy rate should be between 4% and 6%. In this region, it's 0.7%, and in Wexford and Missaukee counties specifically, it's 0%. This analysis was conducted by Bowen National Research in collaboration with Housing North, the Cadillac Area Community Foundation and the Alliance for Economic Success.

The housing crisis is the result of several factors, but the biggest is the Cadillac area's modest median income, limited availability of construction workers and high cost of building materials. There is an imbalance in this area between what most people make and the homes they can afford to purchase or rent.

While that is true for many places, those issues are compounded for those living with mental health issues.

For that reason, mental health advocate and parent of a son with mental health issues Kristen Kenny and Club Cadillac Director Amy Kotulski started talking about how they could help those living with mental health issues, in particular, Club Cadillac members, find safe and affordable housing.

Kotulski said housing is built into Club Cadillac's standards and all clubhouses across the country.

"We as a clubhouse, with our quality standards that we have to adhere to, try to provide safe, decent and affordable housing. What that looks like is connecting with housing specialists in the community," Kotulski said. "We have a (Community Mental Health) housing specialist on our board and we have a (Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency) homeless prevention specialist on the board, so that we have those housing resources."

The standards include staff and members managing the program together, members who live within the clubhouse housing program do so by choice, members choose the location of their housing and their roommates, policies and procedures are developed in a manner consistent with the rest of clubhouse culture, the level of support increases or decreases in response to the

changing needs of the member and members and staff actively reach out to help members keep their housing, especially during periods of hospitalization.

Kotulski said it also includes connecting members with housing opportunities by helping them fill out housing applications, rental applications and those types of things. When Kenny became the Club Cadillac Board President, Kotulski said the idea of trying to take that assistance to the next level started to be discussed.

Kotulski said some clubhouses have housing programs that offer housing to their members. It just so happened that Kenny and her husband have 19 acres of land in Missaukee County off of LaChance Road that they would be willing to utilize for such an endeavor.

With the land available, little to no zoning restrictions and an agreement between Lake Township in Missaukee County and the WexExpress for transportation services members could utilize to get to and from the potential complex, the discussion about building housing for clubhouse members became a little more serious.

“We (the Club Cadillac board) have been talking about housing for years. It’s become a crisis. More recently, (the area) started having these housing symposiums and I said you know what, let’s talk about doing this,” Kenny said. “Let’s work with clubhouse. Let’s work with the board.”

Kotulski said the issues people face regarding housing are only compounded for those who are living with mental health issues. She said affordability is more extreme due to these individuals having a harder time finding employment. They could have been fired from jobs due to complications from their mental illness or employers don’t want to hire them because of the stigma associated with mental illness.

Kotulski said that oftentimes these individuals are on disability or social security, which means they are on a fixed income. That might mean they can’t afford some of the available housing.

“So then they try to get into subsidized housing, which has a waitlist years long. That means they are stuck in unsafe and not decent housing because that is what they can afford,” Kotulski said. “That’s half of it, but the other half is, I believe mental health is criminalized. So, they have a record. That discounts them from subsidized housing because they have had felonies.”

This proposed housing would eliminate those barriers and allow clubhouse members to move into a safe and affordable place to live.

While nothing is set in stone, Kenny and Kotulski said the process is moving forward with the idea this is going to happen.

Kenny said the fiscal year started on Oct. 1 and there are only two things on the agenda for the year — the housing development and transitional employment. That means in an ideal world, Kenny said ground will be broken sometime during this current fiscal year, but a lot has to happen for that to become a reality.

The clubhouse board is scheduled to hold its first meeting of the new fiscal year this week and Kenny said the housing development will be one of the topics discussed including a timeline. This will include delegating who will be seeking what information, who will talk with Lake Township in Missaukee County, what grants are available and how they apply for them and more.

She said while the idea is to build a single-story small house for those members looking for housing would be the goal, what those houses would ultimately look like will only be formulated after members give their input. There also has been discussion about having a five-unit complex that would offer transitional housing for up to a year.

She said for this to be successful, members are going to have to take ownership of this program.

“It will be important for club members to be part of this process. What would make them feel like they can succeed in their own house? What would that house have? What would it look like? How big would it be,” Kenny said. “This has to be something they can sustain on their own, but we also have to remember once a clubhouse member always a clubhouse member. They will continuously receive support in this housing. They are not buying it, but renting it.”

From left, Club Cadillac Director Amy Kotulski and mental health advocate and parent of a son with mental health issues Kristen Kenny look at 19 acres in Missaukee County’s Lake Township that is being considered as a location for a housing development for members of Club Cadillac. The hope is that the project would break ground in the next year but a lot of work has to be done for that to become a reality.



<https://www.manisteenews.com/news/article/munson-healthcare-launches-voices-youth-mental-18403983.php>

Munson Healthcare is harnessing the power of art to address mental health in the community.

Northern Michigan's largest non-profit healthcare system today launched a Voices for Youth Mental Health Art Contest to allow those of all ages to express their feelings, wisdom and hope on issues related to mental health and the community. The contest is open to northern Michigan residents through Oct. 13.

Cash prizes will be awarded. Voting for the best artwork will run from Nov. 6-20.

“Our regional Community Health Needs Assessment showed us that we need to continue to expand access to behavioral health services across Northern Michigan,” said Munson Megan Brown, chief marketing and communications officer. “An art contest is a unique way to share thoughts, feelings and raise awareness as we increase collaboration and access for those experiencing mental health issues in our communities.”

Munson Healthcare announced a new Grand Traverse Mental Wellness Center, a collaboration with Northern Lakes Community Mental Health, Grand Traverse County and other community partners earlier this year.

The center will house crisis services, behavioral health services and youth mental health services under one roof supporting the whole region with the goal of opening in 2024. Grants have been awarded by Grand Traverse County through ARPA funds for \$5 million and most recently by the Michigan Health and Hospital Association for an additional \$5 million to support the center and its mission.

Art submissions for the contest can be photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, quilt, collage, a piece of writing and more.

Artwork may be submitted digitally at voicesforcommunityhealth.org or at drop-off locations around northern Michigan during open business hours. Locations include:

Armory Youth Project, 555 First St., Manistee.
Benzie Shores District Library, 630 Main St., Frankfort.
Cadillac-Wexford Public Library, 411 S. Lake St., Cadillac.
Charlevoix Circle of Arts, 109 Clinton St., Charlevoix.
Crawford County Library, 201 Plum St., Grayling.
Otsego County Library, 700 S. Otsego Ave., Gaylord.
Traverse Area District Library, 610 Woodmere Ave., Traverse City.

For more information, go to voicesforcommunityhealth.org.

https://www.record-eagle.com/opinion/letters_to_the_editor/letter-gamalski/article_d141b744-647e-11ee-9811-9bbb4a75a8f5.html

Letter: Gamalski

The lesson to be learned from recent email scam

Some unscrupulous person sent an email to someone in the Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority (NLCMHA) accounting department indicating that Grand Traverse Industries had a new bank account and transfer number for direct deposits of receivables.

