



July 2026, Volume 36

Customer Communicator



SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH AND SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

National Recovery and Suicide Awareness and Prevention months are observed September 1st through September 30th, 2026.

National Recovery Month

Recovery Month promotes and supports new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the nation's strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and communities who make recovery possible.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) aims to increase public awareness surrounding mental health and addiction recovery and reduce the stigma. In the years since Recovery Month launched, SAMHSA has timed announcements of initiatives and grant funding during Recovery Month, while collaborating with private and public entities to celebrate individuals during their long-term recovery.

To find out what is happening in your local community, reach out to your Community Mental Health provider.

Suicide Awareness Month

Mental Health challenges do not affect adults only—children can struggle too. Early recognition and effective treatment can be life changing. Communities and organizations come together for the month of September to bring awareness and shed light where darkness exists. In the dawn of despair there is hope. Suicide is a complex combination of factors, such as mental illness, substance use, chronic illness, trauma painful losses, exposure to violence, and social isolation.

If you are in a mental health crisis and need help. You can dial 988 and a qualified professional will help you to get the care you need. You can also call Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health and speak with a Care Manager at 1 (800) 781-0353. To learn about the warning signs of suicide click the link at <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/suicidal-behavior/warning-signs>



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.

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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

WHO IS SWMBH?

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH) is a benefits manager for mental health and substance use care. We are contracted by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to manage this care in the counties of Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren. Our processes follow all federal and state rules.

SWMBH does not use financial incentives to encourage barriers to care and services and/or decisions that result in underutilization. SWMBH does not reward practitioners, or other individuals conducting utilization reviews 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.

We are usually open from 8AM-5PM, Monday through Friday. If you leave a message, we will get back with you on or within the next business day. All calls during weekends and holidays will be returned on the next business day.

SWMBH provides information and resources to customers on their website, Facebook, and Instagram pages.

<https://www.swmbh.org/>

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

<www.instagram.com/swmbh2014>

SWMBH provides quarterly newsletters for customers. To get a copy of the newsletter by mail or email please call us at 1-800-890-3712. You can also find the newsletter online at <https://www.swmbh.org/>.

How to reach us:

Customer Service: 1-800-890-3712; TTY: 711 (MRC)

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

Compliance Hot Line: 1-800-783-0914



NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES FOR SUBSTANCE USE

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH) is committed to keeping your health and service data private. We are required by law to protect your data as much as possible. For Substance Use services, there are strict rules about what we can share, who we can share it with, and when it can be shared.

- You should be offered our Substance Use Privacy Practices when you start substance use care with one of our providers.
- You can find this notice on our website (<https://www.swmbh.org/members/member-documents-from-swmbh/>).
- You can call Customer Service at 1-800-890-3712 to ask for a mailed copy.

If you feel your privacy rights have been violated, call our Privacy Officer at 1-800-783-0914. You can also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights. No one can retaliate against you for sharing your concerns.



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 interpreter services and toll-free numbers that have adequate TTY/TTD and interpreter capability.

NEW PROVIDERS IN SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NETWORK

Barry County

Turning Leaf-Red Pak Cottage

Berrien County

NRM. LLC-Brairfield

Hope Network-Neo Grand Rapids

Positive Behavior Supports Corporation (ABA Provider)

Calhoun County

Heritage Haven Homes

Harmony Gardens Music Therapy

Van Buren

Positive Behavior Supports Corporation (ABA Provider)

Our Haus on Main & Our Haus on Monroe sites

Community living Supports & Personal Care in a residential setting



EMERGENCY SERVICES

A "mental health emergency" is when a person has thoughts or actions that may cause harm to themselves or others soon. It can also mean the person cannot take care of their basic needs, putting them at risk. It could mean they cannot make decisions well enough to know they need help. Their actions might lead to harm for themselves or someone else soon.

If you have a mental health emergency, get help right away. You can call the emergency number for your local Community Mental Health (CMH) office. You can go to any hospital with emergency care. You can call 911. If you have a medical crisis and cannot get to a hospital, call 911 right away.

At any time during the day or night, call:

Barry County	269-948-8041 or 1-800-873-0511
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 into any CMH office during open hours and ask for help with a crisis.

You have the right to get emergency help at any time, without needing pre-approval to pay for it. You can go to any hospital or other place that offers this type of care.

Aftercare

After you get emergency mental health care, you may get more help to make sure you stay safe and feel better. This could include staying at a crisis center, having a case manager, going to therapy and/or getting help with medications. Before you leave emergency care, your local CMH will help you plan for aftercare.

COMING SOON! 2026 Member Experiences with Services Survey

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health's (SWMBH) Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey will be open from August through September 2026.

As in previous years, the survey will be available electronically. Survey links will be sent out by email and text message and will also be posted on the Community Mental Health (CMH) and SWMBH websites. Paper copies of the survey will be available at your local CMH office, also.

