

Customer Communicator



MDHHS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL UPDATES

In August 2025, MDHHS issued a Request For Proposal (RFP) seeking to replace the Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs) through a competitive bidding process. The structure of the RFP, if implemented, would effectively end existing PIHP arrangements under the Michigan Mental Health Code, as well as make it impossible for Community Mental Health (CMH) agencies to fulfill their legal roles. After thoughtful and careful consideration, SWMBH joined two other PIHPs and three CMHs in filing a lawsuit challenging the lawfulness of the RFP, in an effort to protect and defend the public behavioral health system.

Two hearings have been held as part of the lawsuit. The first hearing occurred on October 9, 2025. Following that hearing, Judge Yates issued an Order determining three things:

- 1) MDHHS has the authority to competitively procure the PIHP system;
- 2) MDHHS has the authority to unilaterally reduce the number of PIHP regions from ten to three; and
- 3) There remains a genuine issue of material fact as to whether specific provisions of the RFP violate law.

The second hearing was held December 8-10, 2025, to determine if and how the RFP violates law, specifically, portions of the Michigan Mental Health Code. Following that hearing, Judge Yates issued an Order determining that “the RFP, as drafted, impermissibly conflicts with Michigan law in numerous respects...”. The Court did not direct the State how it must fix the deficiencies noted. This decision is a win for the public behavioral health system. While we wait to see how MDHHS will comply with the Court’s Order, we continue in our willingness to work in partnership with MDHHS and other stakeholders on system improvements that protect and benefit the people we serve.

The Court Orders can be found using the following links:

October Court Order: [2025-10-14-25-000143-mb-25-order-20251014-opinion-and-order.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/records/2025-10-14-25-000143-mb-25-order-20251014-opinion-and-order.pdf)

December Court Order: [2026-01-08-25-000143-mb-72-order-20260108-opinion-order-25-143.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/records/2026-01-08-25-000143-mb-72-order-20260108-opinion-order-25-143.pdf)

On January 29, 2026, the Michigan Department of Technology Management and Budget (DTMB) formally cancelled the RFP. DTMB is the agency responsible for State of Michigan procurement processes. SWMBH applauds the cancellation, and continues in our willingness to partner with MDHHS to ensure a public behavioral health system that ensures quality care to the members served and supported by it.





UPDATES TO OUR HANDBOOK

We are updating our handbook. We need to let you know when we make major changes. You can find our new handbook online or in printed copy on or after February 1, 2026.

- Updates to our service array and definitions.
- Updated terms in Person-Centered Planning.

If you need help to get a handbook, please call 1-800-890-3712.



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COMPLIANCE AND YOU!

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health's (SWMBH) team works hard to make sure your health records stay private and are handled correctly, following the law. Here are some things we check for:

- A provider charging for care you did not receive.
- A provider giving and charging for services you do not need (when they are not "medically necessary").
- Not billing your main insurance before billing Medicaid.

You can help stop fraud and abuse by:

- Checking that the dates and times on a provider's timesheet are correct before signing.
- Keeping your benefit information private and not sharing it with others.

If you know or suspect any fraud, waste, or abuse you can report it to our team. You can call our Compliance Hotline at 1-800-783-0914. You can email us at swmbhcompliance@swmbh.org.





DID YOU KNOW?

That you have the right to be treated with dignity and respect? To get help fast and in a respectful way?

That you can ask for a description of your provider payment agreements?

If you have impaired hearing or English is not your first language, and you would like an interpreter, we will give you one at no cost? If you need paperwork in Spanish or other formats (Braille, audio), you can get these from your local customer service staff?

That if you have special needs or need physical help, we will help you fill out and understand paperwork?

That you can share your complaints about the care you receive? That you can ask to appeal a service decision you disagree with?

That you may use an advocate (people who will help you) whenever you feel you need one? This could be a family member or a community agency.

To choose who will provide your care?

To be free from restraint or seclusion as coercion, discipline, provider convenience, or retribution?

Minors 14 years old and older can get mental health services up to 12 sessions or 4 months of service without parent consent?

To have a second opinion from staff within or outside our provider network, at no cost to you?

We do not use money to encourage any barriers to care. We do not encourage under or over using services. We do not reward providers or staff for denying care. All service decisions are based on the coverage and medical need for care. Decisions on based on the individual case and state guidelines.

If you have questions, please call 1 (800) 890-3712 to reach our customer service team at Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health. You can call your local customer service staff. Their contact information is also in this newsletter.

