

Toward Health and Wholeness

2017-2018 Report to Central District Conference

Oaklawn's mission statement describes "joining with individuals, families and our community on the journey toward health and wholeness." For the past 55 years, Oaklawn has provided innovative mental health and addiction services to our community. We believe one of the reasons we have been able to provide that care is because of our flexibility and awareness of new trends and policies that will impact our work.

Opioid Epidemic Response

The opioid epidemic has been far reaching in our community, but with new collaborations among local public health officials, the court system and Oaklawn we are all modernizing our approach to treat addiction.

Medication Assisted Treatment – Oaklawn has become a leading provider of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in our area. Currently, 30% of clients are utilizing some form of MAT which combines a chemical-blocker prescription and behavioral therapy. This has been largely successful due to unprecedented partnerships between area prescribers and our addiction department.

The Bridge

Another new project is the use of "The Bridge," a pain device that can reduce opiate withdrawal symptoms. The device is placed behind a client's ear by a psychiatrist and utilizes neurostimulation to lower withdrawal symptoms. One client going through withdrawal saw major improvement with shaking and anxiety within 10 minutes of application. We received a grant for 25 devices and are piloting the program in Elkhart County.

Drug Court

Oaklawn continues to develop strong relationships with our court systems. St. Joseph County has a long-standing drug court program where Oaklawn offers MAT and therapy options. Elkhart County is in the beginning stages of developing a drug court and we are working with them to determine what a referral process would look like.

The ACA and Mental Health Care

Unlike physical health, Medicaid is the largest payor of services across the country for individuals with mental illness and addiction. The health care expansion for Oaklawn has allowed more people to access services and be covered for their health care needs than ever before. We are very concerned about cuts to Medicaid and what that will mean for clients in our community.

Indiana also made the recent decision to add a work requirement to our HIP 2.0 program, Indiana's version of Medicaid expansion. This will be another barrier to get and maintain health coverage for our clients.

Breaking down stigma-literally

In a spirit of solidarity, Oaklawn consumers, staff and community members came together to break down stigma during Mental Health Awareness Month in May. Oaklawn's marketing team designed a large billboard with assistance from a local construction company that included the word "Stigma" spelled out in over 800 green tiles. Once we removed the tiles (stigma), a collage of local consumers and Oaklawn staff were revealed, along with a new message of inspiration and hope.



Counsel from the church

Oaklawn is one of 14 organizations sponsored by Mennonite Health Services, which appoints our CEO and board members, approves any changes to the by-laws and gives helpful direction and support. CEO Laurie Nafziger serves as the MHS board chair. We value the counsel we receive from our corporate and Foundation boards, as well as our Faith and Mental Health Advisory Board.

Submitted by:

Laurie Neumann Nafziger, President/CEO

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