

Piece OF MIND

Spring 2017 Edition



Saving for Independence

Michigan's Lt. Governor Brian Calley speaks to attendees at the MiABLE kickoff event held at the State Capitol on November 1, 2016.

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State of Michigan Launches MiABLE Savings Program for Individuals with Disabilities

As of November 2016, Michigan has officially become the fifth state in the country to launch a disability savings program designed to help people with physical and/or mental disabilities put aside money to pay for qualified disability expenses. The MiABLE (Michigan Achieving a Better Life Experience) program is a 529A savings account, offering investment and tax incentives for families and others who wish to save for individuals with disabilities.

Signed into law in October 2015 and launched on November 1, 2016, MiABLE allows for individuals with disabilities to save money for their long-term care without jeopardizing benefits such as Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid or Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).

Unlike traditional savings accounts, funds in ABLE savings accounts are disregarded for means-tested assistance programs. This means the account will not be looked at when applying and qualifying for certain public benefits.

Until the ABLE act was introduced, individuals who received Medicaid and other benefits were limited to \$2,000 worth of assets. For many people, a small paycheck or inheritance could put them over that limit and cause a decrease or suspension of benefits. Now, MiABLE account holders can accrue up to \$100,000 without fear of losing any of their disability benefits.

“The Able Act is the most substantial reform for people with disabilities since the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed in 1990,” Lt. Gov. Brian Calley said in a statement at the MiABLE kickoff event in Lansing on November 1, 2016. “Michiganders with disabilities will now have the freedom to save money and plan for the future without jeopardizing any state or federal disability benefits. By removing barriers, we can help all Michiganders live self-determined, independent lives.”

Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) Board Member and consumer Mike Cierzniwski attended the kickoff event in Lansing with Ryan Mulder, Executive Assistant to SCCMHA CEO Sandra Lindsey, where he signed up for his own MiABLE account. “It was such an honor for me to be a part of this event,” Cierzniwski said. “Not only did I get to witness history happening in person, I got to be a part of it when I opened my own account.”



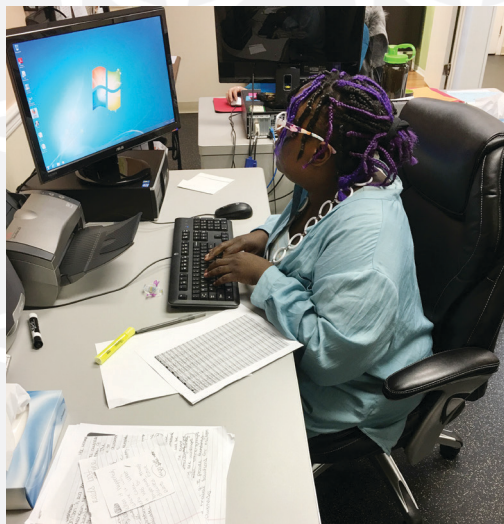
Achieving a Better Life Experience

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Setting the Bar

Bayside Clubhouse Implements Changes in Bid for Accreditation

For Bayside Clubhouse, 2017 will be a year of action as they work toward their goal of accreditation through Clubhouse International. In a statutory requirement put forth by the State of Michigan on December 1, 2015, all organizations operating as a clubhouse model must acquire and maintain accreditation by 2018. Bayside has been hard at work to meet that standard.



Clubhouse member Alisha Barnes prepares to update records for Medicaid billing purposes. At Bayside, members are responsible for tasks that are vital to the day-to-day operations of the clubhouse.

all areas of its operation, with members and staff working side-by-side as colleagues. Opportunities such as supports and services related to employment, education, housing, community inclusion, wellness, community resources, advocacy and recovery are provided within the clubhouse. Through involvement, members achieve or regain the confidence and skills necessary to lead satisfying, meaningful lives while successfully managing their mental illness.

“The accreditation process officially started for us last year when staff members and I went to a two-week training at Genesis Club in Massachusetts,” said Bayside Program Supervisor Jim Nesbit. “We were mentored by their staff and members on the whole process and what we needed to do to get things moving. It was intense, but we walked away with a detailed action plan and a sense of direction.”

