

Sample of efforts, by CMHA member organizations, to address Michigan's behavioral health workforce shortage

June 2023

Below is a sample of some of the work that member organizations of the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan (CMHA) – the state's Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSPs), public Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs), and providers in the networks of the state's CMHSPs and PIHPs – have designed and implemented to address, in their local communities, the deep and prolonged behavioral health workforce shortage. This sample represents the information, in their own words and format, submitted by a diverse set of CMHA members in response to a call for the summaries of these efforts.

AuSable Valley Community Mental Health Authority

- Intern program:
 - We know that interns tend to become employees after their internship is completed. In order to attract more interns, we have started a program of compensating both interns as well as the supervisors that take on the interns. This is for both MSWs and BSWs. We also provide licensure supervision as a benefit of employment.
 - The important thing is that all interns leaving the agency feel good about the internship they had with us. They will then promote us to other students or people they know in the field. This in turn builds a positive reputation for the agency. It also gives people in the field a solid foundation to start from.

In order for this to be a good experience we need to:

- Spend a few months to train, onboard and allow them to shadow before giving them independent work. Don't overload them, they are here for a learning experience, not free labor.
- Keep caseloads low throughout the internship (10 to 12) so they can learn and not be so frazzled they miss their learning piece.
- Offer solid, weekly supervision. This is key. So many graduates today do not realize the importance of supervision (we see this in the new hires). Supervision is where the student and new staff build their foundation for future work. So much can be learned in those first few years that a clinician carries with them through life. If you have supervision that isn't that good, it turns out staff that aren't that good at what they do. Most new therapists do not realize how important supervision is early on. They don't know what they don't know. This goes back to the very basics.
- Partnerships with SVSU, Spring Arbor, MSU, possibly Wayne State and U of M
- Have attended field placement days to share program, information, and brochures
- Wellness days
 - Three days (outside of normal PTO); to be used in full day increments; cannot be aligned with a holiday; do not carryover; no notice is required; "Just Because Days"
- New wage scale
 - Implemented a 12-step wage grid, market and region competitive, 2% increase between steps
- Employee Engagement Committee

- Responsible for internal inclusion/appreciation/recognition
- PTO Donation Program
 - Another way staff can help their colleagues
- Volunteer shift sign-up
 - Staff outside of community CLS can voluntarily sign up for shift work to assist during times of PTO and will be compensated at an enhanced rate (share the load). This has helped gain a greater understanding and appreciation of other roles in the agency and community.
- Billboards (static and electronic)
 - Advertisement throughout the state for urgently needed positions
- Radio spots
- Hybrid work schedules
 - Remote/on-site
- Employee referral Program (\$150, \$250, \$750)
- Dedicated Emergency Services Team
 - In the past all clinical staff were required to be on the ES team on a rotating basis; exit interview data showed that the requirement to be on call for crises was the #1 reason for clinical staff leaving
 - The agency piloted a dedicated ES Team, working to people's strengths instead of forcing their anxiety; staff not on the team are still allowed to volunteer and are paid the ES stipend when they are on the schedule
 - This has been very successful
- Expanding Telehealth for OPT services

Barry County Community Mental Health Authority

- Adjusted BCCMHA pay scale
- Provided longevity payments
- Provided enrichment/development opportunities such as Guided Meditation with Catherine Schmidt, owner of The Yoga Zen
- Provided flexible work schedules – allowing a combination of work from home and in office
- Created an on call system where BCCMHA perform after hrs. on call for one week at a time but do not perform their "day jobs" during that week.
- Provided a 4 day work week opportunity for staff
- Foster working relationships with colleges to reignite internship programs

Community Mental Health for Central Michigan

- Engaged with local colleges/universities to strengthen talent pipeline through internships and education to students on the community mental health system
- Provided staff with flexibles schedules and hybrid work options
- Engaged staff in the recruitment process with implementation of employee referral program
- Provided sign-on incentives for difficult-to-fill positions
- Added two floating holiday's to time off package
- Developed alternative pay arrangement for extended vacancies to recruit and retain staff
- Updated longevity compensation program to begin after completion of trial period of employment
- Enhanced benefit program with the following:
 - Paid Family Leave Program
 - Tuition Reimbursement

- Fitness Reimbursement
- Dental and Vision Buy-Up Plans
- Employer Contributions to H.S.A.

