



2023 Goals and Plans Form

Greene County Mental Health

Goal 1: Advocate at the local, state, and federal level for a better understanding of the housing crisis, as it negatively impacts not only the workforce on all levels, but specifically our healthcare system and the individuals we represent in the LGU. Understanding the issues that we face, how it impacts our residents and economy and advocate for resources directly related to housing.

Goal 2: Work with local government and transportation agencies to improve and expand access to transportation across the county that will allow for individuals and families to access services within the county.

Goal 3: Work with local governmental, non-profit, and for profit agencies to create flexibility, hybrid work options when appropriate, and continue to advocate for high wages across all systems to attract and retain qualified staff.

Annual and intermediate plans for addiction services:

Twin County Recovery Services, the SUD provider for Greene County transitioned its men's, and women and children's residential programs from an OASAS Part 819 Halfway House to an OASAS Part 820 Reintegration Residential Program. At the Catskill women and children's Riverside Residence, clients live in a healthy, supportive environment where activities are client-centered and focused on need while considering the strengths and challenges of each client. Persons appropriate for these services are transitioning to long term recovery from substance use disorder and independent living in the community.

Clients are encouraged to engage in an outpatient program and, in collaboration with outpatient counselors, may explore the following areas:

- 1) additional case management to pursue the enhancement of life skills and/or parenting skills
- 2) attainment of employment and/or educational opportunities
- 3) expansion of sober social and recreational activities

Twin County Recovery Services continues to pursue an expansion of Riverside in order to provide more treatment opportunities for women and women with children.

Twin County Recovery Services provides Intensive Outpatient Services, Outpatient Services, and Peer Support Services, and the Impaired Driver Program at its outpatient clinic allocations. Twin County Recovery Services recently hired a full-time addiction medicine prescribing Physician's Assistant. Twin County Recovery Services plans to increase access to Medication Assisted Treatment through outpatient services and expand its Continuing Care Program.

The Greener Pathways Mobile Outreach service meets individuals where they are at in their recovery journey. It is a Peer Support Service Program present in communities throughout Greene County making connections to substance use disorder services, and other human service's needs. The Greener Pathways Mobile Outreach team is adding the services of an addiction Medicine prescribing Physician's Assistant. Greener Pathways hopes to increase its presence in Greene County communities, where and when needed.

The addition of the Physician's Assistant can improve mobile services in the rural areas of Greene County. Greener Pathway's staff continue to meet with Greene County ODMAP response team members to further responses to overdoses in the County. Greener Pathways staff continues a referral planning process with the Catskill Police Department and Catskill Ambulance.

The county Mental Health clinic and Family Planning clinic continue to coordinate and expand access to MOUD, Narcan, and Fentanyl test strips to clients. The Greene County Public Health Department (Family Planning Clinic) has received approval from the insurers to continue to treat the pregnant patients they have on MOUD throughout their pregnancy if they desire. This is an access change for the Family Planning clinic and should benefit this higher risk population.

Annual and intermediate plans for developmental disability services:

Plans for OPWDD services include to re-establish connections with the school districts to enhance Front Door eligibility referrals, School to Work and other programs and enlist the assistance of School Resource Officers who may be able to identify and refer school age children.

The LGU plans to expand OPWDD Sub Committee membership to include all service agency representatives, local college representative, school CSE committee chairs, and other key stakeholders.

Staffing continues to be a high priority. Lack of staffing has led to decreased ability to support the needs of consumers. Clients are being moved to different housing due to the staffing shortage and some state operated homes have closed. Marketing, bonuses, and increased wages have helped some, but efforts need to continue to recruit and retain qualified staff which will be advocated for at the local and state level.

As efforts to get information on OPWDD resources available within Greene County to parents, families, school personnel, and other stakeholders has proved challenging, the LGU will collaborate with OPWDD service providers to develop a county wide webpage resource page over the next year to make information readily and easily accessible.

As OPWDD requires psychotropic medication management be provided by a psychiatric prescriber and given the shortage of psychiatric prescribers within the county there will be a focus on bridging identified gaps in access to MH and psychiatry services.

Intermediate plans also include re-starting the Greene County Transition Council monthly meetings to better serve transitioning students, families, and increase a more cohesive planning process.