Accredited clubhouses must meet 37 standards ranging from membership, relationships, clubhouse space, work-ordered day, employment, education, clubhouse functions, funding, governance

Bayside Clubhouse follows the standard clubhouse model, operating as a community-based program organized to support individuals living with mental illness. Through what is referred to as the work-ordered day, Bayside provides opportunities for member involvement and ownership in

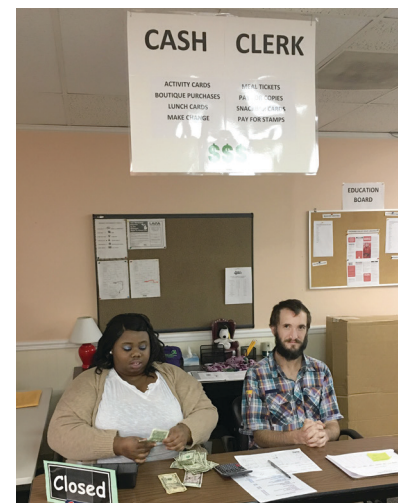
and administration. Based on those standards, Bayside staff and members then developed a set of four overarching goals to help restructure the program and prepare for the accreditation process.

“I think some of the biggest changes we’re implementing come from our goal to offer more meaningful and varied options for our work-ordered day,” Nesbit said. “We originally had four different work units – Kitchen, Snackbar, Administration and Boutique. Moving forward with accreditation, we’ve combined all of these units into either Business or Culinary. This not only creates more variety in available work for all members, but it allows for the development of some more really meaningful opportunities that are vital to the day-to-day operation of the clubhouse.”

Other goals that staff and members are working on include increasing member enrollment, developing a strong and effective employment program and developing an advisory committee made up of members, staff and the local community. Once the action plan is officially put into motion, Bayside will schedule a site visit with members from Clubhouse International who will evaluate their progress, offer recommendations for moving forward and award accreditation status.

“It’s definitely a long, involved process, but everyone is working really hard to reach this goal,” Nesbit said. “Some operational changes are going to take place, but we’re still going to be the same Bayside that members know and love. And we’re going to be able to serve members so much more effectively moving forward under the accreditation standards. That makes all of the work worth it.”

For more information on Bayside Clubhouse and involvement opportunities, find them on Facebook at [facebook.com/baysidelodgeclubhouse](https://www.facebook.com/baysidelodgeclubhouse) or stop by for a tour. Bayside is located at 2700 W. Genesee Avenue in Saginaw.



Bayside members Jasé Starnes (left) and Michael Jerry (right) reconcile the cashbox at the end of the business day as part of their duties in the Business Unit.

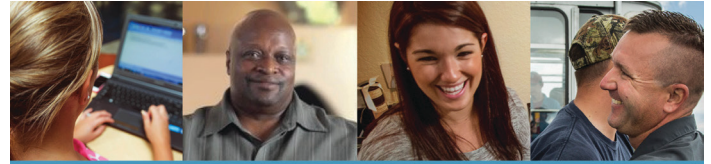
Understanding Trauma

Beyond the Diagnosis in Veterans

When trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are discussed, the first thing many people think of is veterans of war. While rates of PTSD for veterans of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom range between 11-20%¹, rates for veterans of the Gulf War range around 12%², and rates for veterans of the Vietnam War range around 15%³, PTSD isn't a diagnosis that is exclusive to military personnel. PTSD can occur in anyone who has experienced any form of traumatic event such as violence, death, life threatening situations and sexual assault, and can take on many forms when symptoms begin to surface. Because of the common, but often unrecognized, symptoms of trauma, the United States Senate and National Center for PTSD designated June as National PTSD Awareness Month to shed light on this mental health diagnosis.

Robert (Bo) White, Infant Mental Health Supervisor at Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) and childhood trauma expert, spends much of his time working with children in the Saginaw community who have experienced significant traumatic events at an early age. "It's important to remember that any child old enough to laugh and experience pleasure can also experience grief and trauma," he explained. "The terror and uncertainty of trauma can set off survival mechanisms such as freeze, fight or flight. But when resistance or escape isn't possible, the result is hopelessness and overwhelming fear which can eventually materialize as PTSD."

