

Center for Behavioral Health

Description

Founded in 1957, the Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) continues to provide quality outpatient mental health treatment including assessments, psychotherapy, psychiatric evaluation and medication management service. CBH works towards the mission of providing high quality behavioral health services to low-income consumers, many of whom are on Medicaid or have limited financial means to pay. CBH also provides training and services in the community to the department's many agency partners.

Personnel

The program operates under the direction of the full-time Program Director, part-time Psychiatrist, part-time Advanced Nurse Practitioner (APN), administrative support, one full-time LCSW therapist and seven part-time therapists (LCSW/LAC/LSW). Throughout the year, CBH also works with graduate social work and counseling interns who provide clinical services under the supervision of the Director and other staff. This fiscal year, the program housed eleven interns in the fields of social work, art therapy, and clinical mental health counseling.

Caseload

CBH provided services to 189 individuals during FY'25 with a total of 10,172 contacts. This includes providing services to 62 new clients.

Demographics

As of 7/1/25, the census of CBH was 135 with an average monthly census of 133. Clients range in age from 18 to 94. Clients identify as the following for gender: 66% female, 28% male, and 6% transgender. The self-reported ethnicities of the consumers enrolled with CBH are as follows: 16% Hispanic/Latino and 84% non-Hispanic/Latino. More specifically, the self-reported races of clients enrolled with CBH are as follows: 51% White/Caucasian, 37% African-American, 6% Asian, 5% identifying as multi-racial, and 1% identifying as other. CBH consumers are insured through Medicaid (49%), Medicare (28%), uninsured and enrolled in NJMHAPP (21%), and other (2%).

Performance Outcomes

- CBH provided 9% more units in FY'25 than in the fiscal year prior. This continues an upward trend of year-on-year unit increase for past five years.
- Maintained low psychiatric hospitalization rate with an average of 1% of caseload hospitalized each month.

- 64% of cases discharged were positive discharges as clients had met goals and/or services were no longer needed. Remainder of discharges were: 14% referred to a higher level of care and 22% lost to contact.
- Clients showed improvements in clinical outcomes with 85% of all clients surveyed showing a decrease in symptoms six months into treatment.
 - 90% of all clients show progress in their treatment goals.
- Department maintains ability to provide hybrid services (onsite and telehealth) with 54% of all services provided onsite. This remains above outpatient behavioral health industry averages.
- 68% of all clients in department receive medication monitoring by Program MD or APN. Collaboration between clients, therapists, and medical professionals fosters effective, integrated care.
- CBH is servicing a wider variety of ages with 15% all of clients now being 65+

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

In order to measure satisfaction with services, consumer satisfaction surveys were distributed via email, text, and in person to all clients open. 129 surveys were distributed with 21 surveys completed which accounts for a 15% response rate. Overall, clients who receive services at CBH continue to report a high level of satisfaction with 95% of all surveyed agreeing or strongly agreeing they are satisfied with services.

Some comments shared on the survey include:

- “CBH has given me a voice that helps me to express myself.”
- “I had helped me at a time, I needed it. It has helped me grow as a person.”
- “CBH changed my life I was once in a very dark place. My therapist guided me back I’m happier than ever she helped me with setting boundaries. She is everything.”
- “I feel better.”

Program Highlights

CBH continued the second year of partnership with Bloomfield College of Montclair State University to provide on-site mental health services to students on campus.

- MHA Therapists provided weekly individual counseling and group therapy onsite at the college or via telehealth
- Any student in need of medication monitoring was provided services onsite at CBH
- A federal grant funds these services to ensure cost or insurance is not a barrier to services

CBH continued to strengthen community partnerships by providing clinical guidance and training to a range of community agencies across Essex and Morris Counties.

- Throughout the year, CBH staff members have facilitated or participated as panelists in multiple presentations on anxiety, depression, and aging

CBH continued to grow group therapy offerings.

- Short term groups focused on anxiety and DBT problem solving were offered this year.

- CBH also operates the Comfort Zone, a drop-in community support group open to anyone seeking a supportive peer environment to check in and receive emotional support.
- This year, the department added a second weekly Comfort Zone group hosted exclusively in person focused more on art-based techniques and therapy skill development.

With its strong internship program, CBH continues to focus on providing education and a learning environment to the therapists of tomorrow. The department is often looked at as a best-in-class field placement for MA/MSW students.

CBH continued to partner with IFSS to provide onsite mental health screenings at Caldwell University and screened 70 students and faculty.

Advocacy Activities

CBH staff participate in community outreach and tabling events throughout Essex County to provide localized mental health resources and increase awareness of the department and its services. CBH staff also maintain and regularly update a comprehensive list of local mental health resources.

FY 2026 Goals

The demand for mental health services continues to grow, as more individuals seek treatment than ever before. The ongoing acceptance and utilization of telehealth has enabled many clients to maintain consistent access to care. CBH is well-positioned to meet these demands, with a team of seasoned clinicians trained in evidence-based practices, a collaborative and supportive culture, a robust internship and training program for new professionals, and strong administrative infrastructure. These strengths will allow CBH to continue delivering high-quality, accessible mental health services to our target population.