FIND SWMBH ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

Connect and follow us on Facebook and Instagram to get updates about what is going on in the region and state. The latest news, the SWMBH quarterly Member Newsletter, insights, and updates on behavioral health events and activities are regularly posted. Follow us on:

Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/SWMBH>

Instagram at: www.instagram.com/swmbh2014



GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

What is a “Grievance”?

A grievance can be filed verbally or in writing at any time. We want to know your concerns. We want to make sure you get the best care possible. For mental health, file concerns with customer service at your local community mental health service program (CMHSP). If you are a substance use disorder customer, you can file concerns with Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH).

Customer Service will make sure the right people are aware of your concerns. They will help make changes and/or fix the problem if they are able to. You will receive a letter confirming receipt of your concerns. You will get a second letter with the results of your grievance within **90 days of filing**.

What is a local “Appeal”?

A local appeal is a process to review an action taken to change your care. This could be a decision to deny, stop, pause, or lower your services. If a change happens, you will get a written notice about what is happening. An appeal is a local review of the action. You can ask for this if you disagree with the change. You have the right to appeal if a service request decision is not made on time. You also have appeal rights if your services do not start within 14 days of the date you agreed to. **You have 60 calendar days from the mailing date of the Adverse Benefit Determination to request an Appeal.**

A decision will be made as quickly as possible, but no longer than **30 calendar days** from the date you filed the appeal. You can ask for a fast (“expedited”) appeal if taking the 30 days could seriously harm your health or ability to regain function. Fast appeals are decided within 72 hours from the date and time you filed.

What is a “State Fair Hearing”?

You can file a request for a state fair hearing if a local appeal is denied or if a decision is not made on time for an appeal.

You must ask the state for this hearing within **120 days** from getting notice of an appeal denial. Customer Service staff can also help you file a request for a state fair hearing. Call your local Customer Service staff if you have questions.

You can find more information in our Customer Handbook that you were given when starting services. If you need a new copy, call your local Customer Service staff, or call SWMBH Customer Service at 1-800-890-3712.

SWMBH and your local CMHSP will provide reasonable assistance to help you fill out forms, link to interpreter services and toll-free numbers that have adequate TTY/TTD and interpreter capability.



PRIVACY AND YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

You have the right to have information about your behavioral health care kept private. If you receive substance use care, you have certain rights related to the privacy of substance use records. Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH) has a Notice of Confidentiality and Privacy Practices that describes your rights and how we can use your health information. This Notice can be found on our website at <https://www.swmbh.org/members/member-documents-from-swmbh/>. You can ask for a copy to be sent to you. You can call Customer Service at 1-800-890-3712 or email us at customerservice@swmbh.org.

You have the following rights:

- You have the right to review and to get a copy of your health records.
- You can ask us to limit the way we use or share your health information. We do not have to agree to your request except in a few circumstances.
- You can ask us to alter or fix information in your health record. We do not have to agree to your request. If we do not agree we will tell you why in writing.
- You can ask for private communications.
- You can ask for a list of who we have shared your health information with. We are not required to track this information for certain types of uses and disclosures.
- You have a right to choose someone to act for you.
- You have a right to get a Notice of Privacy Practices from any provider where you receive care.
- You have a right to file a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.

We may use or share your health information to:

- Help manage your health care treatment
- Run our organization
- Pay for your health services
- Manage your health plan
- Help with public health and safety issues
- Do research
- Follow the law
- Follow up with requests under a Release of Information that you signed

If you have questions about the privacy of your health information, you can call our Compliance team at 1-800-783-0914 or email swmbhcompliance@swmbh.org.



GRIEVANCE AND APPEALS OVERVIEW

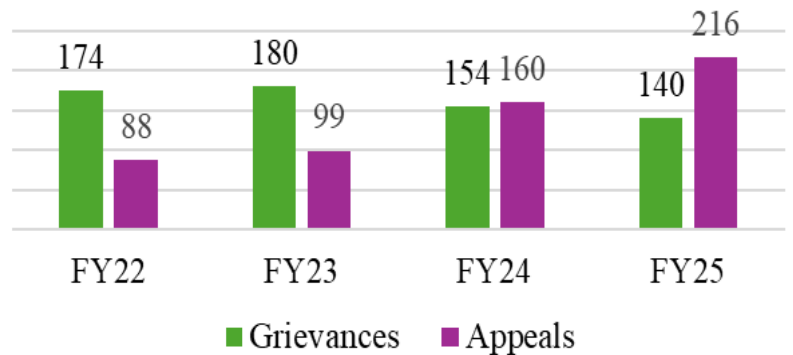
The data collected from this past fiscal year (October 2024-September 2025) includes all 8 Community Mental Health (CMH) agencies and cases filed with Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH) directly. In our region, we review Medicaid and Healthy Michigan Plan grievance and appeal data every few months.