Community Mental Health of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties

Compensation:

- Retention Payment
 - Implemented in December 2021.
- One to One Vacation Buyout
 - Implemented in December 2021.
- Expanded Student Debt Relief 2022
 - Expanded in FY21 and continued for FY22 and FY23.
 - Awards \$2,000 payment directly to student loan lenders for eligible employees to reduce student loan debt.
- Wage Increase provided a 5% raise for all salary schedules effective April 1, 2022
 - This included an early implementation of the planned FY23 3% increase plus an additional 2%
- Phase 1 External Wage and Compensation Study on hardest to fill positions- Master's Level Clinical Positions and Nursing. (Mental Health Therapist, Developmental Disabilities Clinicians, Vocational Clinicians, Behavioral Psychologists, and all Nursing positions)
 - This was completed April 1, 2022.
- Phase 2 External Wage and Compensation Study.
 - Positions surveyed included Client Services Specialists and Developmental Disability Specialists, Psychologist PHY Certified (AMHS), Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Administrative Officers, Administrative Supervisors, Administrative Managers, Administrative Coordinators, HR Specialists, Payroll and Benefits Specialist, Systems Technician, Systems Engineer, Software Developer, Business Analysts
 - This was completed in September, 2022

Other Recruitment and Retention Efforts

- Added a Campus Liaison Position to Human Resources Specialist Staff to increase our presence and recruitment efforts on college campuses both in Michigan and other states. This resulted in doubling the number of student interns in 1 year from 25 students to 50 students. As a result of increasing internships we have hired 11 recent graduates in Spring 2023 to fill open positions.
- Diversity Advisory Council Initiatives-Ongoing. Here are some examples of recent initiatives:
 - 21 Day Challenge and Dialogue Sessions
 - Mentoring Program
 - Pronoun Training
 - Working on developing Employee Resource Groups and Book Clubs
- MSU Scholars Cohort planning launched in MSU Summer and Fall Semesters 2022
 - Sponsorship of a cohort of nine Bachelors level Clinical Staff in obtaining a Masters of Social Work Degree with agreement to work for 3 years post graduate.
 - In FY23 we will evaluate if we can start another cohort for FY24. If so, planning will begin in Fall 2023.
- Media Campaign-Completed spring-summer 2022
 - Human Resources and WILX TV joined forces in launching a campaign called "Work at CMHA-CEI and Make a Difference".

- Comprised familiar faces of our current employees telling their story of working at CMHA-CEI.
 - Commercials, Digital Ads, and Billboards were featured.
 - These efforts drove additional traffic to our job site to view postings
- Resumption of Manager Adaptive Leadership Training and other Manager Training Supports
 - Adaptive Leadership Training for all new managers was held in June, 2022
 - Human Resources Manager Training Topics resumed in spring and summer.
 - Adaptive Design Training to be held in May 24-25, 2023
- Employee Referral Payment Opportunity Launched-August 2022
 - Initiated in August, any full or part-time CMHA-CEI employee who refers an individual to Human Resources for a Mental Health Therapist, Developmental Disabilities Clinician or Behavioral Psychologist to work in a full or part time position within a Clinical Program, may be eligible for up to a \$2,000.00 referral fee.
- Promotion of federal and state tuition reimbursement or other workforce enhancement opportunities
 - Ongoing identification, promotion, or application for opportunities available to eligible staff working in public behavioral health settings from state and federal sources.

