

MDHHS awards grant to develop and implement statewide system of behavioral health mediation services

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The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has awarded Oakland Mediation Center a grant to develop and implement a statewide system of local mediation services to resolve disputes related to behavioral health services provided by Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSP) and their contract providers.

MDHHS Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Administration and MDHHS Office of Recipient Rights have partnered with community and advocacy partners to ensure that all people receiving publicly funded behavioral health services in Michigan have access to an independent mediation process to resolve concerns about their services and treatment. Currently, the CMHSP system serves more than 230,000 Michigan residents and the CMHSP Customer Services and Recipient Rights Departments receive a variety of inquiries and questions related to treatment planning and behavioral health services.

The use of mediation as a first step in the dispute resolution process fosters better treatment relationships and provides for a timelier agreement on what supports and services will be provided by the responsible mental health agency.

"The use of mediation has a proven record of successful outcomes in resolving disputes and allows the patient to be an active participant," said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. "It is exciting that we are able to provide mediation services to resolve complex behavioral health treatment needs in a meaningful way by bringing all parties to the table."

"We are honored to have been awarded this grant to provide a vital alternative to resolving service disputes for behavioral health service complaints," said Charity Burke, executive director of Oakland Mediation Center. "Within the next few months, we will be working with our counterparts across the state, MDHHS and local officials to ensure this program is offered to people that need their voices heard and conflicts resolved."

The project funded by this grant is expected to be fully implemented by September 2021.