Symptoms of PTSD can start soon after a traumatic event, or may take months or years to appear. Common symptoms experienced include reliving the traumatic event or flashbacks, avoiding situations or people that remind you of the event, excessive negative beliefs and feelings such as guilt and shame, and constantly feeling alert or on the lookout for danger (commonly referred to as hyperarousal). People dealing with PTSD can also experience feelings of hopelessness, shame, or despair; depression or anxiety; drinking or drug problems; physical symptoms or chronic pain; employment problems and relationship problems. According to White, symptoms of PTSD in children can be expressed as mistrust, guilt, shame and doubt, perceived inferiority to other children and role (identity) confusion.



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"Children that are five and under have the greatest reactivity and are at the greatest potential for harm as a result of trauma," White explained. "At that age, trauma can alter brain function and the brain's basic architecture. But if trauma and its symptoms are recognized, treatments can be very effective."

Evidence-based treatments for victims of trauma at any age are available through SCCMHA, including but not limited to Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Short Term Trauma & Loss Intervention with Children (TLC) and Emotional Freedom Techniques. If you or someone you know has been a victim of a traumatic event and is expressing symptoms of PTSD, contact Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority at 989-797-3559 for more information on how to get help.

For more information on how to raise awareness about PTSD and how you can get involved in National PTSD Awareness Month, visit ptsd.va.gov.

1 <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/how-common-is-ptsd.asp>

2 <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/how-common-is-ptsd.asp>

3 <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/how-common-is-ptsd.asp>

Out of the Shadows

Celebrating Mental Health During the Month of May and Every Day



For decades, mental illness was talked about in hushed tones and behind closed doors. More often than not, people suspected of suffering from mental ailments and “deficiencies” were sent to long-term treatment facilities or hidden from the outside world. Lack of understanding and fear drove much of the treatment decisions that were made when psychiatric care first became widely recognized – in many ways we are still fighting the stigma today that was created by the limited knowledge that was

available back then, but we sure have come a long way. And that’s something to be celebrated.

Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed during the month of May in the United States since 1949, reaching millions of people through the media, local and national events. Created by the Mental Health America organization (then known as the National Association for Mental Health), its goal is to raise awareness and educate the public about mental illnesses, and to reduce the stigma that surrounds mental illness. Across the country, communities band together to plan events and stage campaigns – from lighting city hall up in green to family carnivals, fundraisers, and online social media movements, the nation stands as one to let people know they are not alone and mental illness is not shameful. In Michigan, mental health organizations, consumers

and advocates gather at the state capitol in Lansing for the annual “Walk a Mile in My Shoes” event, organized by the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards, where they have an opportunity to raise awareness about mental illness and advocate for more robust mental health care laws with their legislators. Locally, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) honors mental health consumers and community partners at the annual Everyday Heroes celebration at Horizons Conference Center. Individuals and groups are recognized for their personal accomplishments and work to provide the best care possible for Saginaw County residents.



“Providing exceptional care is only one piece of the puzzle in addressing the mental health concerns of our nation,” said SCCMHA Board of Directors Chairman Phil Grimaldi. “Stigma is a powerful deterrent to reaching out for help, and the only way to end stigma is to face it head on. Education and advocacy play an important role in moving beyond this stigma, and Mental Health Awareness Month is such a positive platform to achieve these goals. Big or small, every opportunity that Mental Health Awareness Month creates to bring mental health needs to the forefront of our conversations is a victory.”

If you’re interested in doing your part to encourage mental health awareness, wearing a green ribbon or reaching out to your legislators is always a good place to start. To find legislators in your district, visit usa.gov/elected-officials. You can also connect with local mental health groups and organizations to find out what opportunities there are for you to get involved. Spend time digging around the Mental Health America website at mentalhealthamerica.net for information and resources too. But the most important thing you could do is to be a beacon of hope for someone in need. If someone you know is going through a difficult time, reach out and be there for them. If you’re going through a difficult time yourself, don’t try to manage it on your own – reach out to someone who will listen and support you.

And by all means call us at 989-797-3400; or if you or a loved one are in a psychiatric or substance abuse emergency, call our Crisis Services Department 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week at 989-792-9732. If you observe someone who is an immediate threat to themselves or someone else call 911. We will work with law enforcement once they have stabilized and protected the circumstance.





Quintin Blackwell shares his excitement after receiving an Everyday Hero award at the 2016 ceremony.



Representatives from Health Delivery Inc. (now known as Great Lakes Bay Health Centers) accepted the Eileen & Lou Vescio Leadership, Advocacy and Family Support Award at the 2016 ceremony.

