

## GOVERNOR WHITMER SIGNS BILL TO ENSURE EQUAL INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENTS

Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed Senate Bill 27, bipartisan legislation that requires insurers to cover treatments for mental health and substance use disorders at the same level as physical health services. This new law aims to close existing loopholes, ensuring that Michigan residents have necessary access to the treatments they need.

“Every person in Michigan deserves access to mental and physical health care,” said Governor Whitmer. “Today, I am proud to be signing a commonsense, bipartisan bill to require insurers to provide equal coverage for mental health and substance use disorder treatments, just as they do for physical health treatments. Getting this done will ensure Michiganders get the care they need and close loopholes that have allowed providers to avoid covering these essential services. Let’s keep working together to help every Michigander get the help they need to get better.”

Senate Bill 27, sponsored by state Senator Sarah Anthony (D-Lansing), provides equitable coverage for behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment.

“Michiganders’ mental health is no less important than their physical health—no one should go without the care they need because they can’t afford it,” said state Senator Sarah Anthony. “That’s why this bipartisan legislation requiring comprehensive insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorder services is so vital. I am grateful for my legislative colleagues on both sides of the aisle and Governor Whitmer for coming together to recognize the importance of mental health care coverage and delivering results for the people of our state.”

“The signage of Senate Bill 27--Michigan’s first mental health parity law that reiterates the verbiage of the Federal Mental Health Parity and Addictions Act of 2008--is a signal to all of us in this state that the tide is turning,” said Marianne Huff, President and CEO, Mental Health Association of Michigan. “In other words, mental health and addiction treatment is viewed as being as vital as physical healthcare. There is understanding in 2024 that the brain, the mind and the body are a unified system.”

“We appreciate Governor Whitmer’s and Senator Anthony’s leadership in prioritizing mental health services for Michiganders,” said Dominick Pallone, Executive Director of the Michigan Association of Health Plans. “Senate Bill 27 will ensure consistency in mental health coverage throughout our State.”

In her 2022 State of the State Address, Governor Whitmer proposed policies to expand access to mental health services and grow Michigan’s mental health workforce. One key proposal was to ensure parity in coverage for mental health and substance use disorders. Today, Governor Whitmer is making this proposal a reality.

## GOVERNOR WHITMER’S HISTORIC INVESTMENTS IN MENTAL HEALTH

Since taking office, Governor Whitmer has made historic investments in mental health services. These efforts include expanding access to quality, affordable healthcare by recruiting and retaining hundreds of mental health workers and expanding crisis stabilization programs. Additionally, her administration opened a new 100-bed Caro Psychiatric Hospital, further boosting access to mental healthcare.

When it comes to supporting Michigan’s kids, Governor Whitmer signed a budget with \$328 million for mental health and school safety. This secures \$214 per student for on-campus mental health and school safety needs and proposed an additional \$300 million to continue historic investments in student mental health. She also signed budgets that increased mental health professionals on campus.

To keep families and communities safe, Governor Whitmer increased mental health resources for public safety professionals and signed bills to increase compensation and mental health resources for victims.

# SWMBH Newsletter

Gov. Whitmer Signs Bill .....1

Gov. Whitmer’s Historic Investments in MH.....1

**ABOUT SWMBH / Providers**

Directory.....2

SWMBH Supports .....3

State Opioid Response Grants .....4

CMS launches new options for individual to report potential violations .....5

Living the Dream .....5

CEO Testimony .....6

Getting Ahead of the Game with the Veterans Affairs by using ID.me ....6

Kalamazoo Pride 2024.....6

Emergency Services / Resources ....7

2024 Customer Satisfaction Survey ..... 8

Non-Discriminatory Statement ..... 9/10

SWMBH Board Meetings 2024...11

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## ABOUT SWMBH

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health is committed to providing behavioral health and substance use services in compliance with all federal rules through Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. SWMBH does not use financial incentives to encourage barriers to care and services and decisions that result in underutilization. SWMBH does not reward practitioners, or other individuals conducting utilization review for issuing denials of coverage or service. All utilization management decision-making is based only on the presence of coverage and suitability of care and service. Clinical decisions are based on the clinical features of the individual case and the medical necessity criteria.