Together, we processed 140 grievances (complaints) in Fiscal Year 2025. Of these, 93 complaints were about interactions with staff, and 21 complaints were about access and availability of care.

This past year, we finished a record number of appeals. Of the 216 appeal cases filed, 89 upheld the original action, 112 reversed the original action, and 15 cases were considered a split resolution (partially upheld/overturned).

Our region had 9 cases go to a State Fair Hearing with an Administrative Law Judge. Of these cases, 6 were upheld and 3 were dismissed or withdrawn during the hearing process. If you have questions or would like to learn more about grievances or appeals, please call Customer Service at 1-800-890-3712 or email us at: customerservice@swmbh.org.

Number of Grievances and Appeals by Fiscal Year



COPING WITH SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

Many people go through short periods when they feel sad or unlike their usual selves. Sometimes, these mood changes begin and end when the seasons change. Many people feel "down" or have the "winter blues" when the days get shorter in the fall and winter and feel better in the spring when longer daylight hours return. Sometimes, these mood changes are more serious and can affect how a person feels, thinks, and behaves. If you have noticed significant changes in your mood and behavior when the seasons change, you may be experiencing seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

In most cases, Seasonal Affective Disorder symptoms start in late fall or early winter and go away during the spring and summer, known as winter-pattern SAD or winter depression. Other people experience depressive symptoms during the spring and summer months, known as summer-pattern SAD or summer depression. Summer-pattern SAD is less common.

What are the signs and symptoms of SAD?

SAD is a type of depression characterized by a recurrent seasonal pattern, with symptoms lasting about 4–5 months out of the year. The signs and symptoms of SAD include those associated with depression as well as disorder-specific symptoms that differ for winter-pattern versus summer-pattern SAD. Not every person with SAD experiences all the symptoms listed below. Learn about [signs and symptoms of depression](#).

Symptoms of depression can include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood most of the day, nearly every day, for at least 2 weeks
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of irritability, frustration, or restlessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue, or feeling slowed down
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Changes in sleep or appetite or unplanned weight changes
- Physical aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not have a clear physical cause and do not go away with treatment

For winter-pattern SAD, additional symptoms can include:

- Oversleeping (hypersomnia)
- Overeating, particularly with a craving for carbohydrates, leading to weight gain
- Social withdrawal (feeling like “hibernating”)

For summer-pattern SAD, additional symptoms can include:

- Trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- Poor appetite, leading to weight loss
- Restlessness and agitation
- Anxiety
- Violent or aggressive behavior
- Thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts



STATE OPIOID RESPONSE GRANT

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 (SUD), 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 are some examples of what SOR was able to accomplish.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the SOR grant provided the following in our region:

- 4,860 middle school students, high school students, and adults received intensive education through Evidence Based Practice Prevention Programs.
- 3,793 individuals received Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution with Harm Reduction training on how to prevent opioid overdose deaths.
- 12,100 Naloxone (the medication used to reverse an opioid overdose) kits were distributed.
- 106 overdose reversals occurred.
- 2,205 individuals with either an opioid use disorder or stimulant use disorder received contingency management, case management, or peer recovery coaching services.
- 5,340 individuals met with peer recovery coaches at outreach events and engagement centers.
- 3,233 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.
- 389 individuals received support from a peer recovery coach while staying at a recovery home (a sober living environment).
- 161 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.

NEW CONTRACTED PROVIDERS

Barry County

Turning Leaf Woodlea Cottage
ROI Lawrence Autism Center
Turning Leaf – Hickory Cottage
Applied Behavioral Science Institution

Calhoun County

FaithDracut LLC
Advisacare
Maxine's Place
Res-Care Premier Center Woods

Berrien County

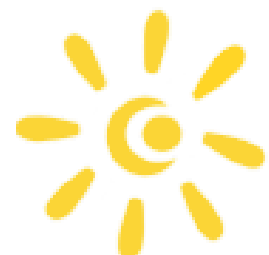
Hiltan Group Home
Turning Leaf Behavioral Health Services Cottage II

Van Buren County

Healing Together LLC

Branch County

Hiltan Group Home
Turning Leaf Behavioral Health Services Birch Cottage II



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 him/her to harm self or another.
- his/her inability to meet his/her basic needs he/she is at risk of harm.
- the person’s judgment is so impaired that he/she is unable to understand the need for treatment and that his/her condition is expected to result in harm to him/herself 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:

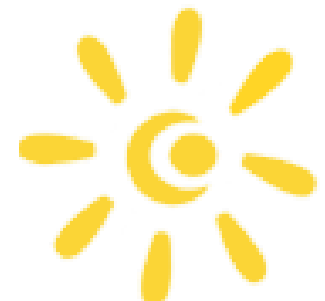
Barry County	269-948-8041 or 1-866-266-4781
Berrien County	269-925-0585 or 1-800-336-0341
Branch County	517-279-1193 or 1-888-725-7534
Calhoun County	269-966-1460 or 1-800-632-5449
Cass County	269-445-2451 or 1-800-323-0335
Kalamazoo County	269-373-6000 or 1-888-373-6200
St Joseph County	269-467-1000 or 1-800-622-3967
Van Buren County	269-657-5574 or 1-800-922-1418



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/or medication reviews. Prior to the end of your emergency-level care, your local CMH will help you to coordinate your post-stabilization services.



PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH

Organized by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM)! The 2026 theme is 'Caring Communities, Stronger Futures', which focuses on the importance of community-driven approaches to problem gambling awareness and support.

- Every year an estimated 2.5 million US adults (1%) meet the criteria for severe gambling problems.
 - 20 million US adults (8%) reported experiencing at least one indicator of problematic gambling behavioral “many times” in the past year.
- Michigan currently has 41 casinos. 3 commercial casinos, 15 online casinos and 23 Tribal casinos.
 - Total 2024 statewide commercial casino gaming revenue was ~\$4.19 billion. This is a 17.1% increase from 2023.
- The Michigan Problem Gambling Helpline, 1-800-270-7117, has trained and experienced counselors available 24/7. They provide immediate assistance to callers by screening for gambling disorder and referring them to treatment.
- Problem gambling costs Americans approximately \$14 billion dollars a year. This includes job loss, bankruptcy, gambling-related healthcare expenses, and other consequences.
 - Individuals with gambling disorder/problem with gambling are 15 times more likely to complete suicide than the general population.

Let's work together to build positive and supportive communities for those struggling with gambling.

Tips for Safe and Responsible Gambling

- The House always wins – the odds of the casino winning your money are greater than the odds of you winning the casino's money. Casinos are a business and businesses need money to succeed.
- Unlink all credit cards and payment methods from gambling sites and apps.
- Give someone you trust the ability to change settings in phones to require a password to download and purchase apps. You can also allow them to monitor your spending habits to ensure you are not overspending.
- Limit alcohol and substance intake while gambling. It can impair your thinking and decision-making skills.
- Only gamble with money you have budgeted out – never borrow money or use money that is set aside for necessities (rent or groceries)
- Practice self-exclusion. Self-exclusion allows a person to be banned from legalized gambling in person or online in your state or area. Visit the Michigan Gaming Control Board website for [Self-Exclusion Forms](#) and more information.

Resources:

[FAQs: What is Problem Gambling? - National Council on Problem Gambling](#)

[What is gambling addiction? | APA](#)

[Gamblers Anonymous](#): You can find local meetings, meetings in Michigan, and virtual meetings.

[Gam-Anon](#): This website contains information for family, friends, and the public to learn more about problem gambling, ways to support someone struggling, and how to communicate the harms of gambling.



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 identification, 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:

- o Qualified sign language interpreters
 - o 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:
- o Qualified interpreters
 - o 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

In order to establish a method for identifying prevalent non-English languages spoken by enrollees and potential enrollees in each PIHP service area the list on the next page is provided. SWMBH provides taglines in the prevalent non-English languages in its particular service area included in the list on the next page.

You have the right to get this information in a different format, such as audio, Braille, or large font due to special needs or in your language at no additional cost. Call us at 1-800-890-3712 (TTY: 711).

[illegible]

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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

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

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 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

**Southwest Michigan
Behavioral Health
(SWMBH)
Customer Service**

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

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

TTY: 711 MRC

Email: customerservice@swmbh.org

**Main Phone: 800-676-0423
Fax: 269-441-1234**

**Monday-Friday
8:00 AM—5:00 PM
Excluding Legal Holidays**

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health

Board Meetings 2026

All meetings are held at the principle office located at:

5250 Lovers Lane Suite 200 Portage, MI 49002

March 13, 2026 (9:30am-11:30am)

April 10, 2026 (9:30am-11:30am)

May 8, 2026 (9:30am-10:30am)

May 8, 2026 (10:30am-3:00pm) Board Planning Session

Our 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.



**"Quality and Excellence
through Partnerships"**