Community Mental Health of Ottawa County

One of the ways we are trying to close the behavioral health workforce gap in the West Michigan area is with a new certificate program for Direct Support Professions through Grand Rapids Community College. The long term goal of this program is to elevate the profession to be similar to a CNA with livable wages to go along with it. The development of the DSP Certificate Program was a collaborative effort between four of our larger residential providers in Ottawa County; MOKA, Heritage Homes, Benjamin's Hope, and Harbor House, CMHOC and GRCC. The program held its "pilot" session starting in the first of the year and registration for the ongoing program is happening now. The attached picture is of the first graduating class. For most of the graduates it was their first exposure to college level courses and you could see and hear the pride in their accomplishment. Such a cool thing and hopefully one of the successful ways that will help to attract more people to the field in the future. While developing the curriculum we were aware of the IMPART Alliance Train-the Trainer (T3) certificate program and we do not believe the GRCC certificate program and T3 conflict at all – just different avenues to achieve the same goal. Some people might want to go the route of a college certificate – some may not.

I've included the link to the program below.

https://learning.grcc.edu/eCS/CourseListing.aspx?master_id=2777&master_version&course_area=CEGH&course_number=216&course_subtitle=00&fbclid=IwAR0xY7ZuJLVQI-gid6crk8iDpnqj1Lfb4KNRaYjXqFw4jF1CvU1TQ5hoOyM

HealthWest

- **Retention Stipends**

A \$1,000 retention stipend will be paid to all staff who were employed on or after 10/1/2022 after six months of continued employment during the fiscal year. Payment to staff who were employed on 10/1/2022, will automatically be paid in April of 2023. Staff hired after 10/1/2022 will automatically be paid the month following their six-month anniversary date.

- **Youth Services and Corrections Services Masters Level Clinician Incentives**

A \$1,000 retention stipend for Masters Level Clinicians who works in Youth Services and Corrections Services will automatically be paid quarterly for staff employed at the end of the quarter, for a maximum of two quarters.

- **Committee Chair and Co-Chair Incentives**

Employees who volunteer for Chair and Co-Chair position on HealthWest Official Committees will be paid a \$1,000 stipend upon completion of six months of service on the committee.

- **On-Call Incentive Stipends**

Employees who work two or more on-call shifts in a quarter will receive a \$300.00 bonus. This is tracked by payroll and will automatically be paid after the end of each quarter.

- 1st Quarter –10/1/2022-12/31/2022 (Payment in January 2023)
- 2nd Quarter –1/1/2023 –3/31/2023 (Payment in April 2023)
- 3rd Quarter –4/1/2023–6/30/2023 (Payment in July of 2023)
- 4th Quarter –7/1/2023 –9/30/2023 (Payment in October 2023)

- **Employee Referral Bonus**

HealthWest offers a referral bonus for staff who refer individuals for HealthWest employment.

Staff members who refer a candidate for employment will be given a \$200 one-time payment upon hiring of that individual and another \$200 payment if the individual successfully pass their probationary period

Staff referrals can be identified by the new hire, but staff are also invited to submit an Employee Referral Form (below) to report who you referred to HealthWest and HR will track your referral for payment.

- **Credential Stipends**

HealthWest will provide a \$1,000 credential stipend to staff members who have or who earn credentials valuable to the organization, such as licensure and certifications. Staff are required to use the credential for one-year before payment will be made. Applications will be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for approval prior to payment.

- **Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Retention Stipends**

Staff who are hired for the Assertive Community Treatment Program (ACT) between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023, will receive a \$2000 sign-on bonus. In addition, for the Fiscal Year 2023, ACT staff will receive a \$300 on-call incentive for each month they work at least four on-call shifts, a monthly retention bonus of \$117.21 per month, paid after six months of work (\$703.28 per six month period) and upon completion of ACT 101 and/or ACT 201 training.

- **CALM App**

HealthWest is providing staff a Calm Premium Subscription, which includes access to hundreds of meditations, sleep stories, soundscapes, music and more. Whether you have 30 seconds or 30 minutes, Calm content is made to suit your schedule and needs.

- **Professional Development Dollars**

All HealthWest staff have access to up to \$300 per year for professional development and growth, including conferences, training, seminars, and other similar opportunities. These funds are available for any training, learning or development opportunity.

- **Education Assistance (Tuition Reimbursement)**

All employees are eligible to receive reimbursement for qualified expenses if they complete college level courses with a grade of C or better, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per calendar year. Eligible expenses include tuition, fees, books and supplies. Please see Policy 02-029, Education Assistance Policy. Employees are eligible for education assistance for courses they have started and completed during employment. Classes taken prior to employment start date are not eligible. Employees may be reimbursed only for eligible expenses that they personally pay out-of-pocket

and are not paid by financial aid, such as scholarships, grants and/or tuition forgiveness and discounts. Student Loans are not considered financial aid for purposes of this program.

