

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 evaluations and medication management services. CBH works toward its the mission of providing high-quality behavioral health services to low-income clients, many of whom are enrolled in Medicaid or have limited financial means to pay for services. Beyond direct clinical services, CBH actively strengthens local networks by providing specialized training and behavioral health outreach to our many valued community partners.

Personnel

The program operates under the direction of a full-time Program Director, a part-time Psychiatrist, a part-time Advanced Nurse Practitioner (APN), one full-time LCSW therapist and seven part-time licensed therapists. 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 served as an educational site for twelve interns in the fields of social work, art therapy, and clinical mental health counseling.

Caseload

CBH provided services to 176 individuals during FY26 with a total of 9,732 contacts. This included providing services to 41 new clients.

Demographics

As of 7/1/26, the CBH census was 131 with an average monthly census of 139. Clients range in age from 18 to 90. Clients identified their gender as the follows: 64% female, 33% male, and 3% transgender. The self-reported ethnicities of the consumers enrolled with CBH were as follows: 19% Hispanic/Latino and 81% non-Hispanic/Latino. More specifically, the self-reported races of clients enrolled with CBH were as follows: 50% White/Caucasian, 35% African American, 8% Asian, 6% identifying as multiracial, and 1% identifying as other. CBH consumers are insured through Medicaid (55%), Medicare (28%), uninsured and enrolled in NJMHAPP (16%), and other (1%).

Performance Outcomes

The Center for Behavioral Health remained committed to delivering high-quality, accessible, and integrated services, achieving strong clinical outcomes across the program.

Low Hospitalization Rate: Maintained an average monthly psychiatric hospitalization rate of 1% of the active caseload, reflecting effective outpatient treatment and symptom management.

Successful Treatment Outcomes: Of all client discharges, 53% were positive discharges, indicating that clients met their treatment goals or no longer required services. The remaining discharges included 25% lost to contact, 12% referred to a higher level of care, and 10% due to relocation.

Clinical Improvement: 90% of clients demonstrated a reduction in symptoms within six months of treatment and 90% made measurable progress toward their individualized treatment goals.

Accessible Care: CBH continued to provide clients with flexible access to services through both in-person and telehealth modalities, allowing individuals to receive care based on their needs, preferences, and circumstances.

Integrated Behavioral Health: 66% of clients received medication management from the program's psychiatrist or advanced practice nurse (APN), supporting a collaborative, team-based approach to care.

Timely Access to Services: When accepting new clients, CBH maintained an average wait time of 3.6 days from referral to intake. When the program reached capacity, staff ensured individuals received appropriate referrals and linkage to community resources.

Serving a Diverse Population: CBH provided services to 40% of clients under age 40 and 10% age 70 or older, reflecting the program's ability to meet the behavioral health needs of diverse age groups.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

In order to measure satisfaction with services, consumer satisfaction surveys were distributed via email, text, and in person to all active clients. Overall, clients who receive services at CBH continue to report a high level of satisfaction, with 95% of surveyed clients agreeing or strongly agreeing that they are satisfied with services. In addition, 100% of respondents felt included in the treatment planning process, 95% stated that they have made progress in dealing with the problems that brought them to treatment and 95% would recommend the program to others.

Program Highlights

The Center for Behavioral Health continued to strengthen community partnerships and expand access to behavioral health services through outreach, education, and supportive programming.

- Aging Well Program Pilot: In partnership with the Township of Montclair, the Center for Behavioral Health launched the Aging Well program to increase access to behavioral health services for older adults, a population that has historically been hesitant to seek services.
- Community Education and Support: The Center for Behavioral Health continued to provide free community-based groups and workshops that offered emotional support, psychoeducation, and practical coping strategies to promote mental wellness, build resilience, and strengthen community connections.
- In April 2026, staff and interns facilitated the Cultivating Resilience workshop, which was attended by 16 community members.
- The Comfort Zone, a drop-in support group for anyone with a mood disorder, meets twice weekly and averages five participants per session.
- The Center for Behavioral Health offers periodic art therapy groups, providing participants with creative therapeutic opportunities to support emotional well-being while introducing an alternative modality for self-expression and healing.
- Workforce Development: Through its robust internship program, the Center for Behavioral Health remained committed to training the next generation of behavioral health professionals. Recognized as a premier field placement for MA and MSW students, the program provides high-quality clinical education and hands-on experience while strengthening the future behavioral health workforce.

Advocacy Activities

The Center for Behavioral Health actively drives community engagement by partnering with local municipalities, including Bloomfield, Montclair, West Orange, and Newark as well as organizations across Essex County to increase awareness of its vital services. CBH staff participate in tabling events and community resource fairs, serve as panelists, and maintain an up-to-date, comprehensive directory of local mental health resources. Furthermore, staff members contribute to community public health task forces, helping to integrate mental health considerations into broader public health planning and ensuring local behavioral health needs remain a priority.

