

# “OUT OF MY MIND”

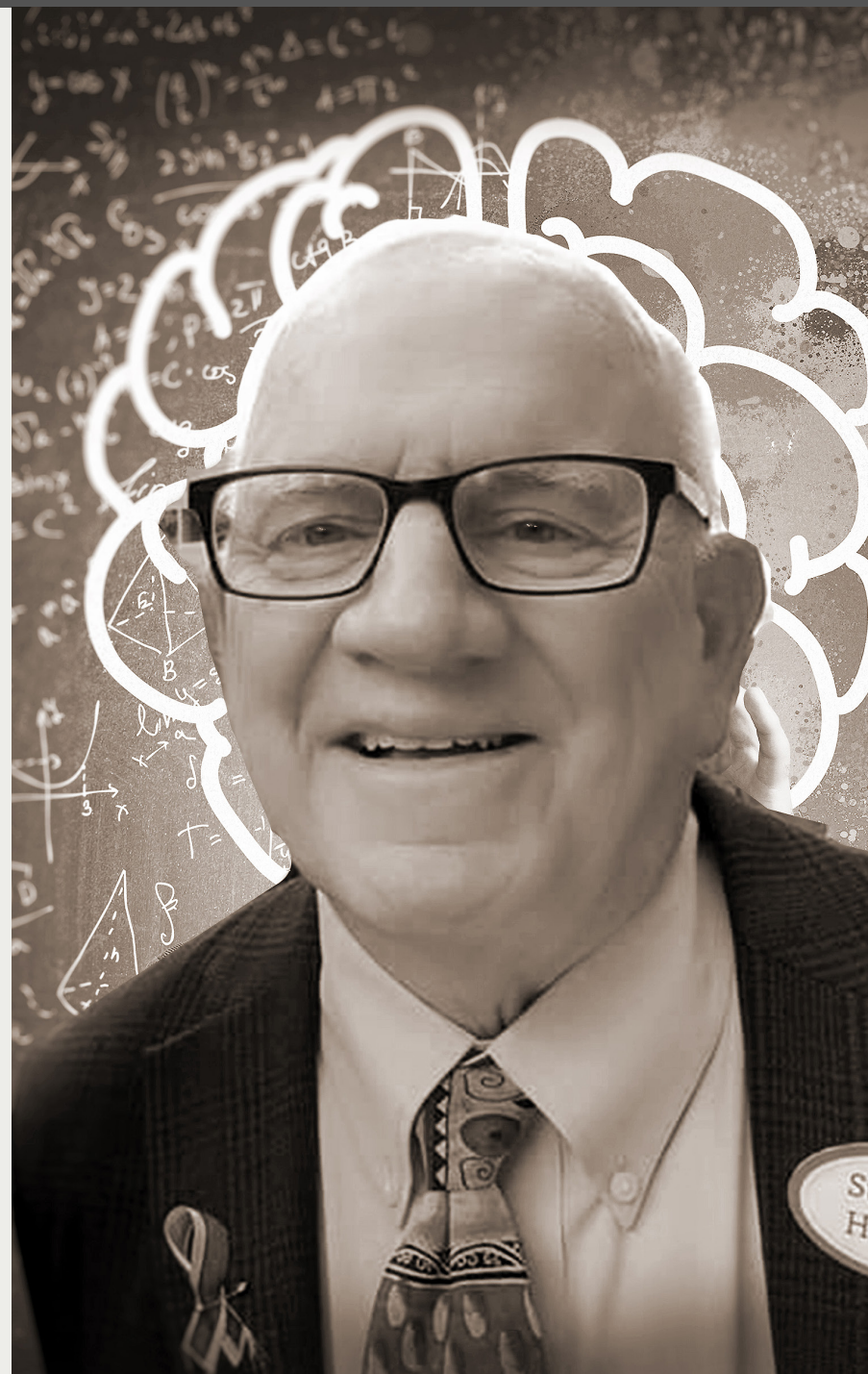
BY JAMES BLUNDO, MMHCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Now is not the time for MMHCA to be humble.  
Steering the ship named MMHCA gives me a  
reason to toot my horn.