NLCMHA's accounting team took this information at face value and paid an invoice using the information they received in the email.

This isn't a hacking incident. This was an error of trust by the accounting department. The technology crew isn't accountable in this situation because this was not a technology failure; it was a failure of small-town trust.

The perpetrator had very specific information about the relationship between NLCMHA and GTI. This was a well-orchestrated scam, for sure, but it didn't involve hacking.

The accounting department likely had every confidence that the email had originated from GTI. But (and here's where the email should've aroused suspicion) why would any legitimate organization send banking information via an unsecured email? If a techie ever saw the email, s/he would've likely called GTI and told them to immediately change their bank account information, because email is the *least* secure form of communications.

Unencrypted email lands on servers – ripe fruit for the picking by anyone with administrative rights on those servers.

What can we learn from this? Never ever use unencrypted communication methods to send highly sensitive information.

Lou Gamalski

Kewadin

Internal Updates: New lactation rooms available for nursing mothers, employee handbook development, and review of policies. Recent emphasis on employee morale and wellness. Sweater Weather Celebration – good staff attendance (95) and celebration baskets were sent to all board-operated AFC homes for those employees. Looking at other opportunities to boost employee morale and encourage wholeness for the employees as individuals. New Partnership with NMC for Internships and hiring on social workers. New HR staff member whose focus will be on recruiting and retaining employees.

Other Updates: The insurance agency has paid \$100,000 to be given to GTI for lost funds. Currently working with GTI to make right additional lost funds.

NOW Newsletter NLCMHA Email Blast: In our most recent email blast we shared information on the following topics:

- **Employee anniversaries**
- **New hires**
- **Staff changes**
- **Office & Townhall meetings**
- **David Woods Bartley speaking event**
- **Upcoming events**
- **RCA spotlight**
- **Community events - Spinning for a cause, Mental Health Summit, Out of Darkness Suicide Walk, Crawford Roscommon Suicide Prevention Coalition's Walk**

Media Coverage: There were some articles in the last month. I am attaching a word document of that article to this report and links are included below should you want to access them yourselves:

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/upcoming-event-to-shine-light-on-mental-health-stigma/article_4291f0d8-5171-11ee-84c5-9fb74dee2ea9.html

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/four-people-share-their-stories-during-mental-health-awareness-event/article_2f1b4e34-52fa-11ee-9989-b3a9dbab0789.html

<https://www.munsonhealthcare.org/about-the-system/news-media-relations/news/news-details?news=1596>

<https://news.yahoo.com/costly-email-hack-suspensions-plague-003600982.html>

www.record-eagle.com/news/northern-lakes-costly-email-hack-suspensions-plaguecommunity-mental-health-authority/ar9cle_2dc019d4-5bec-11ee-aa24-2f03031fa7dc.html

<https://www.9and10news.com/2023/10/02/traverse-city-police-investigate-fraudcase-impacting-two-tc-agencies/>

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/housing-issues-compounded-for-those-with-mental-health-issues/article_deb235bc-6149-11ee-94f0-47f100f00137.html

<https://www.manisteenews.com/news/article/munson-healthcare-launches-voices-youth-mental-18403983.php>

https://www.record-eagle.com/opinion/letters_to_the_editor/lettergamalski/article_d141b744-647e-11ee-9811-9bbb4a75a8f5.html

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Martinus, Interim CEO

Monthly Utilization Report

Customer: 354

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority

Month	Total Number of Incoming Calls	Total Number of Calls Answered	Speed of Service			Average Length of Call (min)	Accessibility	
			Number of Call Answered within 30 seconds	Percentage of Calls Answered within 30 seconds	Average Speed of Answer (sec)		Abandonment Rate*	Calls Abandoned Before 30 seconds
<i>Sep 2022</i>	991	827	649	73.3	47	9.0	6.6	100
<i>Oct 2022</i>	827	697	590	81.2	29	5.0	4.1	100
<i>Nov 2022</i>	939	856	782	89.7	21	4.4	1.8	66
<i>Dec 2022</i>	1374	1154	1053	88.2	22	3.8	3.4	78
<i>Jan 2023</i>	969	902	831	89.9	19	4.5	2.4	45
<i>Feb 2023</i>	848	745	654	85.6	24	5.3	2.5	84
<i>Mar 2023</i>	1245	1150	1053	90.2	20	3.6	1.5	78
<i>Apr 2023</i>	1532	1438	1307	89.6	20	3.1	1.4	73
<i>May 2023</i>	845	755	710	91.6	14	4.5	2.6	70
<i>Jun 2023</i>	1097	967	916	92.8	16	5.2	2.0	71
<i>Jul 2023</i>	1415	1350	1310	96.9	11	4.4	0.1	63
<i>Aug 2023</i>	654	596	585	97.2	10	5.1	1.0	52
<i>Sep 2023</i>	939	857	823	95.4	14	5.0	0.7	76
Past 13 mo's	13675	12294	11263	88.6	20	4.7	2.2	956

***Definitions**

Number of Calls Answered within 30 seconds: Total number of all incoming calls not terminating prior to 30 seconds that were live answered.

Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds: Percentage of all incoming calls not terminating prior to 30 seconds that were live answered.

Abandonment Rate: Percentage of all incoming calls not terminating prior to 30 seconds that terminated after 30 seconds prior to receiving a live answer.

Please direct questions to your ProtoCall Point of Contact

**Calls
Abandoned
After 30
seconds**

58

30

16

40

22

19

17

21

20

20

2

6

6

277

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/upcoming-event-to-shine-light-on-mental-health-stigma/article_4291f0d8-5171-11ee-84c5-9fb74dee2ea9.html

Upcoming event to shine light on mental health, stigma

By Rick Charmoli Cadillac News

CADILLAC – There has been a concerted effort to educate the community and connect people with services who are living with mental health issues.

There also has been an effort put into trying to reduce the stigma related to seeking mental health services and help the community try to normalize issues related to mental health. Thursday, an event is scheduled to try to accomplish all those things.

From 9:30 to 11 a.m. Thursday, the Baker College Student Center will host a community event entitled, “A Day in the Life of ...” The point of the event is to give those in attendance an inside look into the lives of people with lived mental health experiences.

Last March, a mental health symposium was held in Cadillac to bring various community groups and people together to discuss what they are seeing in their professions. The idea behind the event was to allow the Human Service Leadership Council, which hosted the event at Baker College of Cadillac, to provide programming to not only its members but also community members to help spread awareness about what is going on within different agencies and nonprofits regarding mental health.

Although the premise of the mental health symposium was simple, once it was completed the people who attended the roughly two-hour session also knew it was vital for the community to find solutions to the issues associated with mental health and mental illness.