Be sure to look for posters at your local CMH location, where you can scan a QR code with your phone to access the survey quickly and easily.

We greatly value your feedback and want to hear about your experiences with the services you have received. Your input helps us improve and better serve our communities. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts



HOW TO RECOGNIZE OPIOID OVERDOSE

Opioid overdose is life-threatening and requires immediate emergency attention. Recognizing the signs of opioid overdose is essential to saving lives.

Call 911 immediately if a person exhibits ANY of the following symptoms:

- Their face is extremely pale and/or feels clammy to the touch
- Their body goes limp
- Their fingernails or lips have a purple or blue color
- They start vomiting or making gurgling noises
- They cannot be awakened or are unable to speak
- Their breathing or heartbeat slows or stops

How to Reverse Opioid Overdose

Family members, caregivers, or the people who spend time with individuals using opioids need to know how to recognize the signs of an overdose and how to administer life-saving services until emergency medical help arrives. Individuals experiencing an opioid overdose will not be able to reverse it themselves. Naloxone was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as the first over the counter medication to prevent opioid overdose. Check with your healthcare provider, pharmacy, community-based distribution programs, local public health organizations or the local health departments on how to obtain naloxone in your state.

If you suspect someone is experiencing an opioid overdose, take action immediately:

- **Call 911**
- [Begin CPR](#) if the person has stopped breathing or if breathing is very weak (best performed by someone who has training)
- Treat the person with [naloxone or nalmefene](#) to reverse opioid overdose (if available)

Opioid Overdose Causes

An opioid overdose can occur when a person:

- Overdoses on an illicit opioid drug, such as heroin or morphine
- Overdoses on methadone
- Accidentally takes an extra dose
- Deliberately misuses a prescription opioid or opioid-based pain medication in way that was not as prescribed by their physician
- Mixes opioids with other prescriptions, alcohol, or over-the-counter medications. Overdoses can be fatal when mixing an opioid with anxiety treatment medications or derivatives of Benzodiazepine, such as Xanax or valium.
- Uses medication prescribed for someone else. Children are particularly vulnerable to accidental overdoses if they take medication not intended for them.

If you or someone you know has a substance use problem. Help is available by calling our confidential phone number at 1 (800) 781-0353.



LONG TERM TREATMENT SUPPORTS

Long-term services and supports (LTSS) assist with an individual's everyday activities of living to help them remain as independent as possible. LTSS services are provided to people of all ages with disabilities, functional limitations, and/or chronic illnesses who need additional support. This is for the primary purpose of supporting the ability of the beneficiary to live or work in the setting of their choice. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) identifies Medicare and Medicaid participants in its Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers as recipients of LTSS. HCBS provides opportunities for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive services in their own home or community rather than institutions or other isolated settings. These programs serve a variety of targeted population groups such as people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, and/or mental illnesses.

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH) and its network serves beneficiaries receiving LTSS through the following HCBS Waivers:

- Children's Waiver Program (CWP)
- Waiver for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances (SED)
- Habilitative Supports Waiver (HSW)
- 915 (i)SPA

SWMBH is dedicated to ensuring the quality and appropriateness of care to all beneficiaries. The assessment of care provided to our LTSS members is evaluated regularly and throughout the year using a variety of methods and activities. Examples of the methods used are performance measure monitoring, survey analysis, and audit activities. Additionally, regulation 42 CFR § 438.66(e) requires states to submit a Managed Care Program Annual Report (MCPAR). As part of the MCPAR reporting, we are required to identify an LTSS user for several reasons. Those reporting requirements are: appeals and/or grievances filed on behalf of LTSS users, the number of critical incidents filed during the reporting period by (or on behalf of) an LTSS user who previously filed an appeal and/or grievance, resolved appeals related to long-term services and supports (LTSS). For this report, an LTSS user is defined as an enrollee who received at least one LTSS service at any point during the reporting year (regardless of whether the enrollee was actively receiving LTSS at the time that the grievance was filed)

To help identify members who are receiving LTSS services, SWMBH identifies beneficiaries who receive the following services as LTSS recipients:

- Care Coordination/Targeted Care Management
- Respite Services
- Community Living Supports (to promote participation in the community)
- Home Modifications
- Nursing Services
- Personal Emergency Response Systems
- Family and Non-Family Training
- Enhanced Pharmacy
- Overnight Health and Safety Supports

Please see this website for more information: [Managed Long-Term Services and Supports \(MLTSS\) \(michigan.gov\)](https://michigan.gov/mltss). Please reach out to SWMBH with any questions about LTSS services, reporting, or assessment of care.