Annual and intermediate plans for mental health services:

Throughout the past year, Greene County Mental Health has been extremely short-staffed and barely able to keep up with the demand for services. On July 1st, 2022, the decision was made to place a temporary hold on accepting new non-acute clinic-based clients into the clinic. After three full months, GCMH began to re-open its doors to this subset of the population after the clinic reached adequate staffing levels. One goal for the next year is to maintain current staffing levels and to continue to keep our services accessible to all.

During the last quarter of 2022 and into the next year OMH is changing the operating regulations under which GCMH functions. There will be a transition from the Clinic Model to the Rehab Model. With this transition comes opportunity for new and expanded services.

Already, GCMH has offered peer services through a Family Peer Advocate. This has proven to be an important and valuable service. It is our plan to continue that services under the new Rehab Model and to also expand peer services in other ways under these new regulations. Specifically, plans are coming together to begin to offer youth peer services that might ultimately help with engagement and possibly as a support to the schools.

For many years now, GCMH has had school-based satellites in many of the schools providing clinicians to be onsite in the schools and embedded with school staff to provide an extremely comprehensive and collaborative treatment program to children in those districts. There is currently talk of expanding those services into additional schools. While this isn't for certain yet, this may be an initiative identified for 2023. Columbia Memorial Health operating the Article 28 inpatient psychiatric unit serving both Greene and Columbia counties is working with the Wellness Hub initiative in Columbia County to locate an Acute Psychiatric Day Program in the to- be constructed Wellness Hub in Columbia County.

This intermediate level of care is intended to fill the gap in Mental Health Services that exists in Green and Columbia Counties between the Inpatient Psychiatric level of care and traditional outpatient services.

The Mental Health Association of Columbia Greene Counties has had a significant turnover in staffing over the past several months. Immediate plans include workforce recruitment and retention. MHA operates the county's only community residence, in addition to CAP and SHUD housing programs, care coordination, Home and Community Based services, PROS (Personalized Recovery Oriented Services), and the Mobile Crisis Assessment Team.

In April 2021 the Greene County PROS location was closed and services were moved to Columbia County with satellite locations throughout Greene County. Greene county clients served are able to attend the Columbia County site, however intermediate goals include making the PROS program more accessible to Greene County residents in need of this service by offering programming three full days a week in one location in Greene County verses having clients going to different sites on different days.

The Mobile Crisis Assessment Team operating since 2015 was initially funded by OMH to provide services 8 hours per day. In 2017 expanded funding to increase services to 10 hours per day was provided under DSRIP funds which ended in June of 2021. The Healing Communities Study working with Greene County to decrease overdose deaths

provided funding from June 2021 to December 2021 to supplement state aid funding as sustainability for the MCAT program has proved challenging. Greene and Columbia Counties committed \$170,000.00 each for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 with the intent that billing for MCAT services would offset the need for some if not all of these funds. The LGU will continue to work with MHA and MCAT staff to support efforts in maximizing MCAT billing and contract management for future sustainability.

LGU Representative Name: Francesca Daisernia

LGU Representative Title: QA Coordinator/Agency Compliance Officer

Submitted for: Greene County Mental Health



2023 Needs Assessment Form

Greene County Mental Health

Housing Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Housing continues to be a significant challenge in Greene County. There is a lack of affordable housing stock which has only worsened since the COVID-19 Pandemic when downstate and out of state residents began purchasing homes in the county at high prices, therefore raising home and rental property prices.

Greene County continues to struggle with high need individuals who have both mental health and addiction issues, in addition to those who are released from prison or inpatient units and are placed in motels through DSS or the nearest homeless shelter, which is in Albany County. Less than favorable living conditions result in poor outcomes for these individuals who are most vulnerable. The lack of safe, supportive and appropriate housing for those with mental illness and/or substance abuse has continued to create a bottleneck in the local psychiatric emergency room and inpatient unit resulting in lengthy inpatient stays. This continues to be an ongoing trend that remains unchanged since 2018.

Meeting the housing needs of transitional age youth continues to be challenging, with 18-24 months being the wait time in most cases.

One New York State Operated OPWDD residence and one residence operated by The ArC of Mid-Hudson within the county closed in 2021 and 2022 leaving some consumers moved out of the county, at times quite some distance from family.