After the spring event, the idea was that a second event would be held in May during the annual Mental Health Awareness Month, but it was determined to not be a good time.

Various events were occurring in May through Northern Lakes Community Mental Health and other agencies, such as Club Cadillac and National Alliance on Mental Illness that would have been a scheduling conflict for those groups.

August was looked at, but with schools gearing up for the new year it again was going to be a scheduling conflict. With all that, it was determined that the second event would be held in September.

The main difference between this event compared to the last one is Thursday's event is open to anyone and discusses the challenges people face who are living with mental illness.

Instead of the panel consisting of various personnel from area groups and agencies that have a direct connection with mental health issues, Thursday's event will have four speakers who will discuss their personal experiences with mental health. They include Northern Lakes peer support specialist Ashley Thompson, first responder and Green Lake Township Fire Chief Daryl Case, parent Kristen Kenny and Club Cadillac member Gayle Bottoms.

Human Services Leadership Council of Missaukee and Wexford Counties Coordinator Shari Spoelman said Thursday's event is a unique opportunity for people to hear from those who have lived experiences of mental health issues. She also said they are often talked about but rarely is there a chance to hear from those who have gone through challenges in their lives related to mental health.

"One of the panelists will talk about the experiences she has had with a child," she said. "From a parent's perspective, it is helpful to hear from other parents who have had similar challenges."

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health operations manager for Crisis Services Stacey Kaminski was one of the panelists at the spring event but as a member of the Human Leadership Council, she helped to find and select the four speakers at Thursday's event.

She said the idea was to find speakers who could talk about their stories and journeys and talk about how they got to where they are in their lives. Kaminski said that is one way the event could help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health or receiving mental health services.

“It doesn’t matter where you are in life, you might have those (mental health) experiences,” she said. “Everyone has mental health and you have to care for your own mental health. It is not a curse. It is a part of life.”

Kaminski said each of the four speakers will speak for about five minutes to tell their stories to those in attendance. She also said an anti-stigma video will be shown followed by a time for a Q and A with the audience.

Cadillac Area Community Foundation Executive Director Doreen Lanc also has been involved in the process of bringing this event to life. Lanc said a top priority for the community is to improve the conversation about mental health and there is no shame in asking for help.

“We need to keep community resources and support for mental health very visible,” Lanc said. “It is crucial for anyone dealing with mental health or emotional problems they do not have to deal with this alone.”

The mission of the leadership council is to achieve a collective vision of quality of life in communities within Wexford and Missaukee counties through the provision of leadership in the design, delivery and oversight of health, education and human services. Mental health is likely one of the biggest facing this and other communities across the state and country.

To register for the event, you can go [here](#).

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/four-people-share-their-stories-during-mental-health-awareness-event/article_2f1b4e34-52fa-11ee-9989-b3a9dbab0789.html

Four people share their stories during mental health awareness event

- By Rick Charmoli Cadillac News

CADILLAC – Four people from different walks of life told their stories to a group of mostly strangers.

One speaker was a parent. One speaker was a first responder. Another speaker was a person who struggled with addiction. The last speaker was a person who struggled with mental health issues.

While their stories were quite different and life's journey, so far, took them on different paths, all four were connected by how mental health impacted their lives.

The four speakers, Northern Lakes Community Mental Health peer support specialist Ashley Thompson, first responder and Green Lake Township Fire Chief Daryl Case, parent Kristen Kenny and Club Cadillac member Gail Bottoms, all told personal accounts of how mental health issues affected their lives, health and families.

They were part of a community event Thursday entitled, "A Day in the Life of ..." The point of the event was to give those in attendance an inside look into the lives of people with lived mental health experiences. It was held at Baker College of Cadillac.

FROM PSYCH WARD TO SUCCESS STORY

With a southern drawl, Bottoms, who hails from Tennessee, started the panel of speakers.

She spoke about how she didn't learn much about her mental health issues until 2015. It was during that year, and after many toxic relationships, she admitted herself into a psych ward. Anxiety, depression and identity disorder were all part of her diagnosis. Eventually, Gail said post-traumatic stress disorder joined the party.

Gail said eventually she decided to take charge and made the move to Michigan and Cadillac. It was at this point that she found Club Cadillac.

Club Cadillac is a community for people with diagnosed mental health issues and it works to enable members to reach their full potential as respected and productive members of society.

It was through Club Cadillac that she was able to find her tribe and with the support she needed, she said she was able to go from the psych ward to a success story.

She currently serves on the Club Cadillac Advisory Board, spends as much time as she can at the clubhouse when it's open and recently was hired for a job. She ended her time by saying she was proud of how far she has come since 2015 and urged everyone in attendance to never be silent or stigmatized when it comes to talking about mental health issues.

STORY OF RECOVERY

Kristen said her son Anthony was sweet during his early childhood, but when mental health issues started surfacing her life and role as a mother would change.

When he started kindergarten, Kristen said that is when the first signs of mental health issues started to surface. Anthony's teacher said she was concerned about his mental health. Before his elementary school graduation, Kristen said her son would be expelled from school and that is when a thick wool blanket became draped over their home.

Things progressively got worse.

When Anthony was diagnosed, Kristen said it was like rain started to fall on that thick wool blanket covering her home. It became heavy and hard to move. The worst part was the way that figurative blanket would drip on every part of her life, which symbolized how her son's mental illness was impacting all facets of her life.

As he grew, that heavy, wet, thick, wool blanket remained and when he reached high school and it was determined that Anthony was severely mentally ill, Kristen said that is when a downpour started. The social isolation she and Anthony felt only got worse.

As a parent, she said she thought she had to let go of the hopes and dreams she had for her son. There were more hospitalizations, meds and therapy appointments. She was still trying to work, all while she was wading through the water that was rising all around her.

When Anthony had a full psychotic break, Kristen said that is when her home and life were flooded. She was left only able to tread water. Her daughter and Anthony's sister described it like her brother was dying over and over again. They would see a glimpse of Anthony only for it to be gone.

At this point, trying to have a career was no longer possible. She no longer could care for him and that is when a group home was introduced. At that point, Kristen said she was drowning.

It was in that group home, however, that Anthony started to heal, slowly. Eventually, he was able to leave the group home and come back to Kristen. While the wet, wool, blanket remained during that time, Kristen said when Anthony returned, he was like an umbrella. Eventually, the water subsided and the rain stopped. The blanket that had been placed on her home and life dried and it was removed.

While her story is unique to her family and Anthony, Kristen said the thing people should take from what she said is that it is a heroic story of recovery. Recovery is possible.

THIS IS THE HAPPY PART

Ashley's turn on the microphone was the perfect example of her life's journey.

She mentioned she was anxious about speaking on Thursday. You could tell she was anxious by her demeanor. Much like in the story she eventually told, she was able to overcome her anxiety. Ashley's life story included her anxiety, drugs, criminal history and finally redemption.