Contact from members after normal business hours are returned on the next business day and contact received after midnight Monday-Friday except for holidays are responded to the same business day. Typical hours of operation for member services are from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

SWMBH also provides members with a quarterly newsletter no less than three times a year if they have received services within the last 90 days. To obtain a copy of the Customer Communicator Newsletter by mail call us at 1-800-890-3712 or to view our electronic version you can visit our website at <https://swmbh.org>.

### How to reach us:

Customer Service: 1-800-890-3712

SWMBH Substance Use Disorder Access Line: 1-800-781-0353

Compliance Hot Line: 1-800-783-0914

TTY: 711 (MRC)

5250 Lovers Lane, Suite 200, Portage MI 49002

[www.swmbh.org](http://www.swmbh.org)

[www.swmbh-ccm@swmbh.org](mailto:www.swmbh-ccm@swmbh.org)



## PROVIDER DIRECTORY

Check out the **SWMBH Provider Manual** and **Provider Directory**, on our SWMBH website: [www.swmbh.org](http://www.swmbh.org). The website contains information about SWMBH’s policies and procedures, as well as helpful information on the following topics: customer rights, utilization management and other helpful material.



## SWMBH Supports...



On Saturday April 13 SWMBH CEO Bradley Casemore attended the NAMI-MI Gala at The Henry Hotel with his guest Representative Christine Morse Chair of House Appropriations Subcommittee on DHHS Appropriations.



Pictured on the left is Denise Burton-Epp President and CEO of the National Association for children of the Addicted (NACoA). Center is CEO Brad Casemore, and to his right is Cynthia Casemore.



On Saturday April 20, 2024, several Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health leadership and staff attended the Michigan Shines for Autism Gala at the Motor City Casino Hotel. The event included a reception, dinner, and generous auction to help raise money to support Autism Alliance of Michigan and their many wonderful programs to support Michigan families.

# STATE OPIOID RESPONSE GRANTS

Since 2018, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has funded the State Opioid Response (SOR) grant in Michigan. The SOR grant provides funding and resources for prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support for individuals at risk or who have an opioid use disorder (OUD), stimulant use disorders (StUD), or both. Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health receives this funding from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and uses this funding to support individuals in their recovery. A variety of programs and services are funded by the SOR grant in our region and below is an example of a monthly report of the variety of services provided.



## **In April 2024, the SOR grant provided the following in our region:**

- 553 middle school students, high school students, and adults received intensive education through Evidence Based Practice Prevention Programs.
- 122 Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution with Harm Reduction trainings were held to help to prevent opioid overdose deaths.
- 758 Naloxone (the medication used to reverse an opioid overdose) kits were distributed.
- 12 overdose reversals occurred.
- 3 new naloxone boxes were installed at Bronson Hospital in Kalamazoo, and 2 new boxes were installed in community-based agencies in Berrien County. This brings the total of naloxone boxes in our region to 10.
- 83 individuals with either an opioid use disorder or stimulant use disorder received either case management or contingency management services.
- 560 individuals engaged with peer recovery coaches in emergency departments, health centers, outpatient treatment settings, and community settings to help refer to additional services and provide recovery support.
- 68 individuals received support from a recovery coach while staying at a recovery home (a sober living environment).
- 78 individuals received substance use treatment services while they were in jail.

MDHHS is completing their application this summer to SAMSHA for another SOR funding opportunity. SWMBH looks forward to continuing many of the programs already in place to help individuals recover from the disease of addiction.



# CMS launches new option for individuals to report potential violations of the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched a new option on CMS.gov to allow individuals to more easily file an Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) complaint. This new web resource is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's [comprehensive plan](#) to educate the public and promote patient access to the emergency medical care to which they are entitled under federal law.

“HHS is committed to protecting access to emergency medical care for everyone in America and making sure appropriate steps are taken if they don't get that care,” said Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra. “We will continue to uphold the law and the right to emergency care, to inform people of their rights under EMTALA, and to make it easier for someone denied care to file a complaint.”

“If an individual believes their EMTALA rights have been violated, it is important that they can easily file a complaint,” said CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure. “We want to make sure that everyone knows their rights and can take action to help make sure the health care system is safe for everyone.”

CMS is dedicated to safeguarding the health and safety of millions of individuals, a commitment that includes enforcing federal laws including EMTALA. Medicare-participating hospitals are required under EMTALA to provide medical screening exams for individuals arriving at hospital emergency departments to determine if the person has an emergency medical condition. If an emergency medical condition is confirmed, hospitals must provide stabilizing medical treatment (or, if unable to stabilize the person within its capability, to appropriately transfer the patient). CMS continues to work to enforce federal law, to ensure access to quality health care services protected by EMTALA.



