



THE NORTH STAR

CMMHC

CENTRAL MINNESOTA MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Welcome to the 'North Star' Newsletter, a quarterly update that aims to keep you informed about the latest news, achievements, and initiatives at CMMHC. The 'North Star' name originates from the CMMHC logo, which symbolizes inspiration and hope guiding life's purpose and mission; it is a fixed destination we depend on as our lives and the world around us change.

PERSPECTIVE BY JESSICA BRANDON - CEO

In this section, we invite you to get to know the leaders within CMMHC and share information from their unique perspectives, providing insights into their roles and contributions to our organization.

There have been many events in 2025 that have required us, as a non-profit organization, to discuss the "hard stuff." We have had difficult conversations about the effects of the government shutdown, the expiration of Affordable Care Act premium tax subsidies, policy changes to Medicaid, and other issues. We have done our best to consider each new situation carefully and to manage our multiple priorities as they arise, making the best decisions we can to protect the agency's long-term financial viability and continue providing the highest-quality services to those we serve. With CMMHC's purpose, mission, vision, and values always at the forefront, we strive to weather change, thrive, and grow as an agency.

Conversations and collaboration with clients, employees, partners, and our neighbors fuel our progress and will continue to do so. With a renewed focus on CMMHC's core values, we aim to meet our community's needs and adapt as necessary. These fundamental beliefs, principles, and standards serve as an internal compass, guiding employees and CMMHC leaders to align our actions with our mission and purpose. These values define what we prioritize and create our shared understanding and purpose.

Hope is present in everything we do.

Our passion drives us to never give up on Clients, the Community, or each other.

Our person-centered approach creates an environment for healing and recovery.

We're stronger together and see challenges as opportunities for collaboration and Growth.

Additional challenges will arise in 2026, but we will meet them head-on. Our community is more stressed than ever and needs our support to cope with ongoing hardships and emerging obstacles. These adversities will require everyone to remember who we are and what we do at CMMHC. As a community non-profit mental and chemical health provider, our job is to remain calm in the face of adversity to help our clients cope, while also ensuring our own mental health and resilience. We recognize this is a big ask, but we want our employees to remain steady and need our community to support them. Working together will enable us to adjust to new realities, whatever they may be.





ORGANIZATION UPDATES

Celebrating Halloween!

The winner of the CMMHC Group Costume Trophy for 2025 went to the **Day Treatment Team: Punk Rockers**, as voted on by our Facebook community. They will proudly hold the trophy and bragging rights until next year's challenge.

THE WINNERS OF THE INDIVIDUAL COSTUME CONTEST, voted on by CMMHC staff, were...

Charity Schmatz, Monticello Office: Where's Waldo: 1st Place

Amber Dorr, St. Cloud Office: The Pink Monster: 2nd Place

Thank you to everyone who made this year's contest such a fun and creative celebration!



BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

COREY PIEPER, PHD
BOARD MEMBER SINCE 2018



How do you support your mental health?

For me, there are a few things I try to do to take care of my mental health. One is that I try

to work out or exercise as much as I can. I enjoy lifting weights and playing basketball for fun. These activities help provide balance and health for me. It is a great stress reliever to exercise before a day at work. I also enjoy working with my kids on their sports and activities. It is fun to see them grow and mature into young men.

What do you like most about your role as a board member?

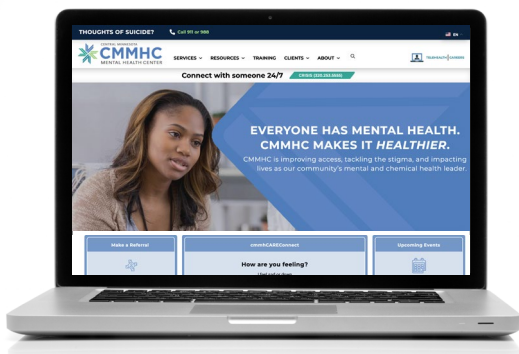
One of the things I enjoy most about my time on the board is seeing how hard the leadership and staff work for the community, and how hard they work to ensure staff have what they need to succeed and feel supported at CMMHC. Honestly, I have worked in and around many mental health facilities over more than two decades of work in mental health, and they are truly outstanding!