Huron Behavioral Health

We have been supporting current bachelor's level staff to return to school to obtain their master's degree in social work by offering 3 hours of paid time per week as well as a flexible work schedule and the ability to complete their internships within our agency. They are able to do their internship in a master's level capacity/program within HBH. We have had numerous staff take advantage of this and graduate with their master's degree.

We also take a lot of interns and this has typically worked out very well for us as we have been able to hire them on post-graduation both bachelor's and master's level interns.

We now offer a \$3,000 sign on bonus for any of our master's level positions to help incentivize and we have recently increased our pay scale for our master's level clinicians to get closer to being competitive with the local school as this is where we lose most of our master's level staff.

We also offer a hybrid work environment where staff are able to get permission to work from home some of the time as well as a flexible work schedule such as requesting to work 4 days per week, 10 hours each day. These are all with approval and oversight but this has been very popular.

LifeWays Community Mental Health

- Revamped the wage scale to ensure we align with other Michigan organizations.
- Created a career ladder by separating out clinician/therapist positions with clinician/therapist I, II, III positions which offer pay grade jump when full licensure is obtained, and then again when CAADC/CAADC + Full Licensure is obtained.
- Award a step increase when preferred education/certification/licensure is met.
- Created a "Provisional" clinical category on clinical positions such as therapist/clinician.
- Implemented an online Applicant Tracking System.
- Attend Job Fairs.
- Post sponsored Indeed Ads to reach a broader audience.
- Pay for other paid job boards.
- Provide free Licensure supervision.
- Broadened our posting sites.
- Host Interns.
- Offer Guest Lecturing to classes informing them of LifeWays.
- Implemented Vitality Academy - addressing educational gaps for brief solution-focused interventions.
- Implemented Licensing links - licensing exam prep courses in partnership with People & Culture (HR Dept).

Lincoln Behavioral Services

Has increased its efforts over the past few years to address the workforce shortage and attract and retain staff. LBS has increased the number of student placements and has increased the number of schools that we partner with across multiple disciplines (family medicine residents, RNs, social workers, counselors, psychiatric residents, PA and NP students and volunteers from local high schools). LBS has also applied for and participated in many loan forgiveness programs

(MI Kids Now, STAR, NHSC provider, qualification as a HPSA area). LBS shortened the work day to an 8 hour work day, with a 1 hour paid lunch, developed a program for staff to have 1 work from home day per pay period to focus on trainings and paperwork, has kept employee benefits cost low (with increasing rates, LBS did not require employees to increase their contribution), additional Holiday was added, formed an employee DEIB group, added an EAP at no cost to employees, opened an employee fitness and wellness center and provided raises and retention bonuses to staff.

Network180

For CLS have been giving an additional \$2/hour above Direct Care Wage (Overall cost estimate of \$5 million). Have given hiring bonuses to providers to attract MSWs into the system as well as retention bonuses (most recent did not include retention funds). Contract with Real Life Services for a "relief" pool that provides staff to fill in as needed (targets individuals who are at highest risk in an unlicensed setting). Rate increases to providers were not significant (cost-of-living). Have had providers with significant deficits and have provided funds to assisting with solvency. Brought ACT in house.

Onpoint

Providers were given an increase from 2 to 10 percent. Internal staffing – COLA retroactive to April, 2022. New hires are getting insurance on the day of hire and fully funding the HSA.