Ashley said her mother was caring but a very anxious person. Looking back at her childhood she showed signs of a similar path. For example, she could remember not wanting to eat chips out of a bag because she was fearful that the germs on her hands would kill her family.

She also said she became focused on picking up and organizing her younger siblings' toys. She said it got to the point that she would become upset or mad when they tried to play with them.

She also said remembered the first time she found hydrocodone. Her friends had some and they all took them together. While they were using it recreationally, Ashley said she wasn't. She didn't take them to get high but to feel normal. It turned her head off and shut down her anxiety.

Ashley said she eventually dropped out of school, continued her drug use and became pregnant. While she didn't use it while she was pregnant with her first child, it didn't take long for her to get back to old habits once she had her baby.

She continued her drug use and started dealing. She said she was running drugs from Muskegon. She wanted to quit but didn't have a way out. When she didn't have her children, she lived in a tent and sold drugs out of it.

At one point, she bought a gun for her dealer because he couldn't as a felony. Her record was clean. He was arrested after he assaulted someone with a gun that was purchased under her name. It was at that point that Ashley said she got on the radar of law

enforcement. She eventually was arrested for providing a weapon to a felony and spent nine months in jail.

During that time she utilized community mental health services and that is when things started to change. She met and connected with a peer support specialist. She remembered telling that person she wanted to do what she did but didn't think she could because of her criminal record.

Ashley said the peer support specialist told her she believed she could do anything she wanted and she was right. Ashley is a peer support specialist for Northern Lakes, is married and they have a 3-year-old daughter. She talked about her life now and how all her children are together, which led her to shed some tears even though she said it was supposed to be the happy part.

In the end, she told those in attendance to live a life of hope and love.

SUCK IT UP

The final speaker was Daryl who spoke about his life as a first responder and how it was the family business.

He said he has been a firefighter for 32 years and been a paramedic for 28. Both his parents were in the profession and he grew up in the culture of suck it up and move on. Regardless of what he dealt with in the last call he had to put a smile on his face and move on to the next call.

He said that changed when he was at work one day and he got a call saying he needed to head home to his mom's house. Although he said there isn't a way someone could die or kill themselves that he hasn't seen, what he had to witness at this call changed him.

His brother, who also was a first responder, had killed himself.

Growing up in the culture of suck it up and move on, Daryl said there was no counseling and no conversations. At the time he didn't realize it by coping mechanism was work. He said many first responders have addictive personalities. He started off coping by working 110-hour work weeks but later moved to alcohol.

He said it was legal. It helped him to sleep and he would stay at home to do it. Eventually, he got arrested and went to jail. He finally got time off from work but that was because he got fired. It took that, however, to get him to seek help. Now he is never embarrassed about talking about mental health.

That is the message he shared with the people who attended Thursday's event but also the message he shared as a peer support specialist.

"It's OK to not be OK," he said.

MOVING FORWARD

For Kristen, telling her story is important because everything she has gone through has to mean something. For her, the reason she had to experience what she did with her son was so she could share it with other people in hopes that it might lessen the load for them.

"I can take this and I can help someone else deal with it by sharing what I've learned," she said.

With events like the one held in March and then again on Thursday, Kristen said she is seeing a change in how people are talking about mental health. Even people she has casual relationships with are talking about mental health and it is starting to become more of an open conversation.

Moving forward, Kristen said she would like to see future events continue with community engagement regarding mental health and allow for more dialogue to occur.

“That’s what I think is needed. Ask me questions. Ask me anything,” she said. “I can always decline to answer. In my mind opening the conversation and allowing the audience to say, ‘What was it like when your son had a psychotic break.’ I want to tell you what’s happened to me, so you can become an advocate.”

For Gail, speaking Thursday was a way for her to bring awareness to mental health and that recovery is possible. While people who get injured from physical injuries need time to recover, Gail said so do people who have had a mental health issue. The point is that recovery is possible and she is proof of that.

Gail said people who maybe are like she was in 2015 and know something isn’t right but haven’t been diagnosed need to find someone to talk to and see what comes of that.

“Don’t stigmatize us. Don’t silence us just because we have a mental illness. We are capable of doing everything that everybody does,” she said. “We’re trying to stamp out stigma and don’t silence our mental health issues. Let it be known and get the help you need.”

Munson Healthcare Receives \$5 Million Grant Toward Pediatric Behavioral Health Services

09.14.2023

The Michigan Health and Hospital Association (MHA) has awarded a \$5 million grant to Munson Healthcare toward adding much needed pediatric mental health and crisis services in northern Michigan.

The competitive grant funding was part of the Michigan Legislature’s \$50 million appropriation in 2023 to improve behavioral health services for pediatric patients in the state. The MHA sent out a request for proposals earlier this year and received a total of 10 grant applications from six different regions of the state.

“This funding will play an important role in bringing pediatric mental health and crisis services to the children and youths in our community,” said Laura Glenn, Munson Healthcare Chief Operating Officer. “We’re grateful to the MHA for recognizing the great need for pediatric behavioral health services in our region.”

The funding is in addition to \$5 million in American Rescue Act Funding awarded in June toward establishment of the Grand Traverse Center for Mental Wellness to be located on the Munson Medical Center campus. The additional \$5 million from the MHA will be used exclusively to provide pediatric programming at the center.

Over the past three years, there has been 25 percent increase in the number of children and youths admitted to Munson Healthcare Emergency Departments. Glenn said this funding will help toward goals to create greater access to pediatric mental health and crisis services over the next four years.

Since last fall, representatives from Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority, Munson Healthcare, Northern Michigan Regional Entity, Northwest Michigan Community Health Innovation Region (CHIR), Grand Traverse County and United Way of Northwest Michigan have been at work on the next phase of a plan to bring mental health, substance abuse disorder and crisis services to one location in Traverse City.

“Our community has created tremendous momentum over the last year toward bringing much needed behavioral health resources to northern Michigan,” Glenn said. “This is another important step forward in driving change and improving access to mental health services for families and young people across the region.”

<https://news.yahoo.com/costly-email-hack-suspensions-plague-003600982.html>

Costly email hack, suspensions plague Northern Lakes

Patti Randt Urgess and Mardi Link, The Record-Eagle, Traverse City, Mich.
Thu, September 28, 2023 at 8:36 PM EDT · 6 min read

[0](#)

Sep. 28—TRAVERSE CITY — Two Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority executives were placed on administrative leave and the FBI and local police were contacted about an unrelated \$283,000 phishing scheme — the latest setbacks faced by the beleaguered organization.

Joanie Blamer, chief operations officer, and Lauri Fischer, chief financial officer, were placed on leave on or before Sept. 18 "pending an investigation," said Brian Martinus, interim CEO of Northern Lakes. He declined to comment further on the suspensions or give additional details.

Police said a hacker posing as a representative of Grand Traverse Industries sent an email to Northern Lakes falsely stating GTI's bank information had recently been updated and requested payment for services.

