

**SCC Community Services Coordinating Body Meeting
January 21, 2026
SCCCMH 1st Floor Auditorium**

Present:

<u>Chair</u>	Debra Johnson	St. Clair County Community Mental Health
<u>Vice Chair</u>	Scott Crawford	St. Clair County Council on Aging
<u>Staff</u>	Amy Smith	St. Clair County Community Mental Health
	Telly Delor	St. Clair County Community Mental Health
	Cindy Richmond	Blue Water Community Action
	Misty Wojnarowicz	Michigan Department of Health & Human Services
	Mike Weaver	Harbor Impact
	Jennifer Gunderson	RESA / Great Start
	Danielle Eastwood	St. Clair County Juvenile Probation
	Karen Palka	A Beautiful Me
	Eric Norat	Catholic Charities Southeast Michigan
	Major Jenny Ortman	The Salvation Army
	Sherry Archibald	Child Abuse Council
	Alyse Nichols	St. Clair County Health Department
	Jesse Sheldon	City of Port Huron
	Tracy Willard	Hunter Hospitality House
	Mike McCartan	Citizen
	Lisa Stoneberg	Professional Counseling Center
	Kathy Swantek	Citizen
	Sharon Wilton	United Way of St. Clair County
	Renee Pettinger	Blue Water Area Rescue Mission
	Randy Bennett	Operation Transformation
<u>Staff</u>	Gloria Valentin	St. Clair County Community Mental Health

I. Welcome, Introductions

Ms. Debra Johnson called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. and opened the CSCB meeting by introducing herself and welcoming all attendees. She then shared the tragic news of a CMH employee who lost their life in a house fire the previous evening. Pastor Randy Bennett led the group in prayer, followed by a moment of silence. Ms. Johnson concluded by inviting all attendees to introduce themselves and their respective organizations. Ms. Patti Samar then took the stage and introduced herself as the editor and publisher of Blue Water Magazine. She shared that she was attending the meeting to announce some exciting news. Ms. Samar explained that each year the magazine recognizes a local woman for her outstanding service and contributions to the community. She then announced that Amy Smith has been selected as the Blue Water Woman Community Services Leader of the Year. Mr. Samar then shared that a formal celebration will be held at the McMorrin Theater on Wednesday, March 11. Additional details will be forthcoming, and attendees are encouraged to save the date. Tickets are expected to go on sale in the coming weeks.

II. Agenda Changes

Ms. Debra Johnson asked the guests if there were any changes to the agenda. Ms. Amy Smith requested an agenda modification, noting that due to recent inclement weather in the region, warming stations were opened throughout the community. Ms. Smith indicated she would provide additional details later in the meeting. With no further agenda changes, the meeting proceeded as scheduled.

III. **Acceptance of September and November Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Debra Johnson requested approval of the September and November meeting minutes. Mr. Scott Shine made a motion to approve the minutes, and Ms. Misty Wojnarowicz seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the September and November meeting minutes were approved.

IV. **Emerging Issues**

A. #TeamPortHuron

Mr. Jesse Sheldon addressed attendees and provided an overview of #TeamPortHuron, a City of Port Huron community initiative and live platform designed to connect residents with local volunteer and service opportunities. He explained that the program serves as a community hub, linking individuals with organizations to promote civic engagement and support future-focused community growth. Mr. Sheldon invited those interested in getting involved to visit www.teamporthuron.com for more information. He also noted that while the city promotes this initiative, the hashtag may sometimes be used in connection with local sports teams or other community groups focused on enhancing the Port Huron area. Mr. Sheldon encouraged attendees to watch the public announcement by City of Port Huron Mayor Mr. James Freed about #TeamPortHuron, which is scheduled to take place on June 28 at the State of the City address.

Ms. Debra Johnson took a moment after Mr. Jesse Sheldon to thank Harbor Impact Ministries for hosting the CSCB Full Body meeting today. Ms. Johnson invited attendees if they have never been here and would like to see a tour of the facility and find out more about Harbor Impact Ministries to see Mr. Mike Weaver after the meeting. He will be providing a free tour. Ms. Johnson also thanked Mr. Chris Urban and Free Methodist Church for their hospitality as well.

B. Nation / State / Local Issues

State - Ms. Debra Johnson thanked all attendees and their respective organizations for submitting letters to legislators and for participating in call-to-action advocacy efforts regarding the competitive MDHHS procurement process. She expressed appreciation for their collective engagement and support.

