



THE NORTH STAR

CMMHC

CENTRAL MINNESOTA MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

PERSPECTIVE BY SUSAN FUCHS-HOESCHEN, MSW, LICSW

Director of Rehabilitative Services (Supervisor of Certified Peer Support Specialists, Targeted Case Management - Child, Community Support Programs [CSP], Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services [ARMHS], Assertive Community Treatment [ACT], Targeted Case Management - Adult)

We want you to get to know the leaders within CMMHC as they share information from their unique vantage points.



Leading Through Change: A Look at Mental Health Care Past, Present, and Future

Mental health care has undergone a profound transformation over the past several decades. As the Director of Rehabilitative Services at Central Minnesota Mental Health Center

(CMMHC), I've had the opportunity to witness and contribute to these changes firsthand. As a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW) for over three decades, the journey has been one of challenge and growth. Throughout this time, I have had the continuing opportunity to witness the tremendous courage and resilience of the individuals we serve.

A Glimpse into the Past

In the early days of mental health services, rehabilitative care was narrowly focused, often overlooking the broader context of a person's life—housing, employment, social connection, and purpose. Frequently, inpatient hospitalizations were the only options for individuals. The idea that someone could live a full, meaningful life while managing a serious mental illness was still catching on. Services may have been available; however, they were not integrated into the person's life or delivered in collaboration with other service providers.

Where We Are Today

Today, we stand in a very different place. At CMMHC, our mission is rooted in person-centered, recovery-oriented, trauma-informed care. Rehabilitative Services now encompass a wide range of supports, from case management and peer support to skill-building to intensive, non-residential mental health services. Mental Health Practitioners and a team of licensed providers provide all services. Our two Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams (St. Cloud and Monticello) provide intensive, non-residential mental health services through a team of psychiatry, nursing, vocational and housing specialists, peer support, co-occurring disorders, and mental health practitioners.

All of our rehab services teams focus on helping people build the skills and supports they need to live independently, engage with their communities, and pursue their goals. We view recovery not as an endpoint, but as a deeply personal and ongoing journey that each person defines for themselves.

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The "North Star" name comes from the new CMMHC logo, which symbolizes inspiration and hope that guides life's purpose and mission; it is a fixed destination that each of us depends on as our lives and the world change.

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Looking to the Future

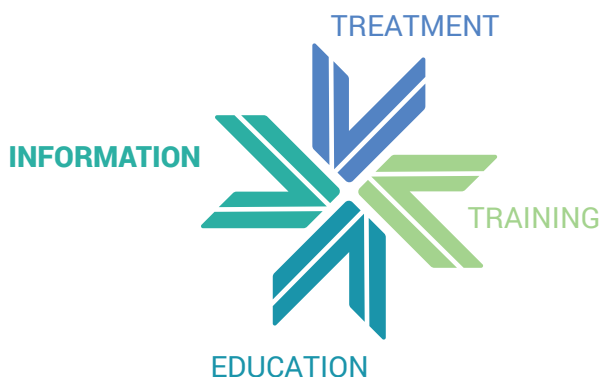
The future of mental health care is rooted in innovation, equity, and empowerment. Technology is playing a growing role for providers and individuals served. We are also reckoning with the reality that systemic barriers—such as racism, poverty, and lack of access—still prevent too many from receiving the care they need. The future must include bold efforts to make mental health care truly accessible, culturally responsive, and community-driven.

As the Director of Rehabilitative Services, I'm particularly excited about expanding peer-led services through our Certified Peer Support Specialists. Those who have walked the path of recovery offer unmatched insight and hope, and their voices are crucial in shaping the future of care.

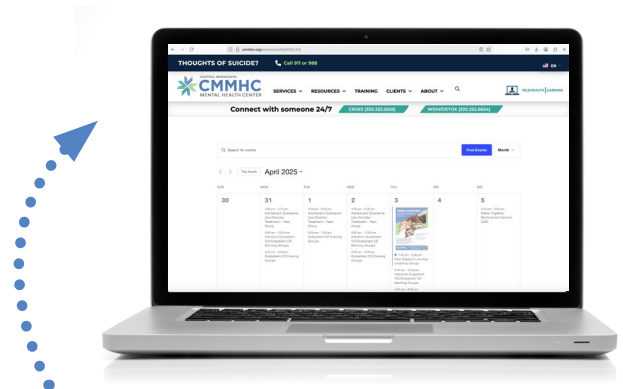
A Shared Responsibility

The responsibility of shaping the next era of mental health care doesn't rest solely on professionals. It requires collaboration with clients, families, communities, policymakers, and advocates. At CMMHC, we are committed to being part of that collective vision.

