

CENTER FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (CBH)

The Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) continues to provide quality outpatient mental health treatment that includes comprehensive intake assessments, weekly psychotherapy, psychiatric evaluations and medication management services. CBH works towards the mission of providing high-quality behavioral health services to low-income clients, many of whom are on Medicaid or have limited financial means to pay.

Personnel: The program operates under the direction of the full-time Program Director, part-time Medical Director/Psychiatrist, part-time Advanced Nurse Practitioner (APN), administrative support, one full-time therapist and six part-time 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 housed nine interns in the fields of social work, art therapy, and clinical mental health counseling.

Service Provision: CBH provided services to 187 individuals during FY2023 with a total of 9,349 contacts. This includes 70 new clients. CBH reached 130% of the targeted number of contacts overall. CBH continues to maintain a small group of clients who see a panel therapist in the community; however, this accounts for only 2% of contacts and continues to be phased out.

On June 30, 2024, the census of CBH was 127 with an average monthly census of 123. The clients range in age from 18 to 77. The clients identify as the following for gender: 69% female, 28% male, and 3% transgender. The self-reported ethnicities of the clients enrolled with CBH are as follows: 21% Hispanic/Latino and 79% non-Hispanic/Latino. More specifically, the self-reported races of clients enrolled with CBH are as follows: 56% White/Caucasian, 35% African-American, 5% Asian, and 4% identifying as multi-racial.

CBH consumers are insured through Medicaid (46%), Medicare (25%), uninsured and enrolled in NJMHAPP (27%), and other (2%).

CBH in the community highlights:

- CBH has partnered with Bloomfield College of Montclair State University to provide on-site clinical services to students on campus. MHA Therapists provide weekly individual counseling and group therapy at the College to increase access to in-person mental health services.
 - A federal grant funds these services to ensure cost or insurance is not a barrier.
 - Grant funds are active for FY2324 and FY2425.
- CBH has collaborated with the Bloomfield Township's Health Department, serving as the Mental Health representative for their current community needs assessments.
 - MHA has also provided in-person and virtual presentations for township residents on mental health education and resources.
- In partnership with Aging in Montclair, CBH hosted a presentation and discussion regarding technology scams aimed at seniors. A retired NYPD Lieutenant in the financial services sector presented to a group of about 45 seniors at the Montclair Public Library.

- Staff from CBH collaborated with members of Caldwell University in October 2023 to conduct another successful National Depression Screening Day, where 65 students and faculty were screened for anxiety, depression, traumatic stress reactions, and suicidal thoughts.

CBH Service Provision Highlights:

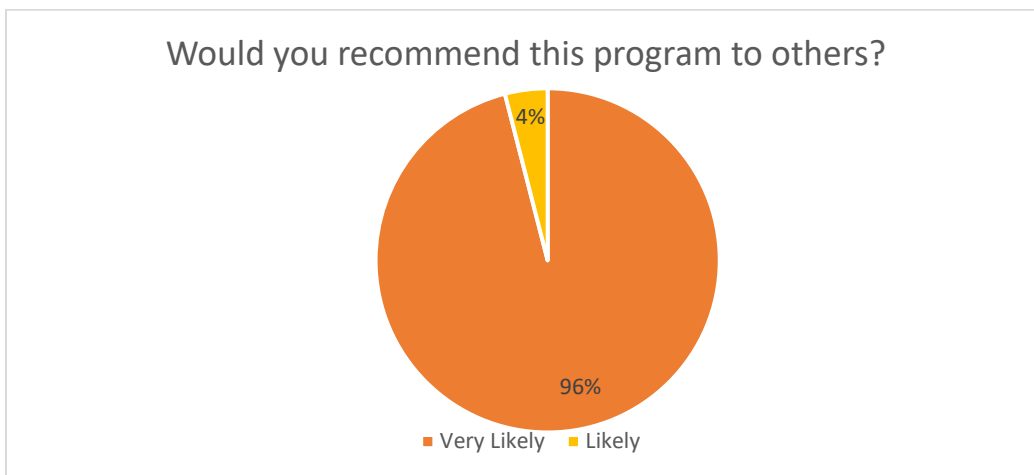
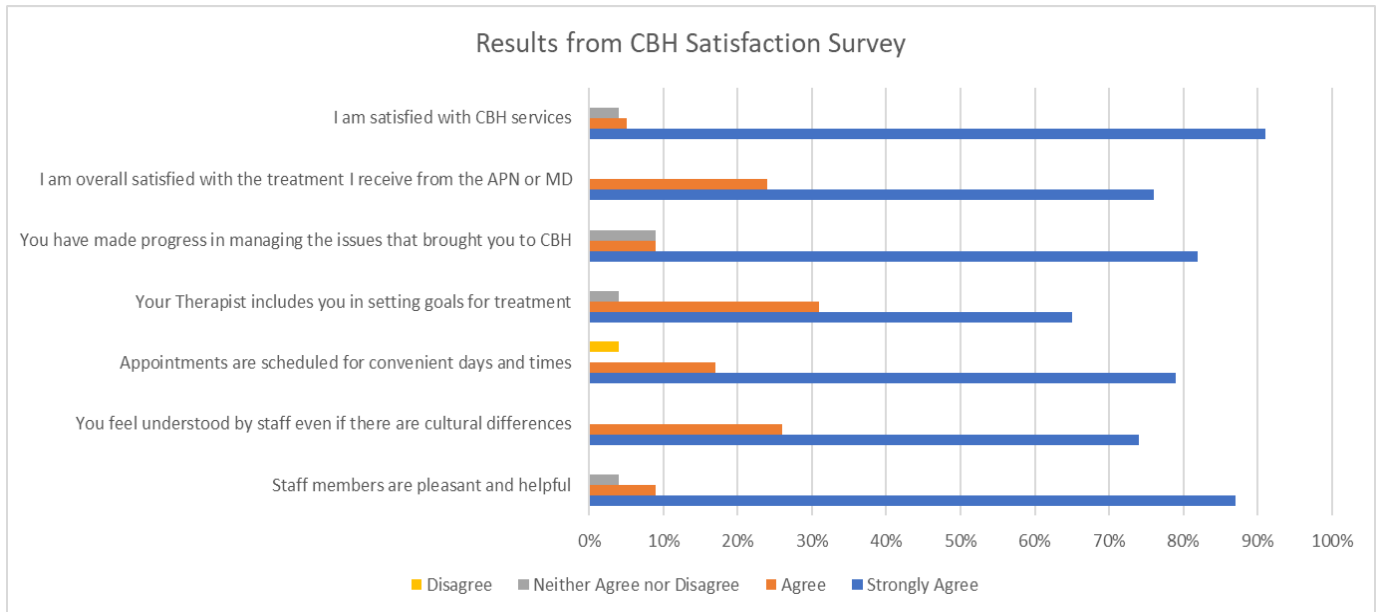
- CBH census increased by 15% compared to the previous year, allowing more clients to be seen.
- The group therapy program further expanded to include two sessions of Comfort Zone each week – one virtual and one in person – to ensure there was a standing group for all. Comfort Zone is the department’s long-standing weekly drop-in support group for those with a mood disorder, facilitated by a licensed clinician.
- Two other short-term groups occurred throughout the year: one focused on young adults (“Adulthood”) and the second being a social skills/socialization group
- CBH staff continue to provide a multitude of different modalities of therapy including art therapy, evidence-based techniques like CBT and DBT, interpersonal psychotherapy, somatic processing, Trauma-focused CBT, and elements of EMDR.
 - Spanish speaking clinical services are available.
- With the retirement of a long-time psychiatrist, the department was able to recruit and hire an adult psychiatrist board-certified in mental health and addictions, further enhancing the department’s ability to treat co-occurring conditions.
- CBH continues to offer services both via telehealth and in-person.
 - 46% of all services were provided on-site, which is far above industry average for in-person services
 - All new clients are assessed for their clinical appropriateness for telehealth to ensure that all clinical considerations are met before offering telehealth.
- 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.

Performance Indicators: The performance indicators measuring efficiency in CBH are the “wait for an intake appointment” and the “wait for assignment to a therapist.” This fiscal year, the average wait for an intake appointment was 3.1 business days and the average wait for assignment to a therapist was zero days, as the client was assigned to a therapist at intake. Both measures are below industry benchmarks.

CBH continues to use the DASS-21 (Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale) to obtain a clinical measure of a consumer’s functioning in those three areas. The inventory is completed at the initial intake appointment and repeated six months into treatment. Thus far, 85% of individuals surveyed

showed an improvement in negative symptomatology when the inventory was distributed six months after admission.

The results of this year’s client satisfaction survey indicate a continued high level of satisfaction among CBH clients. This past year, electronic surveys were distributed to all clients via text, mail, and/or in-person, depending on client preference. Out of the 110 surveys sent out, there was a 24% response rate. As seen from the results below, there is a strong sense of satisfaction with services (100%) though there is a low response rate.



Some of the comments received by clients from the survey:

“My therapy has allowed me to reflect on my life, relationships, and work in productive ways”

“I appreciate the non-judgmental and empathetic environment that therapy provides”

“I feel better about myself”

Many people commented their relationships have improved, they feel better, and they have returned to work or school.