UPDATES TO MEDICAID

There are important and major updates coming to Medicaid/Healthy Michigan Plan. H.R.1 of 2025, also known as “The One Big Beautiful Bill”, was signed into law in July 2025 and makes changes to Medicaid. Michigan is required to implement H.R.1 by January 1, 2027. Some of the major eligibility changes that you should be aware of are outlined below:

New Work Requirements	Six-Month Redeterminations	Retroactive Eligibility Limited	Limits on Non-Citizen Eligibility
- Applies to many Healthy Michigan Plan (HMP) enrollees 19-64. - Must work, train or volunteer at least 80 hours for one month. - Non-compliance will lead to loss of coverage. <u>Effective Date:</u> January 1, 2027	- Eligibility checks for HMP now every six months, instead of annually. - Increased risk of coverage interruptions due to paperwork gaps. <u>Effective Date:</u> January 1, 2027	- No more 90-day retroactive coverage. - HMP: One month prior to application. - Other Medicaid enrollees: Two months prior to application. <u>Effective Date:</u> January 1, 2027	- Fewer pathways to coverage for lawfully present non-citizens. - Affected individuals will lose full coverage → Moving to Emergency Services Only (ESO) coverage. <u>Effective Date:</u> October 1, 2026

Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH) and its Participant Community Mental Health Service Providers (CMHSPs) are reviewing the new requirements and are ready to partner with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to make this implementation as smooth as possible. MDHHS is finalizing its guidance over the next few months, but below is some information we already know about the Work Requirements that go into effect January 1, 2027, for members with Healthy Michigan Plan coverage:

Qualifying Activities	Exemptions	Hardship Exceptions
80 hours per month of: - Work. - Community service. - Participation in a work program. - Half time + enrollment in an education. - Any combination of the above totaling 80 hours per month. - Monthly income that is not less than the federal minimum wage x 80 hours (\$580/month). - Seasonal worker with an average monthly income over the preceding six months that is not less than the federal minimum wage x 80 hours.	Parent, guardian, or caretaker of: - Dependent children under age 13. - Disabled individuals. - Pregnant or postpartum individuals. - Foster youth or former foster youth under age 26. - Medically frail. - Participating in a substance use disorder (SUD) program. - Meeting SNAP/TANF work requirements. - American Indians and Alaska Natives. - Disabled veterans. - Incarcerated or released from incarceration within the past 90 days.	Individuals who were in: - Inpatient hospital. - Nursing facility. - Intermediate care facility. - Inpatient psychiatric hospital. - Individuals who reside in a county with: - A federally-declared emergency or disaster. - High unemployment - above 8% or 1.5x national rate. - Individuals who traveled outside their community for extended medical care for self or dependent.

PEER SUPPORT WORKERS FOR THOSE IN RECOVERY

Who Are Peer Workers?

Peer support workers are people who have been successful in the recovery process who help others experiencing similar situations. Through shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment, peer support workers help people become and stay engaged in the recovery process and reduce the likelihood of relapse. Peer support services can effectively extend the reach of treatment beyond the clinical setting into the everyday environment of those seeking a successful, sustained recovery process.

People with lived experience play key roles in expanding access to recovery and recovery support and are often referred to as peer support workers.

Peer Support Role

Peer support workers engage in a wide range of activities. These include:

- Advocating for people in recovery
- Sharing resources and building skills
- Building community and relationships
- Leading recovery groups
- Mentoring and setting goals
- Peer support roles may also extend to the following:
- Providing services and/or training
- Supervising other peer workers
- Developing resources
- Administering programs or agencies
- Educating the public and policymakers

Peer support workers may need to develop additional competencies to provide services to specific groups who also share common experiences, such as family members. The shared experience of being in recovery from a mental health and/or substance use condition or being a family member is the foundation on which the peer recovery support relationship is built in the behavioral health arena. Find answers to frequently asked questions about core competencies for peer workers in behavioral health services. To learn more about peer related resources visit <https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/recovery/peer-support-workers>.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Recovery Institute Presents the 12th Annual Recovery & Wellness Fair, September 12, 2026, 11:00am-3:00pm
Downtown Kalamazoo Bronson Park

Gryphon Place Suicide Prevention Walk September 19, 2026, 8:00am-12:00pm Downtown Kalamazoo at Bronson Park

12th Annual Walk-A-Mile September 23, 2026, 12:30pm-3:00pm, Lansing MI at the State Capital Bldg.

Calhoun County Veteran Stand-Down October 16, 2026, 9:00am-12:00pm Full Recreation Center at 35 Hamblin Ave, Battle Creek, MI

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

**Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health, 5250 Lovers Lane,
Suite 200, Portage, MI 49002**

August 14, 2026 – 9:30am to 11:30am

September 11, 2026 – 9:30am to 11:30am

October 9, 2026 – 9:30am to 11:30am

November 13, 2026 – 9:30am to 11:30am

December 11, 2026 – 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.**



**"Quality and Excellence
through Partnerships"**