Ms. Telly Delor then took the floor to provide an update on the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Request for Proposal (RFP) regarding the competitive bidding of the administration of Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHP) and its status. Ms. Delor reminded attendees that in 2025, MDHHS issued an RFP proposing to reduce Michigan's PIHP structure from 10 regions to three, which would allow a broader range of entities, including private organizations, to bid to manage these functions. She further explained that Community Mental Health Service Programs (CMHSPs), including SCCCMH, filed suit because the RFP, as written, would have prevented CMHSPs from fulfilling key legal responsibilities required under the Michigan Mental Health Code.

Ms. Delor shared positive news that on January 8, Judge Christopher Yates of the Michigan Court of Claims issued a written opinion regarding the RFP. The court ruled that the RFP violated Michigan law because it interfered with CMHSPs' ability to carry out their statutory duties. Specifically, the court found that the RFP unlawfully restricted CMHSPs from entering into the financial contracts necessary to perform managed-care functions. The court issued a declaratory ruling requiring that the RFP be brought into compliance with Michigan law. Ms. Delor explained that while the judge did not halt the RFP, the decision places responsibility with MDHHS to address and correct the issues identified by the court. The court further affirmed that CMHSPs must have adequate Medicaid funding, the authority to contract with providers to ensure recipient

rights protections, and the ability to meet their legal obligations under the Michigan Mental Health Code.

Ms. Delor concluded by encouraging attendees to continue engaging with their legislators and to ensure they understand that, while the organization is not opposed to system changes, it is important to preserve local control and protect the rights of the individuals served.

National – Ms. Debra Johnson addressed the recent federal cuts to substance use funding and mental health services that were issued by the President. She reported that within 24 to 48 hours, those cuts were reversed as a result of coordinated national advocacy efforts. She noted that this outcome underscores the importance of continued community, state, and national involvement in advocacy initiatives.

Local – Ms. Cindy Richmond provided an update on recent federal budget developments. She explained that for fiscal year (FY) 2026, Congress did not complete all federal appropriations bills prior to October 1, 2025, start of the fiscal year, resulting in a lapse in funding and a temporary government shutdown. A continuing resolution (CR) was subsequently enacted to fund most federal agencies at FY 2025 levels through January 30, 2026. Ms. Richmond noted that frequent continuing resolutions and delayed appropriations create funding uncertainty for Community Action Agencies (CAAs), making it challenging to plan services, manage staffing, and maintain consistent support for the communities they serve. She further shared that the President’s FY 2026 budget proposal initially eliminated funding for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). National Community Action advocates strongly opposed the proposal, emphasizing that the loss of CSBG funding would significantly undermine local initiatives and essential community-based services.

Ms. Cindy Richmond also briefly addressed documentation changes that took effect on October 1 for several programs. She explained that updated requirements now mandate proof of citizenship for clients seeking services. Households are encouraged to provide Social Security cards for all members, birth certificates, and a valid photo identification for each household member age 18 and older. In addition, original documents must be presented to verify authenticity and prevent fraud; photocopies are not accepted. Ms. Richmond noted that the organization will continue to monitor guidance and implement updates related to these new requirements.

Ms. Debra Johnson also provided an update regarding the recent acquisition of the SONS property located at 3001 Electric Avenue. She shared that they have been working closely with the Community Foundation on the potential sale of a portion of the property. The long-term vision for the site includes the development of cottage-style homes. Ms. Johnson added that they are collaborating with the city to address zoning, permitting, and other regulatory requirements necessary for construction. If timelines proceed as anticipated, development could begin within approximately one year. Stay tuned for some very exciting news at the next meeting.

The next local update was provided by Ms. Alyse Nichols from the St. Clair County Health Department. She reported that by late summer, around September 1, the Health Department closed several smaller school-based clinic locations and consolidated services into a centralized model. The Teen Health Clinic at Port Huron High School became the primary site for adolescent health services under this new structure. This consolidation was part of operational changes implemented by the department’s medical leadership to streamline service delivery across the county. Following the closures, the Port Huron clinic served as the main point of care, ensuring continuity of services after the smaller sites were consolidated throughout the summer of 2025.

Clinics consolidated or closed by September 1 included smaller, school-based locations outside of Port Huron, such as those in Yale, Algonac, Capac, and Marysville, which were integrated into the centralized clinic model to improve efficiency and accessibility.

V. **Organizational Presentations**

A. The Athletic Factory

Mr. Cliff Thomason provided an overview of The Athletic Factory, a nonprofit organization in Port Huron, MI, dedicated to the development of student-athletes. Founded in 2017, it serves youth in St. Clair and surrounding counties by bridging the gap between athletic competition and academic achievement.