"CMH had sent the amount of money for services that GTI were providing," said TCPD Capt. Keith Gillis.

Officials on Wednesday confirmed Northern Lakes sent a \$283,000 payment in response to the unnamed hacker's request.

"That was an outside actor hacking into a computer system," Martinus said, adding that the case has been turned over to the FBI.

In addition, audits of Northern Lakes' financial and human resources departments are being conducted, Martinus said.

A third member of the organization's leadership team, Matt Leiter, who served as human resources director, was "let go" several months ago, Martinus said.

The administrative leaves, the significant financial loss and the audits of two crucial departments are the latest in an array of internal issues the organization has grappled with in recent years.

Blamer and Fischer returned a call to the Record-Eagle, but both declined to comment. Blamer said Northern Lakes has a policy that only the CEO can speak to the media and neither she nor Fischer wanted to violate the policy.

In 2021, two former employees filed complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accusing Northern Lakes of harassment and of fostering a hostile work environment.

The complaints were lodged after records showed Blamer and human resources staff directed an investigation into the personal lives of the two former employees.

The EEOC complaints were ultimately dismissed or settled, but not before Northern Lakes paid \$130,000 in legal fees to investigate the employees, clarify board rules and handle civil litigation.

The legal fees were not initially included in board packets, and came from invoices three law firms submitted to Northern Lakes and the organization previously provided to the Record-Eagle in response to a Freedom of Information Act request.

The Northern Michigan Regional Entity manages Medicaid funds for behavioral health treatment in five CMHs covering 21 counties in northern lower Michigan.

Northern Lakes provides services in six counties — Crawford, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Missaukee, Roscommon and Wexford — and as many as 16 board members are appointed to three-year terms by their respective county commissioners.

NMRE began overseeing Northern Lakes in August 2022, with Martinus appointed interim CEO in October. That oversight was to include a search for a new CEO, as the agency has been without a permanent CEO for more than two years.

Blamer began serving as interim CEO in July 2021; she was twice named to the post permanently and, both times, the job offer was rescinded.

Searches done by Northern Lakes had yielded more than 50 candidates, only a handful of whom were interviewed, including Blamer and another candidate who was offered the job but declined it after salary negotiations went sour.

The lack of a CEO and the May 2022 decision by the Grand Traverse County board to sever the county from an enabling agreement with Northern Lakes and form its own agency prompted NMRE to provide oversight to make sure services were being delivered.

Grand Traverse County commissioners had sought to sever the agreement after what they called decades of poor service to some of the area's most vulnerable residents.

The CEO search has not been restarted, as leaders from the six Northern Lakes counties were in the process of rewriting an enabling agreement that created the agency about 20 years ago. Martinus said the next step is to rewrite bylaws for the agreement. Once that is done it clears the way for the search, he said.

The audits, approved by the NMRE board, are being conducted by the Rehmann Group of Traverse City and will include reviews of accounting policies and procedures, financial reporting, grant activities, recruiting and selection processes, employee relations, payroll processes and more, according to a document received by the Record-Eagle.

Martinus would not say whether the audits are connected to Blamer's or Fischer's administrative leave status. They are expected to be complete by the end of October and any decisions on whether to pursue further investigation will be made then, he said.

Martinus also would not say if the audits are connected to Leiter's departure.

Sometime in February, however, meeting minutes from a Northern Lakes board committee show, Leiter was no longer employed following a revelation by the organization's recipient rights director.

Recipient rights is an internal office of Michigan's community mental health organizations, whose staff are tasked with protecting the rights of people who receive mental health services.

Dec. 6, 2022, meeting minutes of the Recipient Rights Advisory Committee show Brian Newcomb, director of Northern Lakes' recipient rights office, "spoke about an issue and requested the required protections."

Newcomb, minutes show, stated that the human resources director had asked him to change the outcome of a neglect complaint his office had investigated and substantiated.

The case was a "Neglect 1" level case, minutes show, regarding behavior by an unnamed Northern Lakes worker against an unnamed person who received services from the organization.

Neglect 1 is the most serious form of abusive behavior the office investigates and, when substantiated, requires immediate termination, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The unnamed employee resigned rather than face disciplinary action, Newcomb told committee members, who then voted unanimously to task Martinus with investigating.

Leiter, who was not referred to by name in meeting minutes, was human resources director at the time of Newcomb's report and left about two months later, records show.

Martinus declined to comment on the reasons for Leiter's departure.

On Tuesday, Grand Traverse Industries Executive Director Cindy Evans questioned how officials determined the phishing scheme involved someone posing as a representative of the non-profit, but confirmed they have not recently been paid by Northern Lakes.

Grand Traverse Industries is a non-profit organization which, since 1974, has provided comprehensive services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Today those services include career training and job experience and the non-profit works through Northern Lakes to bill Medicaid for these services, Evans said.

Evans added Grand Traverse Industries is trying to work with Northern Lakes on securing payment.

Whether the \$283,000 will be recovered may partly depend on whether the email scheme originated from inside or outside the US, police officials said of the open investigation.

Traverse City Police Department has served search warrants on an unnamed bank or banks; recovery chances are better if the schemer is in the US, Capt. Gillis said.

NORTHERN LAKES: Costly email hack, suspensions plague community mental health authority

- By Patti Brandt Burgess pburgess@record-eagle.com and Mardi Link mink@record-eagle.com
- Oct 1, 2023

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Grand Traverse County commissioners had sought to sever the agreement after what they called decades of poor service to some of the area's most vulnerable residents.

The CEO search has not been restarted, as leaders from the six Northern Lakes counties were in the process of rewriting an enabling agreement that created the agency about 20 years ago. Martinus said the next step is to rewrite bylaws for the agreement. Once that is done, it clears the way for the search, he said.

The audits, approved by the NMRE board, are being conducted by the Rehmann Group of Traverse City and will include reviews of accounting policies and procedures, financial reporting, grant activities, recruiting and selection processes, employee relations, payroll processes and more, according to a document received by the Record-Eagle.

Martinus would not say whether the audits are connected to Blamer's or Fischer's administrative leave status. They are expected to be complete by the end of October and any decisions on whether to pursue further investigation will be made then, he said.

Martinus also would not say if the audits are connected to Leiter's departure.

Sometime in February, however, meeting minutes from a Northern Lakes board committee show, Leiter was no longer employed following a revelation by the organization's recipient rights director.

Recipient rights is an internal office of Michigan's community mental health organizations, whose staff are tasked with protecting the rights of people who receive mental health services.

Dec. 6, 2022, meeting minutes of the Recipient Rights Advisory Committee show Brian Newcomb, director of Northern Lakes' recipient rights office, "spoke about an issue and requested the required protections."

Newcomb, minutes show, stated that the human resources director had asked him to change the outcome of a neglect complaint his office had investigated and substantiated.

The case was a "Neglect 1" level case, minutes show, regarding behavior by an unnamed Northern Lakes worker against an unnamed person who received services from the organization.

