

Also in attendance was Assistant Commissioner, Children's System of Care, NJ's Department of Children and Families, Mollie Greene.

Speakers included Susan Gibbs and Deb McKernan-Ace. Susan is a mental health practitioner with experience working with children and families through the Children's System of Care, in an alternative high school, and an outpatient practice. Deb McKernan-Ace has been an Occupational Therapist for more than 30 years. She has extensive experience working with children and youth in the areas of mental health and sensory regulation. She is currently the Program Director for the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Rutgers University and is serving as the OT consultant on the Promising Paths to Success grant in New Jersey.

Tri County CMO also honored the legislative success and advocacy of Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli for championing legislation that improves and expands access to physical and mental health care – including addiction and substance abuse services. Most recently, Assemblyman Verrelli has focused on ensuring coverage for children under 18 with complex medical needs and has advocated for DHS to establish a two-year Regional Community Behavioral Health Pilot Program. In addition, Assemblyman Verrelli also sits on the NJ Legislative Disability Caucus, and participated in fall of 2021 in Tri County CMO's Town Hall event for families with youth with I/DD.