

MICHIGAN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Michigan Mental Health Code indicates that the Community Mental Health Service Providers (CMHSP), such as Northpointe, provide services to those with Serious Mental Illness (SMI), Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), and/or Intellectual/Developmental Disability (ID/DD). This is often a point of confusion as the public may hear that a particular individual did not qualify for services. All requests for mental health services at a CMHSP in the Upper Peninsula are routed through an access process at NorthCare. A qualified mental health professional determines if the individual meets the criteria of SMI, SED, and/or ID/DD before he/she is referred to Northpointe.

Another point of confusion occurs around the type of insurance Northpointe and other CMHSP will accept. Medicaid is the primary funding source of services for ONLY those who are Medicaid beneficiaries. The other funding sources are General Funds (GF), provided by the State of Michigan, and Local Funds, provided by county governments, to provide services for those who do not have Medicaid including anyone with private insurance, Medicare, or who are uninsured. The priority population for a CMHSP to serve is the Medicaid and uninsured population. The number of non-Medicaid individuals who can receive services at a CMHSP is based upon how many GF dollars are available which requires the CMHSP to have guidelines in place to control GF spending.

In 2014 Michigan expanded Medicaid with the Healthy Michigan Plan and reduced the GF dollars provided for specialty mental health by 60%. This reduction resulted in many changes to the services provided by the CMHSP, including the need to prioritize those requesting services by severity and urgency. Northpointe has continued to serve all who meet criteria for specialty mental health services without any restriction which has left the agency in a deficit since Fiscal Year 2013. It has become critical to make the changes that the rest of the state has already made.

Specialty mental health services, as defined by Michigan Medicaid, will be reserved for Medicaid beneficiaries and a limited benefit package has been created for all others. Those individuals who qualify for services but do not have Medicaid will be assessed by a qualified mental health professional to determine level of urgency and severity and placed on a Priority List. The Priority List will ensure those who are the most severe receive services first. Northpointe will also assist individuals who do not wish to be placed on the Priority List with connection to other community providers.

Crisis services will not be affected for anyone who calls the crisis line which is available 24/7 or who presents to our office Monday-Friday from 8am-4pm in Dickinson, Iron, or Menominee Counties. Northpointe will continue to provide crisis services at the Emergency Department, in Dickinson and Iron Counties, for those who have Medicaid or who are uninsured. Crisis services after hours in Menominee will continue at the Menominee Police Station.

Jennifer Cescolini, Northpointe's CEO, stated, "Difficult decisions are not made without an extremely thorough review process. It is necessary to implement a Priority List to ensure that Northpointe is able to provide quality services, the individuals with the most severe illness receive the services they need, and that the agency operates within the financial means provided."

It is important that if someone needs mental health services that they contact the Department of Health and Human Services to apply and learn if they are eligible for Medicaid or Healthy Michigan. It is also equally as important that those individuals who are receiving mental health services ensure they follow through on the redetermination process so that they do not lose their Medicaid benefits. Northpointe has identified resources that will assist those requesting services or already receiving services with the process. Information regarding eligibility and how to apply for Medicaid or Healthy Michigan can be found on the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs> and on the MI Bridges website at <https://newmibridges.michigan.gov>.