Neglect 1 is the most serious form of abusive behavior the office investigates and, when substantiated, requires immediate termination, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The unnamed employee resigned rather than face disciplinary action, Newcomb told committee members, who then voted unanimously to task Martinus with investigating.

Leiter, who was not referred to by name in meeting minutes, was human resources director at the time of Newcomb's report and left about two months later, records show.

Martinus declined to comment on the reasons for Leiter's departure.

On Tuesday, Grand Traverse Industries Executive Director Cindy Evans questioned how officials determined the phishing scheme involved someone posing as a representative of the non-profit, but confirmed they have not recently been paid by Northern Lakes.

Grand Traverse Industries is a non-profit organization which, since 1974, has provided comprehensive services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Today those services include career training and job experience and the non-profit works through Northern Lakes to bill Medicaid for these services, Evans said.

Evans added Grand Traverse Industries is trying to work with Northern Lakes on securing payment.

Whether the \$283,000 will be recovered may partly depend on whether the email scheme originated from inside or outside the US, police officials said of the open investigation.

Traverse City Police Department has served search warrants on an unnamed bank or banks; recovery chances are better if the schemer is in the US, Capt. Gillis said.

<https://www.9and10news.com/2023/10/02/traverse-city-police-investigate-fraud-case-impacting-two-tc-agencies/>

Traverse City Police investigate fraud case impacting two TC agencies

TRAVERSE CITY — Traverse City Police are investigating a fraud case that's cost two Traverse City agencies thousands of dollars.

Captain Keith Gillis said a Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority staff member sent around \$283,000 to what they thought was Grand Traverse Industries.

It happened after an e-mail saying GTI had updated their banking information and wanted payments for services sent there.

Gillis said that e-mail was discovered to be part of a scam, after the money was sent.

That's when police were called to investigate. The case remains under investigation. No suspects and no arrests made yet.

9&10 News did reach out to Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority for comment but have not heard back.

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/housing-issues-compounded-for-those-with-mental-health-issues/article_deb235bc-6149-11ee-94f0-47f100f00137.html

Housing issues compounded for those with mental health issues

- [By Rick Charmoli Cadillac News](#), Oct 3, 2023

CADILLAC — The lack of housing and affordable housing are issues across the country, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that both also are issues in the Cadillac area.

A recently released housing analysis highlighted just how dire the situation is. In a healthy market, the vacancy rate should be between 4% and 6%. In this region, it's 0.7%, and in Wexford and Missaukee counties specifically, it's 0%. This analysis was conducted by Bowen National Research in collaboration with Housing North, the Cadillac Area Community Foundation and the Alliance for Economic Success.

The housing crisis is the result of several factors, but the biggest is the Cadillac area's modest median income, limited availability of construction workers and high cost of building materials. There is an imbalance in this area between what most people make and the homes they can afford to purchase or rent.

While that is true for many places, those issues are compounded for those living with mental health issues.

For that reason, mental health advocate and parent of a son with mental health issues Kristen Kenny and Club Cadillac Director Amy Kotulski started talking about how they could help those living with mental health issues, in particular, Club Cadillac members, find safe and affordable housing.

Kotulski said housing is built into Club Cadillac's standards and all clubhouses across the country.

"We as a clubhouse, with our quality standards that we have to adhere to, try to provide safe, decent and affordable housing. What that looks like is connecting with housing specialists in the community," Kotulski said. "We have a (Community Mental Health) housing specialist on our board and we have a (Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency) homeless prevention specialist on the board, so that we have those housing resources."

The standards include staff and members managing the program together, members who live within the clubhouse housing program do so by choice, members choose the location of their housing and their roommates, policies and procedures are developed in a manner consistent with the rest of clubhouse culture, the level of support increases or decreases in response to the

changing needs of the member and members and staff actively reach out to help members keep their housing, especially during periods of hospitalization.

Kotulski said it also includes connecting members with housing opportunities by helping them fill out housing applications, rental applications and those types of things. When Kenny became the Club Cadillac Board President, Kotulski said the idea of trying to take that assistance to the next level started to be discussed.

Kotulski said some clubhouses have housing programs that offer housing to their members. It just so happened that Kenny and her husband have 19 acres of land in Missaukee County off of LaChance Road that they would be willing to utilize for such an endeavor.

With the land available, little to no zoning restrictions and an agreement between Lake Township in Missaukee County and the WexExpress for transportation services members could utilize to get to and from the potential complex, the discussion about building housing for clubhouse members became a little more serious.

“We (the Club Cadillac board) have been talking about housing for years. It’s become a crisis. More recently, (the area) started having these housing symposiums and I said you know what, let’s talk about doing this,” Kenny said. “Let’s work with clubhouse. Let’s work with the board.”

Kotulski said the issues people face regarding housing are only compounded for those who are living with mental health issues. She said affordability is more extreme due to these individuals having a harder time finding employment. They could have been fired from jobs due to complications from their mental illness or employers don’t want to hire them because of the stigma associated with mental illness.

Kotulski said that oftentimes these individuals are on disability or social security, which means they are on a fixed income. That might mean they can’t afford some of the available housing.

“So then they try to get into subsidized housing, which has a waitlist years long. That means they are stuck in unsafe and not decent housing because that is what they can afford,” Kotulski said. “That’s half of it, but the other half is, I believe mental health is criminalized. So, they have a record. That discounts them from subsidized housing because they have had felonies.”

This proposed housing would eliminate those barriers and allow clubhouse members to move into a safe and affordable place to live.

While nothing is set in stone, Kenny and Kotulski said the process is moving forward with the idea this is going to happen.

Kenny said the fiscal year started on Oct. 1 and there are only two things on the agenda for the year — the housing development and transitional employment. That means in an ideal world, Kenny said ground will be broken sometime during this current fiscal year, but a lot has to happen for that to become a reality.

The clubhouse board is scheduled to hold its first meeting of the new fiscal year this week and Kenny said the housing development will be one of the topics discussed including a timeline. This will include delegating who will be seeking what information, who will talk with Lake Township in Missaukee County, what grants are available and how they apply for them and more.

She said while the idea is to build a single-story small house for those members looking for housing would be the goal, what those houses would ultimately look like will only be formulated after members give their input. There also has been discussion about having a five-unit complex that would offer transitional housing for up to a year.

She said for this to be successful, members are going to have to take ownership of this program.

“It will be important for club members to be part of this process. What would make them feel like they can succeed in their own house? What would that house have? What would it look like? How big would it be,” Kenny said. “This has to be something they can sustain on their own, but we also have to remember once a clubhouse member always a clubhouse member. They will continuously receive support in this housing. They are not buying it, but renting it.”

From left, Club Cadillac Director Amy Kotulski and mental health advocate and parent of a son with mental health issues Kristen Kenny look at 19 acres in Missaukee County’s Lake Township that is being considered as a location for a housing development for members of Club Cadillac. The hope is that the project would break ground in the next year but a lot of work has to be done for that to become a reality.