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

My name is Corey Pieper, my wife's name is Dawn, and we have two sons, Brady and Dawson. A little about me: professionally, I am a Licensed Psychologist and earned my PhD. I am also a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. I am also a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

ORGANIZATION INSIGHTS

This quarter, we focus on CMMHC's **Treatment pillar**. As a non-profit community provider of crisis, mental health, and chemical health services, CMMHC offers comprehensive, clinically grounded, trauma-informed services. We are a pioneer in our region as a nonprofit Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC), ensuring that every treatment or recovery plan respects the individual's uniqueness, wherever they are on their mental or substance use health journey. All providers collaborate to develop a client's goals and implementation strategy. CMMHC takes a client-first, relationship-centered, integrated treatment approach, aiming to reach all who could benefit from our services.



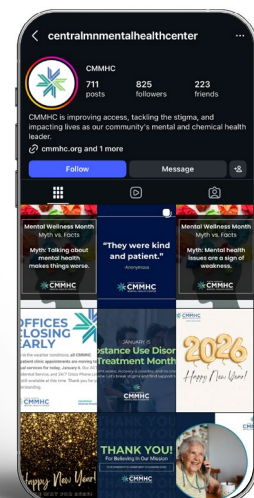
CMMHC Website

Our website lists the CMMHC services available to address specific client issues, including Crisis Services, Mental Health Services for Adults, Children, Youth, and Families, and Chemical Health Services. CMMHC's integrated treatment or recovery plans help individuals, whether it's during a time of crisis or when mental illness, anxiety, depression, stress, substance use, or everyday challenges arise. Our services allow each person to live the healthiest life possible.

Did you know CMMHC is on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn?



We'd love for you to follow and share our social media posts to help get the word out about what we're doing at CMMHC. Posts include job postings, service details, events, and essential information on mental and chemical health. We appreciate your help!





PEER PERSPECTIVE

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

“Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.”

—JK ROWLING, HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

Ugh, it's that time of year that many people, including myself, dread. The cold weather, early darkness, dreary, cloudy days, and other factors can make this season challenging. It's a “SAD” time of year. Seasonal Affective Disorder can affect anyone. What is it? “It's a type of depression that is related to changes in seasons and begins and ends at about the same time every year.” Whether officially diagnosed with this disorder or not, this time of year can be difficult for anyone.

Some tips to keep in mind to help with the symptoms of SAD include:

- Light therapy
- Spending time outside
- Exercise
- Meeting with friends and family
- Practicing Self-care
- Most importantly, if you feel overwhelmed, **seek professional help.**



Remember, after December 21st, the days start getting longer!

Shelly Schwanke, PLSW, MHP, CFPSS
Certified Family Peer Support Specialist



ALL-STAFF TRAINING IN OCTOBER



A Q&A panel featuring professionals from diverse areas of Human Services discussed industry trends across

Central Minnesota and how their work intersects with trauma-informed care. The panelists provided a valuable opportunity to hear multiple perspectives and deepen our shared understanding of trauma-informed practices in our daily work and their impact on the community. Thank you to the following for their participation!

John Donovan,
St. Cloud Intergroup

Sgt. Tad Hoeschen,
St. Cloud Police Department

Rich Smith,
CMMHC Withdrawal Management

Stacey Kloeck,
Anna Maries Alliance



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS/ SERVICES SPOTLIGHT



CSP Moves to Sherburne County Health & Human Services

Beginning January 2026, the Sherburne County Community Support Program (CSP) transitions from CMMHC facilitation to direct coordination by Sherburne County Health and Human Services. We express our sincere appreciation to all participants and partners who have been part of CSP over the years. During this period of change, our teams at CMMHC and Sherburne County Health and Human Services will work closely together to ensure a smooth, coordinated process.





CLIENT STORY

Because of our CCBHC status, we have dedicated staff, called **Care Navigator Intake Specialists**, who work with new clients and provide the time and care needed to help them get set up with the services they require. As the first point of contact for our organization, the Intake Team is the first of many ears to listen.

Recently, a client came in off the street to our Waite Park office, a not-so-common occurrence. For some individuals, it can be harder to ask for help in person than over the phone, so we meet with them to discuss their needs. The client enrolled in Chemical Dependency (CD) services later that week, and staff assisted them in completing their intake forms while they were there. They were able to get the help they needed faster than they thought.

This client's story illustrates how our CCBHC status enables CMMHC to provide dedicated staff for every step of the client's journey.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES FEATURE

Community Angels Resource Center provides resources and services to children, families, and survivors of violence, including employment, housing, food, transportation, financial literacy, and education. Offering support to underserved children and families in our four-county area, they provide essential supplies to those facing insecurities. Do you know a child who needs cold-weather essentials, hygiene items, clothing, undergarments, or a personalized birthday box?

Check Community Angels out for more information at <https://communityangelsmn.org>.