Core Programs & Services

- **Athletic Training & Leagues:** Offers specialized skills training for basketball and volleyball, including travel programs and "Biddy Ball" for younger children (grades 1–2).
- **Academic Support:** Provides free after-school tutoring, SAT/ACT test preparation, and assistance with FAFSA completion and NCAA/NAIA eligibility.
- **Specialty Offerings:** Includes a golf simulator program for year-round practice and a recently launched esports program.
- **Community Initiatives:** Operates a "Summer Get Out and Play" program and partners with local schools like the **East Shore Leadership Academy** for after-school activities.

Mr. Thomason also shared that they are excited and fully prepared to launch this initiative in partnership with St. Clair County Community Mental Health. He explained that TAG in St. Clair County stands for the Teen Advisory Group, a youth leadership and advocacy committee focused on promoting mental health awareness and encouraging meaningful community engagement. Today, we are joined by Joshua Kriesch, a senior at Yale High School, who will provide our members with an overview of the Teen Advisory Group.

What the Teen Advisory Group Is

- **Organized by:** St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH).
- **Purpose:** Provide a dedicated space for high school students across St. Clair County to share their perspectives on mental health, help shape outreach and support efforts, and plan or lead related initiatives.
- **Goal:** Amplify youth voices in conversations about mental wellness not just advise adults but lead or co-lead projects that matter to teens.

What TAG members do

- **Monthly Meetings:** Members meet regularly (typically monthly) to discuss priorities and plan work.
- **Mental Health Campaigns:** They contribute to youth focused awareness campaigns, including social media content and community messaging.
- **Media Projects:** TAG has been involved in producing content such as short radio segments ("Mental Health Minutes") and is working on launching a podcast to discuss issues like resilience, stress, and everyday teen life.
- **Resource Development:** The group is helping create digital resource pages and other tools that schools can share with students for easier access to mental health information.
- **School Engagement:** Members collaborate with local schools to integrate brief "mental health moments" into announcements and other regular communication.

Who Can Join

- Open to any high school student (ages ~14–18) who lives or attends school in St. Clair County.
- Each school in the county may send up to two representatives.
- Students usually apply in the spring for the following year's group
-

Skills & Benefits

- Participation in TAG helps students build:
- Leadership and advocacy skills
- Communication and project planning experience
- Collaboration with peers across different schools
- Real impact on local mental health programming

Mr. Cliff Thomason provided attendees with a PowerPoint packet and flyers with more details and information about The Athletic Factory and TAG. If anyone is interested in The Athletic Factory please visit www.theathleticfactory.org.

B. MDHHS

Ms. Debra Johnson noted that two presentations had been scheduled for today. She advised that the MDHHS presentation will now take place at the next Full Body meeting on March 18.

VI. CSCB Updates

A. Steering Committee

a. 2026 MOU's & Dues

Ms. Amy Smith reminded attendees that the Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) were mailed in December. She requested that any organization that has not yet returned a signed MOU or initiated payment of its dues please do so at its earliest convenience. Organizations that are unsure whether CMH has received their documentation, or that requires a replacement packet, are encouraged to follow up with Ms. Amy Smith or her secretary, Ms. Gloria Valentin, after the meeting.

b. Expanding Membership

Ms. Amy Smith shared that the updated CSCB Organizational Chart, revised in November, is included in today's meeting packet. She explained that membership dues directly support the staffing necessary to sustain the ongoing work of the CSCB. Ms. Smith noted that increasing membership would not only enhance the diversity of the CSCB and expand networking opportunities but could also potentially contribute to reducing membership dues in 2027. She encouraged members to review the current membership list, think broadly about potential partners, and consider referring businesses, organizations, or entities that value collaboration.

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for **Monday, February 26 at CMH.**

B. Workgroup updates

a. Early Childhood

Ms. Jennifer Gunderson provided an update about the 2026 State Budget cuts. They eliminated Great Start Collaborative (GSC), Family Coalition (GSFC), Home Visiting, and Imagination. Removing critical early childhood infrastructure and significantly limiting families access to coordinated support. These cuts will result in home visiting programs ending in June, with a focus on smooth transitions and sharing available resources. Playgroups will continue through

the summer and may exceed through 2027. The GSFC held their final meeting in December at the Discovery City Museum.