<https://www.manisteenews.com/news/article/munson-healthcare-launches-voices-youth-mental-18403983.php>

Munson Healthcare is harnessing the power of art to address mental health in the community.

Northern Michigan's largest non-profit healthcare system today launched a Voices for Youth Mental Health Art Contest to allow those of all ages to express their feelings, wisdom and hope on issues related to mental health and the community. The contest is open to northern Michigan residents through Oct. 13.

Cash prizes will be awarded. Voting for the best artwork will run from Nov. 6-20.

“Our regional Community Health Needs Assessment showed us that we need to continue to expand access to behavioral health services across Northern Michigan,” said Munson Megan Brown, chief marketing and communications officer. “An art contest is a unique way to share thoughts, feelings and raise awareness as we increase collaboration and access for those experiencing mental health issues in our communities.”

Munson Healthcare announced a new Grand Traverse Mental Wellness Center, a collaboration with Northern Lakes Community Mental Health, Grand Traverse County and other community partners earlier this year.

The center will house crisis services, behavioral health services and youth mental health services under one roof supporting the whole region with the goal of opening in 2024. Grants have been awarded by Grand Traverse County through ARPA funds for \$5 million and most recently by the Michigan Health and Hospital Association for an additional \$5 million to support the center and its mission.

Art submissions for the contest can be photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, quilt, collage, a piece of writing and more.

Artwork may be submitted digitally at voicesforcommunityhealth.org or at drop-off locations around northern Michigan during open business hours. Locations include:

Armory Youth Project, 555 First St., Manistee.
Benzie Shores District Library, 630 Main St., Frankfort.
Cadillac-Wexford Public Library, 411 S. Lake St., Cadillac.
Charlevoix Circle of Arts, 109 Clinton St., Charlevoix.
Crawford County Library, 201 Plum St., Grayling.
Otsego County Library, 700 S. Otsego Ave., Gaylord.
Traverse Area District Library, 610 Woodmere Ave., Traverse City.

For more information, go to voicesforcommunityhealth.org.

https://www.record-eagle.com/opinion/letters_to_the_editor/letter-gamalski/article_d141b744-647e-11ee-9811-9bbb4a75a8f5.html

Letter: Gamalski

The lesson to be learned from recent email scam

Some unscrupulous person sent an email to someone in the Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority (NLCMHA) accounting department indicating that Grand Traverse Industries had a new bank account and transfer number for direct deposits of receivables.

NLCMHA's accounting team took this information at face value and paid an invoice using the information they received in the email.

This isn't a hacking incident. This was an error of trust by the accounting department. The technology crew isn't accountable in this situation because this was not a technology failure; it was a failure of small-town trust.

The perpetrator had very specific information about the relationship between NLCMHA and GTI. This was a well-orchestrated scam, for sure, but it didn't involve hacking.

The accounting department likely had every confidence that the email had originated from GTI. But (and here's where the email should've aroused suspicion) why would any legitimate organization send banking information via an unsecured email? If a techie ever saw the email, s/he would've likely called GTI and told them to immediately change their bank account information, because email is the *least* secure form of communications.

Unencrypted email lands on servers – ripe fruit for the picking by anyone with administrative rights on those servers.

What can we learn from this? Never ever use unencrypted communication methods to send highly sensitive information.

Lou Gamalski

Kewadin

**CEO Response to September 21, 2023 Board Monitoring Report Evaluation
October 19, 2023**

Policy 1.0 – Consumer and Community Ends – Internal Inspection - CEO

Nine (9) Board Members completed and submitted the monitoring report. Fourteen (14) Board Members attended the meeting.

Question 1 - Was this report submitted when due? – 9 Yes

Question 2 - Did the report lay out the CEO's interpretation of the request? – 9 Yes

Question 3 - Was I convinced that the interpretation is justified and reasonable? – 9 Yes

Question 4 - Did the interpretation address all aspects of the subject? – 9 Yes

Question 5 - Does the information show compliance with Board direction/policy? – 9 Yes

Comment – "Very Thorough report."

CEO Response 2023:

I appreciate the Board's assessment that we are in 100% compliance with this policy.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brian Martinus
Interim CEO

**CEO Response to September 21, 2023 Board Monitoring Report Evaluation
October 19, 2023**

Policy 2.3 – Compensation of the Employed Workforce – Internal Inspection - CEO

Nine (9) Board Members completed and submitted the monitoring report. There were fourteen (14) Board Members attending.

Question 1 - Was this report submitted when due? –9 Yes

Question 2 - Did the report lay out the CEO's interpretation of the request? – 7 Yes, 2 No

Question 3 - Was I convinced that the interpretation is justified and reasonable? – 7 Yes, 9 No

Question 4 - Did the interpretation address all aspects of the subject? – 7 Yes, 2 No

Question 5 - Does the information show compliance with Board direction/policy? – 7 Yes, 1 No, 1, unanswered

Comments:

"Need more detail."

"I was unable to say yes, because the CEO did not address the policy items."

CEO Response 2023:

I appreciate the Board's assessment that we are in 78% compliance with this policy. If you have additional questions, please let me know, and I am happy to answer them.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brian Martinus
Interim CEO

**BOARD MEANS SELF-ASSESSMENT
POLICY 3.0 GLOBAL GOVERNANCE PROCESS/OWNERSHIP LINKAGE
DIRECT INSPECTION
OCTOBER 19, 2023**

3.0 Global Governance Process/Ownership Linkage

Type of Report: Direct Inspection

The purpose of the Board, on behalf of Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority, is to assure that the Authority (a) achieves appropriate results for appropriate persons at an appropriate cost, and (b) avoids unacceptable actions and situations.

Board Means Policy Being Monitored:

3.0 Global Governance Process/Ownership Linkage – Direct Inspection

October 19, 2023

Review all sections of the policy listed and evaluate our compliance with policy.

1. Do you believe we are in strict compliance with the policy as stated for each provision?

Yes

No (requires comment)

2. If you indicated that the Board is not in full compliance with the policy as stated, please indicate what areas and what you notice that gives evidence that we are *not* in compliance?

3. How do you think we could improve our process to be in full compliance?

4. What do we need to learn or discuss in order to live by this policy more completely?

5. Does this policy remain in compliance with the Policy Governance model in terms of content and format? Yes No (requires comment)

**BOARD MEANS SELF-ASSESSMENT
POLICY 4.0 GLOBAL GOVERNANCE – BOARD/CEO LINKAGE
DIRECT INSPECTION
OCTOBER 19, 2023**

4.0 Global Board/Chief Executive Officer Linkage

Type of Report: Direct Inspection

The Board's sole official connection to the operational organization, its achievements and conduct will be through a Chief Executive Officer.