Fiscal Year 2025: For almost 70 years, CBH has been able to provide high-quality outpatient mental health services to the low-income adult population of Essex County. This remains the focus and mission of the department. By further maximizing slots and efficiency, CBH will continue to grow the census and be able to provide more services to more clients. While maintaining the department’s existing weekly drop-in support groups, CBH will add group therapy programming where appropriate. CBH continues to be a leader at emphasizing the benefit of in-person services and continues to offer and recommend in-person services to all. At the same time, CBH continues to provide telehealth to many who prefer this modality.

With existing partnerships already established, CBH will continue to outreach and collaborate with more community partners to provide more community programming and services. CBH is well poised to continue to be a leader in community mental health.

The Riskin Children's Center (RCC)

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 consultations. 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, with administrative support, 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.

Service Provision: This fiscal year, RCC provided mental health services to 53 individuals, 28 of whom were new to the department. Overall, RCC provided 795 units of service. Predominantly, RCC works with families who have Medicaid or are uninsured. For those who are uninsured, RCC offers services on a sliding-scale fee basis. RCC consumers are insured through Medicaid (96%) and self-pay (4%).

On June 30, 2023, the census of RCC was 25. Clients range in age from 6 to 18. The clients identify as the following for gender: 65% female, 30% male, and 5% transgender. The self-reported ethnicities of the clients enrolled with RCC are as follows: 48% Hispanic/Latino and 52% non-Hispanic/Latino. More specifically, the self-reported races of the consumers enrolled with RCC are: 59% White/Caucasian, 23% African-American, and 18% identifying as multi-racial.

Highlights of RCC:

- Expanded involvement of RCC in the community
 - Staff facilitated “Breathe In, Breathe Out”, a stress management workshop at Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey’s Teen Life Conference on March 15, 2024 with over 35 teens attending
 - RCC staff and interns also presented on mental health symptoms and treatment at Planned Parenthood events in the Spring
 - Staff facilitated an art therapy workshop focusing on Mindfulness at Montclair State University for teenagers in a pre-college summer program with over 20 youth attending.
 - Staff presented on mental health symptoms and treatment for 25 parents and educators at Bloomfield Township’s Back to School webinar
- RCC continues to offer services both via telehealth and in-person.
 - All new clients are assessed for their clinical appropriateness for telehealth to ensure that all clinical considerations are met before there is a decision made about the method of service delivery.
 - This fiscal year, 66% of all services at RCC were provided in-person, with the remaining 34% provided via telehealth.

- Group therapy program expanded with a focus of providing time limited in person groups focused around a particular topic
 - RCC held its first therapy group for those ages 9-12 entitled, “Mindful Warriors”, in July and August 2023. Mindful Warriors focused on anxiety reduction and increasing the ability to cope with anxiety.
 - RCC offered an arts-based workshop for those aged 12-14 to explore identity and self-expression.
 - Medicaid was billed for any client who had this insurance; a low-cost fee for the entire group set up for anyone without insurance.

Performance Indicators: The performance indicator, which measures efficiency in RCC, is the “wait for service.” This fiscal year, the “wait for an intake appointment” was 3.7 business days, and there was a zero-day wait for assignment to a therapist, as this occurred at intake.

To measure effectiveness with our clinical interventions, RCC uses a variety of validated evidence-based outcome measures. RCC has used the DASS-21 (Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale) for youth, 12 and older, in order to obtain a clinical measure of a client’s functioning in those three areas. The inventory is completed at the initial intake appointment and repeated six months into treatment. At this point, there has been an 85% overall improvement in symptoms.

This year’s parent/consumer satisfaction survey showed a 100% overall satisfaction rate. However, there was a very low response rate. We sent out 20 electronic surveys with 5 clients completing the survey, leading to a 25% response rate. See below for a sampling of responses.

I am happy with my therapist	100%
I would recommend my therapist to a friend if they needed help	100%
I feel I have made progress towards their treatment goals	100%
I would talk to someone else at RCC in the future if I needed to	100%
I am satisfied with my psychiatric care	100%
Overall, I am satisfied with RCC services.	100%
I feel my therapist treats me with respect	80%

Fiscal Year 2025: During this time, many other providers have chosen to remain telehealth. In contrast, RCC is upholding the long legacy of in-person services. With a new youth-focused LCSW clinician on staff, RCC is well poised to increase slots and be able to provide more services to youth in need. Group therapy will resume in the Fall/Winter to ensure that this valuable adjunct therapy can be offered to any youth who may benefit.

The continuation of RCC's partnerships with Planned Parenthood and other community partners will further expand RCC's footprint in the community. Waitlists for youth seeking mental health services remain long and limited. Many service providers continue to only provide telehealth and/or short-term services. With an expansion of RCC's capacity expected for this fiscal year, RCC will continue to provide high-quality mental health services for youth, including psychiatry. Today's youth face a multitude of mental health challenges and with less stigma associated with seeking mental health care, RCC is here to support and help.