CBH will continue to maintain and grow its community partnerships. Building on strong relationships with local senior organizations and advocacy groups, CBH plans to formalize these collaborations by offering short-term, senior-specific counseling services. This initiative aims to reach an underserved population and address the unique mental health needs of older adults with the planned referral sources being these community partners. CBH will also look to service more individuals in both individual therapy and group therapy. Specific consideration will be given to expanding both our open groups, such as the Comfort Zone, and our topic-specific therapy groups.

CBH has been a vital resource for low-income, underinsured, and disabled individuals, and it will continue to lead with unwavering dedication to delivering high-quality, equitable mental health care for all.

Riskin Children's Center (RCC)

Description

The Riskin Children's Center (RCC) is a comprehensive outpatient mental health service for youth ages 6 to 18. The Center was created in September of 2011 after a generous gift from Dr. Sylvia Riskin. RCC provides individual therapy, family therapy, psychiatric evaluation, medication management, and group therapy. At RCC, the mission is to provide high quality mental health services to children, adolescents, and their families, many of whom are insured by Medicaid or have limited financial means to pay for private practice care.

Personnel

RCC operates under the direction of the full-time Program Director, administrative support, part-time Medical Director/Psychiatrist, and two therapists. Throughout the year, RCC works with graduate social work and counseling interns who provide clinical services to youth, all under the supervision of the Director and other staff.

Caseload

RCC provided services to 43 individuals during FY'25 with a total of 829 sessions held. This includes providing services to 22 new clients.

Demographics

As of 7/1/25, the census of RCC was 26 with an average monthly census (throughout the year) of 27. Clients range in age from 6 to 18. Clients identify as the following for gender: 58% female, 35% male, and 7% transgender. The self-reported ethnicities of the consumers enrolled with CBH are as follows: 50% Hispanic/Latino and 50% non-Hispanic/Latino. More specifically, the self-reported races of clients enrolled with CBH are as follows: 65% White/Caucasian, 15% African-American, 12% identifying as multi-racial, and 8% identifying as other. RCC consumers are insured through Medicaid (96%) and self-pay (4%).

Performance Outcomes

- RCC provided 4% more units in FY'25 than in the fiscal year prior.
- 70% of cases discharged were positive discharges as clients had met goals and/or services were no longer needed. Remainder of discharges were: 17% referred to a higher level of care and 13% lost to contact.
- Maintained low hospitalization rate with 2% on average per month hospitalized psychiatrically.

- Clients showed improvements in clinical outcomes with 85% of all clients surveyed showing a decrease in symptoms six months into treatment.
- Department maintains ability to provide hybrid services (onsite and telehealth) with 73% of all services provided onsite. This remains above outpatient behavioral health industry averages.
- 57% of all clients in department receive medication monitoring by Program Psychiatrist (MD). Collaboration between clients, therapists, and medical professionals provide for collaborative care.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

In order to measure satisfaction with services, consumer satisfaction surveys were distributed via email, text, and in person. 21 surveys were distributed to youth with 9 surveys completed which accounts for a 39% response rate. 21 surveys to parents of clients were distributed with 2 completed which accounts to 9% response rate.

Overall, clients who receive services at RCC continue to report a high level of satisfaction with 100% of all surveyed agreeing or strongly agreeing they are satisfied with services. Some of the comments that were received on the surveys include:

- “I’m able to work w/ therapist & psychiatrist who allow me to feel heard in a comfortable seating”
- “it’s easier to understand my needs and communicate them.”
- “It keeps me more on track and feel better mentally and emotionally.”

Program Highlights

- RCC continues to strengthen its position in the community by developing and deepening relationships with local school districts and community partners. Local school districts have been providing more direct referrals to RCC.
- RCC partnered with local agencies to provide specific presentations in the community on a variety of topics including stress management, healthy relationships, navigating the youth mental health system, and anxiety distress tolerance.
- RCC was able to host and train MSW/MA interns who had specific interest in providing counseling to youth.
- To strengthen relationships between our youth and their families, therapists provided 39% more family counseling sessions this year.

Advocacy Activities

Throughout the year, RCC staff participated in tabling and community outreach events to provide mental health resources and raise awareness of the department and its offerings.

FY 2026 Goals

Youth are experiencing mental health challenges in numbers never seen before. At the same time, youth (with the help of their parents, caregivers, schools, community) are seeking mental health services in numbers never seen before. It is well known how difficult it can be to find a mental health provider who has specific expertise in working with youth, have availability, and accept one's insurance. With a shortage of providers able to accept NJ Family Care/Medicaid in the area, RCC will continue to provide crucial services to this population.

In the upcoming fiscal year, RCC will remain committed to providing robust, high-quality mental health services for youth, building on our mission to support their well-being and growth. RCC will offer topic-specific group therapy sessions to complement our individual therapy services. These groups will also be open to the community. With the ever-growing need for mental health support, RCC is committed to continuing its legacy of providing high-quality care to the youth and families of our service area.