Board Means Policy Being Monitored:

4.0 Global Board/Chief Executive Officer Linkage – Direct Inspection

October 19, 2023

Review all sections of the policy listed and evaluate our compliance with policy.

1. Do you believe we are in strict compliance with the policy as stated for each provision?

Yes No (requires comment)

2. If you indicated that the Board is not in full compliance with the policy as stated, please indicate what areas and what you notice that gives evidence that we are *not* in compliance?

3. How do you think we could improve our process to be in full compliance?

4. What do we need to learn or discuss in order to live by this policy more completely?

5. Does this policy remain in compliance with the Policy Governance model in terms of content and format? Yes No (requires comment)



Administrative Office, 105 Hall Street, Suite A,
Traverse City, MI 49684

October 2, 2023

NLCMHA Board Retreat Meeting Minutes

Ben Townsend called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

Board Members Present: Ben Townsend, Greg McMorrow, Mary Marois, Al Cambridge, Pam Babcock, Kate Dahlstrom, Ruth Pilon, Tom Bratton, Carol Blake, Dean Smallegan, Penny Morris

Absent: Sherry Powers, Tony Lentych, Dave Freedman, Ty Wessell - all advance notice.
Eric Ostergren

Others Present: Stacy Maiville, Executive Secretary; Brian Martinus, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Jeremiah Williams, Information Technology Supervisor

MOTION:	Approval of the Agenda
RESULT:	ADOPTED. [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	D. Smallegan
SECONDER	M. Marois

Policy Governance -Susan Radwan

Susan Radwan educated the Board on policy governance.

Governing is “seeing to it”, that the organization achieves what it should and avoid unacceptable situations.

Ms. Radwan reviewed foundations of policy governance and what the role of a Board should be that practices policy governance.

The Board sees things from a helicopter perspective. They can see the paths below and the direction the agency should take. A helicopter can also put a spotlight on issues that are happening. The helicopter does not set down on the ground to deal with the situation but must stay above looking at the overall picture and direct those on the ground to deal with the matter. She noted that when a Board starts micro-managing the organization, it leads to chaos and many other bad consequences. An undisciplined Board violates boundaries and causes a lack of trust and unfair environment to staff members. The Board should be outfacing, not inward viewing into the organization.

Ms. Radwan reviewed Monitoring Reports and how to properly utilize them. She emphasized that dialogue around the monitoring reports is important.

Governance- John Amrhein

Mr. John Amrhein presented to the Board regarding their role on the Board as individuals and as a whole. He mentioned that the Board has a duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience. Mr. Amrhein also

spoke about the ten components of working together as an extraordinary Board and how an extraordinary Board is defined. He touched on the components of governance and having a culture of accountability, transparency, and integrity.

Governance Best Practices- Sarah Bannon

Ms. Bannon explained the history of Community Mental Health and reviewed the contents of the Enabling Agreement. Ms. Bannon discussed highlights about the Enabling Agreement. Some changes that were made recently, is the criteria and terms of Board members. The authority must notify the counties within 30 days of any vacancies. Key performance indicators must be reported to the NLCMHA member counties. Ms. Bannon reviewed the CMHSP's prevailing practices for Board members.

Discussion:

The Board discussed the monitoring reports.

It was stated the staff need to understand that the Board is behind them.

All Board members attending spoke about their thoughts on the governance model.

Mr. Cambridge stated that he believes policy governance is the way they need to operate, and the Board has failed with the monitoring reports and better defining their policies. Mr. Cambridge mentioned that a couple years ago the Board voted on the population model, and somehow the previous Interim CEO changed things to the governance policy model. He stated that NLCMH should create its own policy governance but stay with policy governance model.

Ms. Marois commented that she feels that she can support a model that is policy governance but modified and not the Carver model. The agenda needs to be easier for the public to understand. There needs to be a way for the Board to hear what people are saying. There also needs to be a way to develop funds that are not tied to Medicaid use, in hopes to better serve the community with less restrictions.

Ben Townsend stated that he agrees with Mr. Cambridge, NLCMHA needs to come up with their own policy governance.

Mr. Smallegan mentioned that he would like to see the wording and format of the agenda change. He commented that when he first joined the Board, he saw immediately a lot of division and a lack of trust between the staff and the Board. Unless there is unity then the Board is making things harder for the staff. He stated that changing governance isn't the issue, the issue is being transparent, open, honest and being able to accomplish the goals together. He didn't see another model that works for a 16-member Board.

Ms. Morris commented that there was a lot of mistrust and intimidation with both staff and Board when she first started on the Board two years ago. She stated that with a policy governance model, they have to know that the CEO is the right person for the job, who will do the right thing, even if it is uncomfortable. She mentioned she has so far seen Mr. Martinus do this time and time again. The greatest thing we can do moving forward is respect the organization and respect each other.

Mr. McMorrow expressed that even though there is a lot stirred up at the moment, he believes that the outcome of everything will be a positive one, and that he would like to see more efficient meetings. There can be efficient, positive and frank meetings to where the Board can get things done in a reasonable time. He believes that policy governance structure is a sound one, with the addition of sub committees that get the information to the board quicker.

Ms. Pilon expressed her gratitude that the Board is working through certain items right now. She believes that the Board is going in an upward direction. The current model is the only one she knows and would like to see the board work through those kinks.

Ms. Blake mentioned that the policy governance is the best model for this entity. She has worked with other boards who had other models and still feels that the policy governance is the best method. The Board does not have the time to tell the CEO what to do, it is easier to tell the CEO what not to do. The Board does need to learn more about the policy governance model and perhaps that can be something during board education sessions. Learn how it is supposed to be done, learn how to do it, and hold each other accountable to do it correctly.

Mr. Bratton feels that the Board has not been implementing the concepts of the governance model very well. It would be important for the Board to continually work towards improving their knowledge and correct usage of the model. He mentioned that the CEO needs to have the ability to have innovation and think on their own. Mr. Bratton is in favor of having a "Northern Lakes Policy Governance".

Ms. Dahlstrom had hoped that today's presentation would be broader, more balanced, and learn about other governance models. She would like to continue the conversation and to look at other CMHs in the state and where they have ended up with their governance model. Kate would like the Board to look at a results-based model.

Ms. Babcock stated, "rather than starting over, make sure what we are doing, we are doing right." Continuing education of the monitoring reports would be helpful. Ongoing education would be the key so that everyone can be informed.

The Chair, Mr. Townsend, would like to continue this discussion for an hour during the Committee of the Whole. He also indicated that the monitoring reports may need to change a little bit and have become more of ritual instead of a helpful tool.

The idea was suggested about making the Board and Committee of the Whole into one meeting, it was mentioned that having two separate meetings seem like an inefficient use of time.

Mr. Amrhein Commended the Board on their focus on governance today.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Townsend.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ben Townsend, Chairperson

Sherry Powers, Board Secretary

Stacy Maiville, Executive Secretary