ORGANIZATION INSIGHTS



Each quarter in 2025, we will discuss one of the pillars of CMMHC's work, which includes treatment, training, education, and information. **This quarter, we focus on INFORMATION** and CMMHC's role as an information hub for public community mental and chemical health events. Sharing information enables us to contribute to a more informed, empathetic, and supportive society, ultimately helping to break down the stigma associated with mental health.



CMMHC is the ***Mental and Chemical Health Events Calendar*** repository for Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright counties. We provide this information on the website Event Calendar and social media. In addition to including happenings initiated and attended by CMMHC, we actively solicit information about activities shared by other service providers, community partners, school districts, law enforcement, educational institutions, and others. This calendar provides information regarding topics, times, locations, presenters, and other relevant data to encourage community participation.





BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MARY PFOHL, PHD | JOINED THE BOARD IN 2018

What would you like the CMMHC community to know about you?

My career vocation and passion are social work, both practitioner and professor, with a particular focus on child welfare. My roots go deep into rural Minnesota, growing up on a farm and now living in an agricultural community. I, along with my husband of 40 years, am blessed with children, extended family, and friends who brighten our lives and support us through life's ups and downs.

Why were you interested in being on CMMHC's board of directors?

I was drawn to serve on the CMMHC board for two reasons. First, I have witnessed how mental health impacts the lives of my loved ones and me. Positive mental health carried

us through life's ups and downs. Untreated mental health diagnoses made the journey more difficult. Second, as a child welfare social worker, supervisor, and educator, I saw the devastating impact of untreated mental health on children, their families, their peers, and their community. Serving on the CMMHC Board, I contribute to a healthier community through improved access and strong mental health services.

How do you support your mental health?

I strive for a holistic approach as I support my own mental health. Each day, I begin with quiet time for meditation and journaling. I am careful about what I put in my body and get enough sleep to restore myself. I practice breathing, taking deep breaths in and blowing out tensions. I stay connected with friends and family. To round out my day, I engage in nature walks, either alone or with my husband.





“Pets are humanizing. They remind us we have an obligation and responsibility to preserve and nurture and care for all life.”

—JAMES CROMWELL

PEER PERSPECTIVE

Our Peer Support Specialists share their unique views on healing and recovery to reach individuals with similar mental and chemical health challenges

Loneliness can be one of the most damaging symptoms that can make someone's mental illness much worse. It can lead to isolation, anxiety, cognitive decline, social anxiety, and an even shorter life span. During my mental illness struggles, I have also fought with feeling lonely and isolated.

For many years, I agonized about what I should do about it. Going out for short periods helped in the short term, but nothing would help in the long term. When I brought up this problem with someone, they suggested I investigate getting a pet.

At first, I was hesitant about the idea of getting a pet. I didn't want the extra responsibility of caring for something physically and financially. But then I weighed the pros and cons of acquiring a pet and concluded that it might work. My first idea was to get a dog, but I quickly ruled this out because I could not have a barking dog annoying all my neighbors in the apartment building. So, I settled on acquiring a cat instead. After

buying many cat toys, scratching posts, and other items, I picked one out at the Tri-County Humane Society. I decided to take my time choosing because I didn't want to just get any cat; I wanted to find a cat that would be the right fit for me. I finally decided to adopt a fat, black cat named Bubba. The first few days, it was awkward for him to be around me, but he eventually warmed up to me and became my best friend.

It does not matter to him if I'm having a bad day. He always provides companionship, reduces stress and anxiety, offers unconditional love, creates a sense of purpose through routine care, encourages physical activity, and generally boosts my mood and self-esteem. He essentially acts as a calming presence and source of emotional support. Having a pet has been very beneficial to my mental health, and I've found this in my clients who have pets themselves.

Ricky Brey, Peer Support Specialist, St. Cloud ACT Team



CLIENT STORY

This story is from a client utilizing CMMHC's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Services - community-based treatment to help adults with Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, Major Depression with Psychosis, or Bipolar with Psychosis become independent and integrate into the community as they experience recovery.

A recent client demonstrated fantastic success with the ACT team over the past 3 years. The co-responders referred this client to the ACT team after a concerned family member called for a welfare check. His apartment was in disarray, and he was not actively taking prescribed medications, so admission to the ACT team began in December of 2021.

