

Budget Advocacy Talking Points

- For Fiscal Year 14/15 Community Mental Health of Ottawa County (CMHOC) is facing an approximate \$2 million dollar budget shortfall.
- In addition to this year's budget concerns, there is a very real potential for more significant budget reductions in the coming years as a result of our merger into the new region and changes in the Medicaid funding methodology.
- To address these substantial budget issues CMHOC will need to make changes that in some cases will result in a change or decrease in services to our consumers. Specific examples of these changes might include; receiving outpatient therapy at a local community provider, a reduction in the number of days attending KandU, or a reduction in the amount of respite money available for families. Any changes to a person's services will be discussed at their Person Centered Planning (PCP) meeting.
- CMHOC is committed to providing effective services in cost efficient ways and to providing services in a fair and equitable manner based upon assessment of needs and supports.
- Our ability to provide effective services and keep our consumers healthy and safe is compromised with every budget reduction that takes place.
- The method for distribution of Medicaid and other funds is not equal among all of the CMHs throughout the state. The message we want to make clear is that the public mental health system needs to be equitably and adequately funded.

When you are speaking with or writing your state legislators remember the value of sharing your personal story. How have the budgets reductions affected you, your family or someone you know? Sharing your personal story will help make change happen.

If you need assistance communicating with your legislator please contact CMH Customer Services at 616-494-5545 or by email: cmhcustomerservices@miottawa.org.

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