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1. MMHCA played a significant role in authoring HB 4325. MMHCA started the bill moving through the legislative process early in 2019, which it allowed it to become a law (PA 96) when we needed it most.
2. I have been in weekly contact with our lobbyist, who arranged for MMHCA to be consultants regarding most mental health-related legislation and related bureaucratic issues. This consultation includes the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). This access gives us significant clout on behalf of counselors. These efforts have moved our profession to the forefront of mental health services in Michigan.
3. I am serving on the Board of Directors of the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) and the AMHCA Public Policy Committee. This appointment has allowed access to the latest on Federal Legislation like Medicare Inclusion for LLPC/LPC and VA inclusion.

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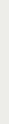
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4. I was able to work with David Bergman (AMHCA Lobbyist) to move the first stand-alone Bill HR 945 out of the House Energy Committee for consideration in the US Houses of Representative.
5. As Executive Director, I have steered the organizational structure to its highest level of internal and external functioning. Not only do we have an overall Strategic Plan. We now have strategic plans for each committee.
6. I was able to negotiate our first value-added program for a variety of insurances and other services through The Benefits Group and Aflac. I am presently negotiating health insurance coverage for active members. This benefit will more than pay for the \$100 per year dues. This initiative is the first of many other Affinity Program that will be offered exclusively to our 1075 members.

# MMHCA NEWS FLASH!

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- Dr. Katherine James is now serving a two-year term as MMHCA President. We are very fortunate to have such a highly qualified person at the helm. She is already leaving a positive mark on our association. Welcome, Katherine!
- We were invited by Governor Whitmore to offer input on her order for LARA to mandate Implicit Bias Training for all health professions. I have appointed Katherine to Chair a Taskforce to design and implement Implicit Bias Training for health professionals.
- We are working closely with the Board of Counseling and LARA to clarify and finalize Supervision Rules.
- We have confirmed that Medicaid will cover all available testing codes.
- We are consulting with Blue Cross for full coverage of available testing codes.
- I am developing a two-day statewide conference for next spring on Trauma related to PTSD, COVID, etc. Watch for details.





- Finally, we want to recognize Napoleon Harrington, immediate past president of MMHCA, for being selected The AMHCA Mental Health Counselor of the Year. He is being recognized for his efforts to help engage thousands of counselors to support the passage of PA 96 of 2019.
- And we want to recognize Andrea Cascarilla, our retained lobbyist, for being selected to receive the AMHCA Presidents Award for her significant effort to negotiate the passage of the bill that protects our Scope of Practice, including the ability to diagnose. PA 96 of 2019 passed and was signed into law on October 29, 2019.
- Thank you for your commitment, Napoleon and Andrea!
- Dr. Elizabeth Teklinski is our new Publications Chair and Newsletter Editor. As you can see, she is creating a whole new level of expertise. What a great job!
- Please follow us on Facebook and other social media and please join or renew online at [www.mmhca.org](http://www.mmhca.org)
- For further information or questions, please contact me at [jamesblundo@att.net](mailto:jamesblundo@att.net).





# REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR MMHCA MEMBERSHIP EVERY YEAR!

- What other organization represents you better (and has recently saved our counseling profession)?
- MMHCA has your back. Help us continue our unprecedented and proven efforts to strengthen and protect our profession. Our MMHCA lobbyist continues to strategically position us to have a direct impact on Michigan Public Policy and National Medicare Mental Health Access Improvement.
- Our strategic plan is only as strong as our membership numbers (remember when thousands of us showed up in Lansing?)
- There is no comparison. Please encourage others to apply for membership and don't forget to renew every year!



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*“protects counselors like me”*