## Living the Dream

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health would like to congratulate Level of Care Transition Navigator, Vinnie, for celebrating 30 years of recovery! Vinnie has been employed at Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health since August 2022. He has assisted many members of our community as they start to navigate their own path of recovery. Vinnie has a knack for engaging people he has never met before. His friendly demeanor and due diligence allow him to give his best and assist with meeting the needs of those seeking recovery. His kind tone lets others feel at ease talking to him. If you see him anywhere in the community or around the region, please join us in congratulating Vinnie on his success with recovery.

If you, or someone you know is struggling with a substance use disorder. Help is available by calling 1(800)781-0353.

## CEO Testimony

On April 10, 2024, Bradley Casemore CEO SWMBH testified before the Michigan House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Department of Health and Human Services. The two main topics that he talked about were Medicaid funding increase needs and the opioid settlements. He talked about using the Community Mental Health Entities and Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans for effective and efficient delivery of state funds received from the opioid settlements. The settlements total \$750,000,000 over the next fifteen years. This is in addition to another \$750,000, which counties and other municipalities will receive.



## Getting Ahead of the Game with the Veterans Affairs by using ID.me

VA.gov is updating its website sign in process. The Veterans Affairs (VA) is doing this through ID.me. ID.me is an easier, more secure way to log in and prove your identity. When you log into VA.gov, you will select ID.me. Once you set up your identifying information in ID.me, it will allow for a single sign on for VA.gov access. Veterans will need to have an ID.me account in place by 12/31/2024. Should you need additional help please reach out to the Battle Creek Veterans Administration at 269-966-5600 ext. 31980 or ext. 31224. The following links will also provide you with additional information.

You can follow the link at <https://www.va.gov/resources/verifying-your-identity-on-vagov/>. Click here if you would like to get started for the ID.me website: <https://www.id.me/>



## Kalamazoo Pride 2024

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH) was excited to be part of Kalamazoo Pride 2024, organized by OutFront Kalamazoo on June 8th, 2024. Sarah Ameter and Achilles Malta represented SWMBH during this event. They were able to connect with many community members to provide information and resources about behavioral health services.

# EMERGENCY SERVICES

If you are experiencing a life-threatening or medical emergency, unable to transport yourself to an emergency room, or if you are experiencing a life-threatening or medical emergency after hours, always call 9-1-1 right away.

A “mental health emergency” is when a person is experiencing symptoms and behaviors

- that can reasonably be expected in the near future to lead them to harm self or another;
- the inability to meet their basic needs putting them at risk for harm;
- the person’s judgment is so impaired that they are unable to understand the need for treatment and their condition is expected to result in harm to themselves or another individual in the near future

You have the right to receive emergency services at any time, 24-hours a day, seven days a week, without prior authorization for payment of care.

If you have a mental health emergency, you should seek help right away. You can call the emergency number for your CMH office, you can go to any hospital that offers emergency care, or you can call 911.

**Emergency Assistance is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from CMH:**

<b>Barry County</b>	<b>269-948-8041 or 1-800-873-0511</b>
<b>Berrien County</b>	<b>269-925-0585 or 1-800-336-0341</b>
<b>Branch County</b>	<b>517-279-1193 or 1-888-725-7534</b>
<b>Calhoun County</b>	<b>269-966-1460 or 1-800-632-5449</b>
<b>Cass County</b>	<b>269-445-2451 or 1-800-323-0335</b>
<b>Kalamazoo County</b>	<b>269-373-6000 or 1-888-373-6200</b>
<b>St Joseph County</b>	<b>269-467-1000 or 1-800-622-3967</b>
<b>Van Buren County</b>	<b>269-657-5574 or 1-800-922-1418</b>



**You can walk-in to any CMH office during business hours and ask for assistance with an emergency.**

## Post-Stabilization Services

After you receive emergency mental health care and your immediate needs are met, you may receive ongoing mental health services to make sure your condition continues to stabilize and improve. Examples of post-stabilization services are crisis residential, case management, outpatient therapy, and medication reviews. Prior to the end of your emergency-level care, your local CMH will help you to coordinate your post-stabilization services.