Saint Clair County Community Mental Health Services

All staff

- Emphasis on work-life balance with many hybrid/remote positions available
- 37.5 full-time work week
- Increase from 2 to 4 personal days per year available out of sick bank
- Retention payments given to staff in addition to cost-of-living adjustments yearly
- Tuition support for CMH nurses working toward becoming Nurse Practitioners
- 100% Tuition reimbursement for continuing education towards MSW
- Internship opportunities available, including evening hours and weekends
- Child care through Tri-share for income eligible staff
- Increase to 13 Paid Holidays per year
- Up to an 8% employer match on 457B

Clinician-based

- Hiring Bonus of \$3500 (\$1750 in first paycheck, and \$1750 at completion of six month probation)
- Free CEU opportunities
- Free evidence based training
- Free on-site Clinical Supervision to support licensing requirements
- Increased vacation time to 17 days per year (Five days after six month probation, and twelve days at one-year anniversary)
- LLMSW positions start at 3 year level of the Union Salary Schedule, \$66,668/year
- Fully licensed LMSW positions start at 3 year level of the Union Salary Schedule, \$68,657/year

*We have diversified our recruiting efforts on Handshake, LinkedIn, Facebook, ZipRecruiter, and SC EDA Hot Jobs in addition to hiring new grads before they receive their limited license in

response to the MDHHS Bulletin Number MMP 23-02 issued on January 5, 2023 allowing us to do so.*

Tuscola Behavioral Health Systems

- We participate in various Thumb Community Health Partnership (TCHP) workgroups. Focus areas have been HR workforce planning/activities meetings and employer led collaborative meetings. Initiatives have focused on developing and increasing our workforce; such as, offering nursing and social work apprenticeships (to keep individuals in the thumb area) and another objective is to increase educational opportunities related to health and human services for the thumb. There are events where guest speakers talk with 9th and 10th graders at high schools and technology centers in the thumb to focus on youth pursuing careers in behavioral health. We also speak with students on campus and have been developing those partnerships with universities and colleges about our needs. Increase the number of internships and job shadow opportunities so we are able to develop those relationships with schools and universities in order to TCHP is addressing how individuals could complete degrees in this area since community colleges have closed and travel/distance being a barrier. d increasing the number of internships and job shadow opportunities so we are able to develop those relationships with schools and universities in order to build the pipeline.
- Offering opportunities for employee development, training and conferences.
- Our pension program has waived the hours requirement for retirees through 2027 to help with the workforce shortage.
- Numerous recruitment and retention strategies have been implemented to recruit, invest and retain our current workforce as we struggle to find skilled/qualified workers.

West Michigan Community Mental Health System

- Implement a FY-long strategic goal focus that is focused on workplace experience Building a culture where all team members are energized, engaged, and equipped to do their best work for the people we serve. There are a number of projects and deliverables tied to this strategic goal focus.
- Pilot alternative work schedules for staff which also meet consumer and organizational needs.
- Allow a hybrid work schedule for those staff positions where that makes sense to meet consumer and organizational needs.
- Utilize MDHHS ARPA grant dollars to support staff recruitment and retention – most recently we've applied for and received dollars specific to recruiting and retaining ACT and Crisis staff.
- Enhance organizational communication -- lean huddles, monthly newsletters, every 2-week all-team meetings.
- Implement the CE-CERT supervision model (to better support all staff) with appropriate supervisory staff.
- Enhance our new hire orientation process.
- Encourage and support professional development of all staff.
- Ensure our workplace is welcoming to all – enhance our DEI work.
- Increase our staff referral bonus and staff tuition reimbursement.
- Focus on leadership development (continued work with our leadership consultant).
- Flexible (as appropriate) about the credentials required to fill vacant positions.
- Enhance employee engagement activities – all staff picnic, themed casual Fridays, logo wear availability, face-to-face team building activities, holiday party, Cheers for Peers, etc.
- Expand our staff recruitment efforts (i.e., internship opportunities, job fairs, university fairs, radio ads, social media campaigns, etc.)

- Participate in NHSC and other loan forgiveness programs, daycare repayment options, etc.
- Complete market study to ensure appropriate placement of positions on pay grades and ensure economic wage increases align better with COLA, pricing index and inflation rates.
- Include staff retention payments as option in compensation package.
- Ensure market-competitive benefits (i.e., health insurance, HSA, dental, vision, FSA, etc.)
- Add "wellness day" to staff PTO bank.
- Add additional holiday to staff paid holidays.
- Implement lean principles across the organization to support improved communication, efficiency, and effectiveness and reduce waste/duplication, etc.