CMMHC FOCUS

We share current and emerging mental health and chemical health topics, including training, milestones, and subjects relevant to the CMMHC community.



What is a non-profit? What it means for CMMHC.

A nonprofit social service agency is a mission-driven organization that provides essential community support, with any surplus revenue reinvested in programs, staff, or infrastructure. Nonprofits focus on social, educational, or charitable goals, serving the public interest rather than profit.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

MISSION-FOCUS: The primary purpose is to serve the community or a specific cause, not generate income. *Our mission is “CMMHC makes mental health healthier through treatment, training, education, and information.” This guidance informs all decision-making and planning.*

PUBLIC BENEFIT: Offers services that enhance public well-being, often filling gaps left by government or for-profit sectors. *For CMMHC, this means serving as a community provider of mental health, substance use, and crisis services. We serve individuals and families—often underserved or vulnerable—carefully considering each person’s needs.*

FUNDING DIVERSITY: Relies on donations, grants, fundraising, fee-for-service, community partnerships, or volunteers. *In addition to the previous sources, CMMHC also receives revenue from private insurance, Medicare, sliding-scale patient fees, and state, local, and federal funds. All have reporting and outcome requirements.*

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: The nonprofit’s culture is community-oriented, with employees addressing and solving problems identified in the community. *CMMHC’s culture is mission-driven, people-centered, and grounded in respect, accountability, and collaboration, creating a supportive environment where staff can do their best work in service of the community.*

LEGAL STRUCTURE: Often recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization in the U.S., granting tax-exempt status, enabling contribution write-offs for those who donate. *Since its establishment as a nonprofit in 1964, CMMHC has provided a wide range of services to meet the needs of our local community.*

GOVERNANCE: Governed by a board of directors, ensuring accountability to the public. *CMMHC board members bring diverse knowledge, backgrounds, and professional and personal experiences to their volunteer service. They come from every county we serve, ensuring representation of each area’s issues and concerns in addressing our organization’s needs and development.*

As a community-based nonprofit organization, CMMHC focuses on people and impact—we invest every dollar in services, staff, and community well-being.





CMMHC IN THE COMMUNITY

CMMHC'S COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
FROM OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER INCLUDES

Community Connect at Big Lake MS

EVENTS

- Big Lake Schools Homecoming Spirit Fest at Big Lake HS
- Big Lake Family Fun Fest at Big Lake ES
- Kaleidoscope Open House at Kaleidoscope School in Albertville (2 days)
- Community Connect at Big Lake MS
- Project Connect at the Rivers Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud
- Safety Committee Meeting for the City of Buffalo at the Buffalo Fire Station
- IEC Conference at St. Paul RiverCentre (3 days)

PANELS & PRESENTATIONS

Suicide Prevention for Educators (Presentation)
Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School District
Susan Fuchs-Hoeschen, Director of Rehabilitative Services

Mental Health, Crisis, Trauma & Self-Care (Presentation)
Anna Marie's Alliance
Chad Bösl, Director of Training & Outreach
Susan Fuchs-Hoeschen, Director of Rehabilitative Services

Buffalo Strong Coalition Panel
Suicide Awareness (Presentation & Panel)
Wright County Services
Dr. Steven Loos, Chief Clinical Officer

CONFERENCE

Infant & Early Childhood (IEC) Multidisciplinary Conference



This event took place at St. Paul River Center in November and included professionals who support young children from prenatal life through age six, as well as their families and caregivers. Promoting infant and early childhood mental health principles to inform practice across disciplines, the conference brought together a vast network of multidisciplinary professionals from across the state who work with young children, their families, and caregivers. Several CMMHC employees attended the conference, and we also connected with attendees at our vendor table to introduce ourselves and share the services we offer the community.



THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- ✓ **59th Annual Central MN Farm Show**
February 24-25
- ✓ **Mental Health Day on the Hill**
March 26th
- ✓ **New CMMHC blog!**

Thank you to everyone who contributes information to the newsletter every quarter. Your assistance makes this publication possible.

DONOR RECOGNITION

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

General

Anonymous - 2
Jessica & Blaine Brandon
Cathedral High School
Eric Falk
Jolene Foss
Grateful Gifts
Greater Twin Cities United Way
Dave & Penny Hogberg
JoAnn Lewis
Mary & Kenneth Pfohl
St. Cloud Morning Optimist Club
Josh Seezs
Kathryn Young

In-Kind

Social Indoor, Central MN

In Memory

Lisa Fobbe, in memory of brothers, Dan & Tony
Linda Kampa, in memory of Scott

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