# RESOURCES

**Crisis/Suicide Hotlines:** 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

**Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** 988 (Call or text)

**Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

**Suicide Prevention Hotline for Deaf or Hard of Hearing:** 1-800-799-4TTY (1-800-799-4889)

**Suicide Prevention Online Chat:** [www.gryphon.org/services/crisis-services/online-chat](http://www.gryphon.org/services/crisis-services/online-chat)

**Suicide Prevention Text Line:** Text: “Hello” to 741-741

**Human Services:** (Crisis Situations, food, housing/rent help): **211**

**Child Abuse and Neglect Parent Helpline:** 1-855-942-4357

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):** 1-800-950-6264 or [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

**National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233), TTY: 1-800-787-3224, Spanish: 1-800-942-6908

**National AIDS Hotline:** 1-800-342-AIDS (1-800-342-2437)

**Alcoholics Anonymous Hotline:** 269-467-1107

**Veteran Crisis Line:** 1-800-273-8255 press 1 Text: 838-255



# 2024 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

SWMBH is conducting a Satisfaction Survey for customers served by any CMH in the region –

Barry, Berrien (Riverwood Center), Branch (Pines Behavioral Health), Calhoun (Summit Pointe), Cass (Woodlands BHN), Kalamazoo (ISK), St. Joseph (Pivotal), and Van Buren.

**The survey is 100% voluntary and confidential.**

The purpose of this survey is to collect your views on the services and programs you or your immediate family members have received. It takes ~3 minutes to complete.

Please visit <https://www.swmbh.org/members/quality-surveys/>  
or <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7691319/62c0e725eb5c>

or scan the QR code below.







Principal Office: 5250 Lovers Lane, Portage, MI 49002  
Phone: 800-676-0423

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health complies with applicable Federal and State civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, color, sex, disability, religion, age, height, weight, familial status, partisan considerations, or genetic information. Sex-based discrimination includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, and pregnancy. Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health does not exclude people or treat them differently because of any of these categories.

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health:

- Provides **free** aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
  - Qualified sign language interpreters
  - Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, Braille, other formats)
- Provides **free** language services to people whose primary language is not English or have limited English skills, such as:
  - Qualified interpreters
  - Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact Customer Services.

If you believe that Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with:

Customer Services  
5250 Lovers Lane, Suite 200  
Portage, MI 49002  
P: 800-890-3712 (TTY: 711)  
F: 269-441-1234  
customerservice@swmbh.org

If you are an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, you may contact the MI Relay Service at 711 to request their assistance in connecting you to Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health. You can file a grievance in person or by mail, fax, or email. If you need help filing a grievance, Customer Services is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights. Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>. You may also file a grievance electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW., Room 509F, HHH Building  
Washington, D.C., 20201  
1-800-368-1019.





**Southwest Michigan  
Behavioral Health  
(SWMBH)  
Member Services  
Specialist**

**5250 Lovers Lane,  
Suite 200  
Portage, MI 49002**

**Customer Service  
Toll-Free:  
(800) 890-3712**

**Agency Phone:  
(800) 676-0423  
TTY: 711 MRC**

**Fax:  
(269) 441-1234**

**Email: [info@swmbh.org](mailto:info@swmbh.org)**

**Customer Service Hours  
M – F  
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Excluding Legal  
Holidays**

## **SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BOARD MEETINGS 2024**

**Air Zoo Aerospace & Science Museum  
6151 Portage Rd, Portage, MI 49002**

**July 12, 2024 – 9:30am to 11:30am**

**August 9, 2024 – 9:30am to 11:30am**

**September 13, 2024 – 9:30am to 11:30am**

**October 11, 2024 – 9:30am to 11:30am**

**November 8, 2024 – 9:30am to 11:30am**

**December 13, 2024 – 9:30 am to 11:30am**

All SWMBH Board Meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.261-15.275

SWMBH adheres to all applicable laws, rules, and regulations in the operation of its public meetings, including the Michigan Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.261 – 15.275

SWMBH does not limit or restrict the rights of the press or other news media.

Discussions and deliberations at an open meeting must be able to be heard by the general public participating in the meeting. Board members must avoid using email, texting, instant messaging, and other forms of electronic communication to make a decision or deliberate toward a decision and must avoid “round-the-horn” decision-making in a manner not accessible to the public at an open meeting.