FY 2027 Goals

CBH will continue to expand its community presence by strengthening its established relationships throughout Essex County. As a trusted community partner, CBH is regularly invited to participate in local events, serve on expert panels, and provide educational presentations. Two community presentations are already scheduled for early fall, with additional outreach opportunities expected throughout the year.

Among its core priorities is the expansion of the Aging Well program, which launched in early 2026. CBH aims to scale this initiative to meet the growing demand for dedicated older adult behavioral health services as referral volume continues to rise. Additionally, building on strong participant feedback from the Cultivating Resilience workshop, CBH will maintain its focus on evidence-based group programming. By offering these workshops on a more regular basis, the center will provide community members with ongoing opportunities to build practical coping skills, foster peer connections, and engage in long-term mental wellness.

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. RCC provides individual therapy, family therapy, psychiatric evaluations, 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, a 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 41 individuals during FY26 with a total of 885 sessions held. This includes providing services to 17 new clients.

Demographics

As of 7/1/26, the census of RCC was 26. Clients range in age from 6 to 18. Clients identify as the following for gender: 60% female, 32% male, and 8% transgender. The self-reported ethnicities of the consumers enrolled with CBH are as follows: 52% Hispanic/Latino and 48% non-Hispanic/Latino. More specifically, the self-reported races of clients enrolled with CBH are as follows: 64% White/Caucasian, 12% African-American, 20% identifying as biracial (African-American/White), and 4% identifying as other. RCC consumers are insured through Medicaid (92%) and self-pay (8%).

Performance Outcomes

- Increased Service Capacity: RCC expanded service delivery by 7% in FY26 compared to the previous fiscal year.
- Demonstrated Clinical Progress: 90% of clients surveyed experienced a measurable reduction in symptoms six months into treatment, while 67% of client discharges were successful completions in which treatment goals were met.
- Minimizing Crisis Interventions: Psychiatric hospitalization rates remained remarkably low at an average of 2% per month.
- Collaborative Psychiatric Care: 72% clients received medication management through RCC's Program Psychiatrist, ensuring close coordination between clinical therapists and medical care.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

In our ongoing commitment to quality care, RCC distributed consumer satisfaction surveys to clients and families via email, text, and in-person. We achieved a 50% response rate among youth and a 36% response rate among parents and guardians.

Overall satisfaction remains exceptionally high: 100% of respondents reported being satisfied or strongly satisfied with their care. Additionally, 100% of youth reported feeling heard by their therapist, and 100% of parents stated they would recommend RCC to others (along with 90% of youth).

Program Highlights

- **Targeted Therapeutic Groups:** RCC facilitated two specialized youth groups, Art Therapy and Social Skills, designed to provide short-term, targeted support. These sessions gave participants a safe space to build coping skills, enhance social interactions, and foster emotional well-being.
- **Family Engagement:** To strengthen relationships between youth and their families, RCC therapists delivered 163% more family counseling sessions this year.
- **Board-Certified Psychiatric Services:** RCC provides dedicated, onsite psychiatric care through a board-certified youth psychiatrist, offering everything from comprehensive consultations and medication monitoring to specialized educational recommendations. Direct access to psychiatric expertise ensures our youth receive timely early intervention, collaborative support, and integrated care.
- **Workforce Development:** RCC continues to host dedicated MSW and MA interns, providing hands-on training and mentorship to the next generation of youth mental health clinicians.

Advocacy Activities

Throughout the year, RCC staff participated in tabling and community outreach events across both Morris and Essex Counties to provide mental health resources and raise awareness of the department and its offerings. RCC staff also maintain a resource guide of referral and linkage services for youth in our service area.

For Mental Health Awareness Month in May, RCC participated in multiple onsite mental health fairs at local public schools. Across three resource fairs, the team distributed critical mental health resources, screenings, and education to more than 1,000 youth.

FY 2027 Goals

RCC continues to deliver high-quality mental health care to local youth. Amid a significant shortage of regional providers accepting NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid, RCC serves as a vital safety net for families. To further address community needs, RCC is expanding its group therapy programming. Group settings offer unique therapeutic value for children and teens, fostering mutual support, constructive feedback, and a safe space to practice and generalize key social skills into everyday life. Moving forward, RCC aims to scale up capacity to offer regularly facilitated social skills groups.

Recognizing the growing demand for family-centered care, RCC continues to expand its family therapy sessions. In FY2027, RCC will implement targeted measurement frameworks to systematically evaluate the clinical efficacy of these interventions. These findings will determine the feasibility and structure for offering standalone family therapy services in the future. As we look ahead, RCC remains committed to building upon our 15-year legacy of delivering accessible, high-quality mental health care to youth across Essex County and neighboring areas.