



Washtenaw County Mental Health and Public Safety Preservation Millage

Service Expansion Announcement: March 2019

Service expansion

On May 1, Washtenaw County Community Mental Health (WCCMH) will extend services and service-navigation assistance to all county residents who are unable to secure community-based mental health and substance use services, regardless of their insurance type, location, or ability to pay for services.

In the interim, WCCMH is accepting referrals from front-line crisis response and stabilization providers—including Michigan Medicine, Packard Health, St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor, St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea, and others—that are experiencing capacity challenges.

What's changing?

Over the past several years, Washtenaw County Community Mental Health has provided 24/7 crisis response and stabilization services to all residents, but due to funding constraints, WCCMH was only able to offer ongoing treatment services to residents with Medicaid coverage.

Community Mental Health and Public Safety Preservation Millage funding will allow WCCMH to offer a broad range of treatment services—including individual and group counseling, medication prescription and management services, peer support services, substance use recovery and support services, and veteran support services—to any county resident who is unable to find a community provider that can provide treatment in a timely manner. These individuals will continue to be served by WCCMH until they can be referred to appropriate community partners and providers.

Interdisciplinary team

Since January 2019, when millage dollars first became available, WCCMH has hired and trained a number of new staff members—an interdisciplinary team with expertise in nursing, social work, crisis services, psychiatry, addiction treatment, and peer counseling—to build capacity for this anticipated service expansion.



This interdisciplinary team will work in tandem with existing WCCMH staff not only to support assessment, treatment, and referral needs for the broader community, but also to assist with community outreach and education, prevention activities, substance use disorder treatment and support, youth services, clinical services for those who require long-acting injectable medications, and group therapy programs for mental health and substance use conditions. Peer supports—provided by individuals with lived experience in recovery—will also be available.

CARES

“This is a significant expansion of WCCMH’s existing 24/7 mobile crisis response team,” says Trish Cortes, Executive Director of Washtenaw County Community Mental Health.



“While our crisis team has provided crisis services for county residents for nearly a decade, we are excited to have the opportunity to provide not just crisis services but stabilization services through our newly expanded team, which we’re calling CARES. The CARES team will be able to provide the right service at the right time and the right place for all Washtenaw County residents regardless of need, insurance type, or severity of illness.”

CARES (Crisis, Access, Resources, Engagement, and Support), will respond to crises across the county and will be an access point for mental health and substance use treatment and support services (including opioid treatment services); connections to community resources for health, behavioral health, and social service needs; engagement with community-based partners; and support for unmet behavioral health needs.

“While we won’t be at full staff capacity until May, we wanted to open our doors sooner than later to start serving residents with more complex needs,” says Kelly Bellus, Clinical Director of Washtenaw County Community Mental Health. “We will take patients from inpatient psychiatric units, anyone our crisis team engages in the community, and other referrals on a case-by-case basis before we open to the full community on May 1.”



Future investments

For the time being, CARES services will be provided from existing offices in Ann Arbor (110 North Fourth Ave) and Ypsilanti (555 Towner Street). Additional service locations, including a 24/7 observation and crisis response center in Ypsilanti and satellite sites, open by appointment, at locations in western Washtenaw County and Whitmore Lake, will be added throughout the year.

Ultimately, Washtenaw County Community Mental Health aspires to create a response system that allows individuals to see a clinician within 24 hours, and to offer alternative treatment options for jails, crisis residential homes, inpatient settings, and emergency rooms.

WCCMH is also working with community partners to develop new services, outreach activities, and educational programs around millage priority areas including supportive housing, justice-engaged youth, suicide prevention, and more.

Stay informed

To be notified of millage investment priorities, job postings, prevention programs, requests for proposals, and outreach activities, [sign up for periodic updates](#) from Washtenaw County Community Mental Health.

Remember

If you or someone you know needs assistance, call us 24/7 at 734-544-3050 or 1-800-440-7548.