



FACT Sheet: OCCMHA's Service Wait List, Healthy Michigan & the General Fund

About OCCMHA:

- Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority (OCCMHA) is the public mental health system responsible for identifying, influencing, and delivering services and supports to more than 23,000 Oakland County residents. These residents include adults and children with developmental disabilities; adults with serious mental illness or substance use disorders; and children with serious emotional disturbance.
- Assistance provided to individuals by OCCMHA's service network is funded primarily through Medicaid, as well as the State's General Fund, Healthy Michigan, and Local dollars from Oakland County.
- In 2014, OCCMHA received a \$14 million Medicaid rate reduction. This reduction is the result of the Michigan Department of Community Health's (MDCH) actions to establish a uniformed Medicaid state funding average for all of Michigan's ten community mental health regions.
- Prior to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicaid Expansion (Healthy Michigan), OCCMHA used its unrestricted General Fund dollars to meet a community need that is now being addressed by both of these valuable healthcare plans.
- Recently, the State removed \$20 million of General Fund dollars from OCCMHA's budget. This decision was made with the understanding that many people who had been receiving services through the General Fund would now be insured through Healthy Michigan.
- Federal restrictions regarding the use of Healthy Michigan funds have resulted in an \$8 million General Fund shortage for OCCMHA.
- In response to the reduction in General Fund dollars, OCCMHA has changed its service guidelines to agree with the ACA and Healthy Michigan. These guidelines include the creation of a Service Wait List to be used by Common Ground during the eligibility/access process. The wait list took effect on July 15, 2014.

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OCCMHA Service Wait List Details:

- All persons requesting out-patient services that require the use of General Fund dollars, and whose service needs meet the service priority guidelines, will be placed on OCCMHA's new "Service Wait List."
- People are only added to the Service Wait List after Common Ground has assessed and provided for their immediate crisis/emergency needs and the situation is stabilized.
- OCCMHA's Service Wait List and services are only available to people who do not appear to be eligible for Healthy Michigan, Medicaid, or MICHild. Common Ground will help to determine a person's eligibility for these insurance plans.
- Since people with developmental disabilities who are over the age of 18 should be eligible for Medicaid, they will not be added to the Service Wait List. Youth with developmental disabilities should be covered by their parent/guardians' private insurance or Medicaid plan, and also will not be added to the Wait List. Common Ground will help to determine the family's eligibility for Healthy Michigan, Medicaid, or MICHild.
- If it appears that an individual qualifies for Healthy MI benefits, Common Ground will connect him/her with an OCCMHA service provider. Both Common Ground and the service provider can assist in the Healthy Michigan application process.
- A person's position on the wait list is determined by the severity and urgency of his/her needs. "Severity Scale" guidelines used to evaluate an individual's situation are based on OCCMHA's level of care guidelines and risk assessment.
- Using criteria specified by OCCMHA, Common Ground and OCCMHA service providers have the ability to add an individual to the Service Waiting List.
- OCCMHA manages/monitors the list using a customized computer program to maximize the movement of people from the list to services. While new to Oakland County, wait list programs have been used by other public mental health systems in the state since 2010.
- All people who are added to the Service Wait List will be given a letter explaining the process and the steps they can take to have their situation reviewed and re-evaluated.
- Individuals who are currently receiving services from an OCCMHA provider and moved to the Service Waiting List, do have the right to dispute this decision through a Local Appeal. OCCMHA's Customer Services can assist individuals with their request. A Customer Services representative can be reached at (800) 341-2003.
- Individuals who are applying for public mental health services for the first time and are added to the wait list have the right to request a "review of decision" through Common Ground. OCCMHA's Customer Services can assist with this request as well.

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OCCMHA “Service Wait List” Q & A

1. Why am I on the “Service Wait List?”

You are on the service wait list because you have no insurance or your insurance does not cover the out-patient services that you are requesting. Also, funding is not currently available to offer you treatment. If the funding situation changes, you will be removed from the wait list and referred to an OCCMHA service provider.

2. What is a Service Wait List?

OCCMHA’s Service Wait List includes the name of individuals who do not have Medicaid, Healthy Michigan, or MICHild and whose service needs must be paid through General Fund dollars given to OCCMHA from the State. People are put on the list until funding becomes available to provide the services that they are requesting.

3. Why does OCCMHA have a Service Wait List?

OCCMHA recently received a reduction in General Funds from the State. General Fund dollars are used to serve people who have insurance, or no insurance, and cannot afford to pay for important health services. Examples of these services include medication, case management, and respite care. The decrease in funding required OCCMHA to revise its service delivery guidelines. While having a “Service Wait List” is new to Oakland County, many counties in Michigan have used a similar wait list system since 2010.

4. How does OCCMHA decide if someone can receive services or if they need to be placed on the Service Wait List?

The decision as to whether or not an individual is placed on the Service Waiting List is based on specific guidelines developed by OCCMHA’s staff. These guidelines evaluate the severity and urgency of an individual’s service needs first, funding availability, and if a person is eligible for Healthy Michigan, Medicaid or MICHild.

OCCMHA’s Service Wait List and services are only available to people who do not appear to be eligible for Healthy Michigan, Medicaid or MICHild. Common Ground will help to determine a person’s eligibility for these insurance plans.

Since people with developmental disabilities who are over the age of 18 should be eligible for Medicaid, they will not be added to the Service Wait List. Youth with developmental disabilities should be covered by their parent/guardians’ private insurance or Medicaid plan, and also will not be added to the Wait List. Common Ground will help to determine the family’s eligibility for Healthy Michigan, Medicaid, or MICHild.

Again, people are only added to the list after Common Ground has addressed their immediate emergency/crisis needs and the situation is stabilized.

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5. How are names listed: first come/first serve or by need?

Names are listed by need following the same criteria that OCCMHA and its service providers use to determine a person's level of care. These guidelines use objective measures to determine a person's care and needs.

6. How long will my name stay on the Service Wait List?

Currently, there is not a specific timeframe designated for how long a person will remain on the Service Wait List. OCCMHA's goal to move people from the wait list to receiving services as soon as possible. Again, unless the situation is a crisis, this too is impacted by the availability of funds.

7. How will I know when my name is taken off the Service Wait List?

You will be notified when you have been transitioned from the "Wait List" to receiving services status. Your name will also be removed from the list if you move out of the county or state.

8. What if I disagree with the decision that my needs are not severe or urgent enough to receive services?

Individuals who are currently receiving services from an OCCMHA provider and moved to the Service Waiting List, do have the right to dispute this decision through a Local Appeal. OCCMHA's Customer Services can assist individuals with their request. A Customer Services representative can be reached at (800) 341-2003.

Individuals who are applying for public mental health services for the first time, and are added to the wait list, have the right to request a "review of decision" through Common Ground. OCCMHA's Customer Services can assist with this request as well.

9. What do I do if my situation begins to get worse or better?

If your situation changes and you want your name removed from the waiting list, or you are experiencing a mental health emergency, call 1-800-231-1127 or go to Common Ground located in the Resource & Crisis Center, 1200 N. Telegraph, Bldg. 32E, Pontiac.

10. Is there somewhere I can go for help until I begin receiving public mental health services?

Common Ground will connect you with local community service organizations to assist you until your name is removed from the Service Wait List and you began receiving services through the public mental health system.

11. Is there someone I can call if I have questions or for an update on my request to receive services?

You can contact OCCMHA's Customer Services department toll free at (800) 341-2003.

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