- The Family Liaison – in the process of completing the 2026 Summer Fun Guide.
- SCC Early Childhood Family Resources padlet – is an online bulletin board for early childhood information, parenting tools, family event flyer, community support, and more. Visit <https://padlet.com/SCCFamilyResources/SCCFR> .
- Community Baby Shower – was held on October 14 and 54 moms, 36 guests, 27 vendors, and a panel of 6 shared their top tips relevant to pregnant moms.
- Great Start Home Visiting – earned Blue Ribbon status from Parents as Teachers, the nation’s evidence-based home visiting model.
- Literacy – the newest Talking is Teaching space has been set up at the Salvation Army in Port Huron.
- Help Me Grow – the Help Me Grow referral system is transitioning from the Early Childhood HUB to www.MiEarlyChildhood.org . All users should contact Riley Alley at Alley.Riley@sccresa.org to set up an account and complete brief training. The current HUB was shut down December 31st.
- Preschool – the 2026/2027 application is now available online at www.sccresa.org enrollment begins in February.
- Next meeting will be on **Monday, February 26th**. See update included in packet provided for more information and details.

b. Housing Workgroup

Ms. Kathy Swantek introduced Ms. Cindy Redmond, who provided an update on the upcoming Statewide Point-in-Time (PIT) Count scheduled for Wednesday, January 28.

Ms. Redmond explained that each January, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires every state to conduct a comprehensive count of individuals experiencing homelessness. In Michigan, the effort is coordinated by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), with local coordination led by the Housing & Support Services Workgroup (HSSW) under the CSCB.

To ensure the count accurately reflects the current housing landscape in St. Clair County, Ms. Redmond emphasized the critical role of community partners. Surveys will be conducted in person at homeless shelters, senior centers, food pantries, walk-in clinics, soup kitchens, counseling centers, hospitals, 24-hour establishments, and other human service agencies. Outreach will also include individuals who are temporarily staying with friends or family to avoid homelessness or shelter entry. In addition, the HSSW aims to gather data on individuals who are precariously housed, including those who are doubled up or “couch surfing.”

Volunteers will conduct a street count to identify individuals who may be living or sleeping outdoors. There is a seven-day reporting window following the PIT Count. Individuals may be surveyed at any time during that period, provided they were experiencing homelessness on the night of January 28.

PIT Count information and a copy of the survey tool are included in today's meeting packet. Questions or concerns may be directed to Ms. Bernie Newby at bnewby@bwcaa.org or 810-982-8541. Completed surveys must be returned by Monday, February 9, 2026, and may be submitted via email, fax (810-982-7233), or mailed to Blue Water Community Action, Attn: Bernie Newby, 3403 Lapeer Rd., Port Huron, MI 48060.

Ms. Kathy Swantek then provided an update on the Housing & Support Services Workgroup's upcoming event. She shared that the Community Resource Fair (CRF) is fast approaching, and the CRF Planning Committee has already established its meeting schedule. The event will be held on Wednesday, May 26, at the Fieldhouse at St. Clair County Community College.

Included in today's packet is the planning meeting calendar, draft sponsor letter, vendor information materials, and the vendor questionnaire to be completed at the conclusion of the event. Ms. Swantek noted that any questions regarding the Community Resource Fair may be directed to Ms. Lori Gauthier at lgauthier@scccmh.org or Ms. Amy Smith at asmith@scccmh.org. She concluded by thanking everyone in advance for their continued support of this important community event.

Lastly Ms. Renee Pettinger introduced the new Executive Director of Blue Water Area Rescue Mission, Mr. Demetri Stafford. The next HSSW meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 14th at CMH**. See included in your packet detailed information and flyer about upcoming events.

c. Substance Use Disorder PTR

Ms. Nicole Flecher provided a brief update on SUPTR. She shared that the next SUPTR meeting will feature a speaker from the Overdose Prevention Engagement Network (OPEN), an organization dedicated to improving lives and reducing the harms associated with substance use. OPEN partners with individuals, communities, and organizations to provide education and resources that strengthen person-centered prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.

She reminded attendees that the next SUPTR meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 11, at CMH**, and encouraged anyone interested in learning more about emerging opioids, as well as available programs, resources, and upcoming events, to attend.

d. Adolescent Services

Ms. Karen Palka shared that one of the Adolescent Services Workgroups 2026 goals is to review and update the Adolescent Resource Guide, with the process anticipated to begin in February. A copy of the current guide was provided for member review, and attendees were asked to identify any updates or corrections related to their own organizations or others. All revisions and feedback should be submitted to Amy Smith no later than March.

Ms. Palka also addressed 2026 Organizational Presentations. A sign-up sheet was distributed at the previous meeting, and four organizations have registered to present. Five presentation dates remain available. Organizations interested in highlighting their services are encouraged to contact Ms. Palka to secure a date.