After requiring medication monitoring 7 days a week for several months, he gradually worked towards independent medication administration and then independent medication

setup. He was an avid participant in ACT groups offered 4 days per week consistently over his 3 years with the team. While working with ACT, he met with peer support specialists, learned more about his illness through psychoeducation with his therapist, and gained information about the importance of medications while working with the nurses and Dr. Davis.



He was motivated to find work and was employed part-time. He was quickly promoted and began to train new staff at his job. He eventually moved to full-time employment and no longer received social security benefits. His appointments with ACT lessened over time, and he showed independence in managing his benefits, medications, and appointments. Before his discharge with the ACT team in January of this year,

he was proud to share his success and story with our other clients to help motivate them on their recovery journey.



MENTAL HEALTH DAY

CMMHC participated in Mental Health Day on the Hill on February 20th, learning about policy issues and connecting with legislators at the Capitol.



CMMHC ON THE MOVE!

Watch for CMMHC's latest ads on buses around St. Cloud.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS/ SERVICES SPOTLIGHT



DENTAL CLINICS AVAILABLE

CMMHC clients can access dental services at our Monticello or Buffalo office locations thanks to a partnership with Children's Dental Services. This non-profit clinic provides mobile services to patients of all ages. Interested clients can inquire and fill out a form at the front desk of any CMMHC office location.

Upcoming Dates:

June 10th - Buffalo

July 29th - Monticello



OPENINGS AVAILABLE FOR ALL OUTPATIENT SUD SERVICES

CMMHC is now accepting new clients for our Outpatient Substance Use Disorder (OPSUD) Groups. These groups are rooted in evidence-based practices that integrate both substance use and mental health services because recovery means addressing the whole picture. Through collaborative, individualized treatment plans, our team works closely with each client to support long-term healing and improved quality of life.

Openings available:

Morning & Evening in St. Cloud

Morning in Monticello

Morning & Evenings in Buffalo

Adolescent Group in Buffalo

For client referrals, complete the referral form here: <https://cmmhc.org/referral>.

Submit the form to our St. Cloud office and schedule a chemical dependency (CD) evaluation with a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC).



IMMEDIATE OPENINGS FOR CHEMICAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

CMMHC's outpatient staff provides chemical health assessments for anyone, whether:

- They want treatment or not
- They need inpatient or outpatient treatment
- They want to receive services from CMMHC's outpatient program or another program
- They are court-ordered or self-referred
- They want sobriety or not

For client referrals, complete the referral form here: <https://cmmhc.org/referral>. Call our St. Cloud Office for more information at 320.252.5010.





PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY

FROM JANUARY THROUGH MARCH 2025 INCLUDES:

EVENTS

- Becker School Community Night at Becker HS
- Big Lake School Presentation for Students at Big Lake HS
- Full-Service Community School Launch Event at Discovery ES in St. Cloud
- Central MN Farm Show at Rivers Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud (2 days)
- Monticello School District Wellness Day Health Fair at Monticello HS
- Dassel-Cokato Health Fair at Dassel Cokato HS
- WCCA Headstart Health Fair at Eastview Education Center in Monticello
- Foley Community Connect at Foley HS



PANELS & PRESENTATIONS

Supporting Distressed Students

- St. Cloud Technical & Community College
- Dr. Steven Loos, Chief Clinical Officer

Explore the Impact of Technology on Our Lives

- Buffalo High School
- Dr. Steven Loos, Chief Clinical Officer
- Marah Walker, Mental Health Professional

Mental Health in the Workplace (Virtual)

- NASW Minnesota Chapter Meeting
- Chad Bösl, Director of Training & Outreach

Healthy Sleep Hygiene/Impact of Screen Time on Sleep

- WCCA Headstart HealthFair
- Monique Miller, Outpatient Therapist



CMMHC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram! We'd love to have you share information and events with others in the community. You can also help us spread the word about open positions by sharing CMMHC job postings on social media. We regularly put hiring posts on Facebook and LinkedIn. Your help is much appreciated!

THINGS TO WATCH FOR

May is Mental Health Awareness Month!

DONOR RECOGNITION

Thank you for the monetary and in-kind donations to CMMHC from the following individuals and organizations.

General

Bednark Electric, Inc.
Centra Sota Cooperative
City of Waite Park
Elk River Lions Club, Inc.
Jessica & Blaine Brandon
Kristin Otten
Magnifi Financial
Molly Thompson
Pleasureland, Inc
Raedell Marx
United Way of Central MN

In-Kind

The St. Cloud Rox – donation of ticket vouchers

We apologize if we unintentionally omitted a donor; please contact CMMHC (development@cmmhc.org) so we can acknowledge you in the following newsletter.