As of September 2022, 15 individuals are on the waitlist for SHUD housing, 1 of whom has been on a waitlist since 2017, 3 individuals waitlisted for CAP housing, and 3 individuals waitlisted for community residence.

Fair Market Rent prices in Greene County are high compared to the national average. This FMR area is more expensive than 84% of other FMR areas. Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Greene County is \$1,030 per month.

Compared to the rest of New York, the Greene County FMR area is more expensive than 70% of the state. (www.rentdata.org/greene-county-ny/2022)

Inpatient Treatment Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Currently the Article 28 inpatient mental health unit located in Columbia County, serving Greene County only accepts adults ages 18 and up. There is no inpatient unit for children requiring psychiatric hospitalization within a 50 mile radius causing an undue burden to families and resulting in prolonged ER stays as bed availability continues to be extremely limited. Almost all area psychiatric inpatient units have been on diversion frequently since the COVID 19 Pandemic due to lack of staffing.

Greene County has no inpatient detox or rehabilitation unit for SUD which requires residents needing this level of care to travel anywhere from 40 to 100+ miles for this level of care. Data from the New York State Department of Health Opioid Data Dashboard and County Opioid Quarterly Reports indicates that Greene County continued to rank higher than the rest of the state in 2019 and 2020 for opiate deaths, opiate related emergency department visits, newborns with Neonatal Withdrawal Syndrome, drug arrests for controlled substances (excluding marijuana), and alcohol related motor vehicle injuries and deaths, Cirrhosis mortality, age-adjusted adult binge drinking, and DWI arrests.

Respite Yes

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Youth Only

Need description (Optional): Greene County is in dire need of adequate respite resources. Greene County has 7 children currently receiving respite services, and 21 on a waitlist, with the longest waiting a little over a year for respite services. Staffing shortages have resulted in no overnight respite for children in Greene County and long wait lists often leading to increased strain on families and more hospitalizations as families are unable to manage behaviors in the home. This has been brought to the attention of OMH on numerous occasions with no action and little hope for change.

Transportation Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Transportation continues to be an identified area of need for the public, low income, and disabled residents of Greene County. Greene County government, in conjunction with DOT funding continues to provide financial support to this project which is operated by The ArC of MidHudson. Although expansion in areas serviced has taken place, there are still extended wait times for incoming or return buses and routes are not always feasible for those attempting to fulfil work requirements. (Employment sites and for the general public attempting to utilize this service to/from employment). For impoverished families there often few if any routes for families to attend community functions, sporting events for children at school, or grocery shop as there is a 2 bag limit per person with an extra fee for > 2 bags. The public transportation system does allow a passenger to use a deviation, up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile off the main route for those who cannot get to a scheduled stop. To do so, a reservation must be made, 24 hours before the end of the business day before the ride is needed. There is an additional \$10 fee, each way, charged for this service. This additional charge is burdensome for already impoverished families and seniors, especially given the rural and remote nature of the geography of Greene County. With Medicaid transportation providers there is a one hour prior to appointment pick up time which can become concerning in the winter months if the client is picked up at 8am, with a 15 minute ride to a facility that may not open until 9am leaving the client with up to a 45 minute wait in cold or inclement weather. Providers have attempted to work with these clients so they are not outside, however the one hour pick up time prior to an appointment has been problematic in the past requiring service providers to work with the MAS system closely to ensure client safety.

Workforce Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Workforce recruitment and retention continues to be identified across all systems as an area of significant concern. Workforce shortages have worsened since the COVID 19 Pandemic despite state incentivized bonuses to recruit and/or retain staff.

Low salaries coupled with the at times intense work conditions and expectations placed on direct care workers has made it extremely difficult to retain staff. COVID-19 Vaccine mandates have also affected staffing in all systems and impacted employer ability to recruit staff.

Psychiatric prescribing services remain in high demand with a statewide shortage of prescribers available, especially to those ages 5-18. Recruitment and retention of LCSW's and LMSW's in the area continues to be labor and time intensive with lowest salaries noted in Greene County compared to others in the Capital Region.

High rents and lack of affordable housing in the county has only worsened the workforce shortage as lower pay and higher costs of living make it more difficult to attract staff across all systems to the area.

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