Additionally, Ms. Palka shared that she has been asked to chair another group. In order to accept that role, she would need to step back from serving as Chair of the Adolescent Services Workgroup. She invited anyone interested in assuming the Chair position to contact her or Amy Smith for further discussion.

The next Adolescent Services Workgroup meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 4**. Please refer to the summary and supporting documents included in today's packet for additional details.

VII. **Additional Agenda Items**

A. Food Insecurities / EOC Activation

Ms. Debra Johnson provided an update on food insecurity within our community. She shared that last fall, delays and disruptions in the federal distribution of food assistance benefits significantly impacted many local households, creating an immediate increase in need.

In response, the CSCB partnered with Homeland Security/Emergency Management to activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), ensuring a coordinated and timely community response. Opening the EOC allowed agencies to centralize communication, streamline accurate and up-to-date information, and efficiently distribute resources where they were needed most.

Funds collected through the Community Foundation were allocated to several local food pantries to help address the surge in demand. Throughout the response, press releases and social media updates were issued multiple times per day to keep community members informed and connected to available assistance.

Justin Westmiller noted that ours was the only EOC in the state to activate in response to this issue, highlighting the strength and collaboration of our local network.

Ms. Johnson thanked everyone involved for their willingness to step forward and coordinate a response that supported so many individuals and families in our community. This effort truly reflects one of the greatest strengths of our CSCB—our ability to come together quickly, strategically, and compassionately in times of need.

B. CSCB Help Card Update

Ms. Alyse Nicols reminded attendees that the Help Card is updated annually, and it is time to begin the 2026 revision process. An email will be sent to all members shortly with the current version attached for review.

She asked members to carefully review the document, confirm that their organization's information is accurate and up to date, and notify us of any corrections. Members are also encouraged to review the full document and share suggestions for additions or updates that may improve its usefulness.

Your prompt response is greatly appreciated to ensure the Help Card is finalized and ready for distribution in 2026.

C. 2026 CSCB Meeting Calendar

Ms. Debra Johnson reminded members that the 2026 CSCB calendar is included in today's meeting packet. The calendar conveniently consolidates all CSCB workgroup meetings into one comprehensive document, providing an easy reference for meeting dates, times, and locations at a glance.

D. Warming Centers / Inclement Weather

Ms. Amy Smith provided an update on local warming shelters in response to the recent subzero temperatures across our region. She previously shared a list of available warming shelters via

email and noted that a revised version with additional updates will be distributed later today. The updated list is also available on the CSCB website at www.cscbinfo.org

She reminded members that most of the listed warming shelters operate Monday through Friday during daytime hours, with limited availability on evenings and weekends. However, some local fire halls are also providing temporary shelter during extreme cold conditions. The heating centers were opened at Blue Water Allies, Blue Water Rescue Mission, Blue Water Recovery Outreach Center, Council on Aging, serving St. Clair County, St. Clair County Library System, The Salvation Army- Port Huron, and YMCA of the Blue Water Area.

Please share this information with anyone who may be in need of a safe, warm place during this frigid weather.

VIII. **Announcements (flyers included in packet)**

- **Dumpster Fire Recovery Podcast** – new episodes weekly, available on all podcast platforms
- **The Athletic Factory** – Bingo Night – Tuesday, January 27th starts at 5:30PM at The Wrigley Center.
- **The Athletic Factory** - Open Gaming Night – Tuesdays, starting on February 17th from 3:30 PM –5:30 PM at The Athletic Factory
- **Mid-City Nutrition** – Pasta Dinner – Thursday, January 29th from 5:30PM – 7:30PM
- **A Beautiful Me** – Bloom w/ A Beautiful Me – Friday, February 27th doors open at 5PM at McMorran Theatre
- **CMH** – Face Off for Mental Health – Friday, March 6th at McMorran Sports & Entertainment Center.
- **BWAC** – Walk for Warmth – Saturday, March 7th registration starts at 9:00AM at the Wrigley Center and race starts at 9:30AM
- **CMH** – Run for Recovery – Saturday, May 9th at CMH first run starts at 8:30AM

IX. **Next Meeting: Wednesday March 18th from 2PM – 4PM at CMH Auditorium**

X. **Adjournment**

With no further business to address, Ms. Debra Johnson adjourned the meeting at 3:13PM

Respectfully Submitted by,

Reviewed and Approved by,

Gloria Valentin
Recording Secretary

Deb Johnson
CSCB Chair