No Cape Needed – Celebrating the Heroes All Around Us

Heroes come in all shapes and sizes – they may wear masks and capes on the big screen, they can be men and women in uniform, or even good Samaritans that help a stranger in need. For the past 14 years, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) has celebrated Everyday Heroes, big and small, by honoring consumers and their families for successes, personal growth, and participation and leadership skills, as well as community volunteers and organizations who contribute to the mission and vision of SCCMHA.

The annual Everyday Heroes Banquet is held at Horizons Conference Center in conjunction with National Mental Health Awareness Month to honor the heroes we interact with every day. It is a night of triumphant tales, laughter and (happy) tears, dinner and dancing. It's a night where we come together to share in the journey of recovery and celebrate the services offered in the community. Awards presented at the event include:

- Everyday Hero Award – given to consumers receiving services from SCCMHA or our network of providers who have attained personal success and accomplishment worthy of recognition.
- Agnes Rambo Quality of Life Award – given to an SCCMHA network provider that has demonstrated commitment to improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities living in a residential setting in Saginaw County.
- Bernice Barlow Community Partnership Award – given to an individual who has shown commitment to the power of partnerships with SCCMHA, which in turn has improved services for Saginaw County citizens.

- Improving Practices Champion Award – given to an SCCMHA staff member or network provider that has advanced the challenge of implementing Evidence-Based Mental Health Practices or Promising Practices in our community.
- Rapson Living the American Dream Award – given to an individual who has shown commitment to the vision of freedom, choice and independence and has helped turn dreams into realities for persons with disabilities in the Saginaw community.
- Eileen & Lou Vescio Leadership, Advocacy & Family Support Award – given to an individual who has shown commitment to leadership, advocacy and family support, which in turn has improved services to Saginaw County citizens.
- Special Hero Award – given to individuals or organizations that have attained success and accomplishment worthy of recognition.

This year's event is scheduled for Thursday, May 18th and SCCMHA is currently accepting nominations for all awards. If you know an individual or organization that deserves recognition, visit our website at sccmha.org/success-stories/everyday-heroes.html for information on how to submit your nomination. Information on sponsoring the event and purchasing tickets may also be found at the link.



Investing in the Consumer Experience

For the past couple of years, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) has been making some pretty noticeable changes to the 500 Hancock Street building. From entrances temporarily blocked off to the sounds of construction crews hard at work, it was impossible to miss if you stopped by for a visit. Now that the main construction project is all but complete and operations have settled back into a normal rhythm, it's hard not to notice the new layout and service structure that has been implemented. With an inviting new atmosphere and updated facilities to match the ever-changing world of mental healthcare, consumers and community partners are sure to feel welcome and valued when they come through the front door.

"I've gotten a lot of positive feedback from both staff and consumers so far," said Tim Ninemire, SCCMHA Director of Customer Service and Recipient Rights. "Between the updated furniture in the waiting areas, the cool new informational TV in the lobby, and the convenience of Customer Service staff now located right at the check-in desk to help with directing visitors to their appropriate appointments, people seem to be thrilled with the changes."



Customer Service member Liz Szul waits to greet visitors at the front desk of the SCCMHA Hancock Street building, situated in front of the Customer Service office area. It's here that she helps with check-ins and directs visitors to their appropriate appointments throughout the building.

In the previous layout, Customer Service staff were located in a separate office off of the main lobby and weren't as active in the check-in process for visitors, which was mainly overseen by security personnel. While largely responsible for coordinating communication, information sharing and daily organizational needs between consumers, staff and the community, Customer Service staff are now able to review consumer schedules in their individual charts upon check-in and direct them to appointments

more efficiently. This helps to reduce missed appointments or miscommunications in appointment times, resulting in more effective care for those we serve.

In addition to the updated Customer Service layout and process, the brand new Health Home and Wellness Center also took shape with the construction project. Once home to the Child and Family Services Unit at SCCMHA, this newly renovated space now houses Great Lakes Bay Health Centers' primary care clinic operations three



Front Desk Associate Barbara Beardslee (left) and Medical Director Administrative Coordinator Karen Becker (right) stand in the waiting area of the new Health Home and Wellness Center located in the SCCMHA Hancock Street building.

days a week, as well as SCCMHA psychiatry staff, injection nurses, clinical nurses and a lab. The goal of the Health Home model is to serve as a main access point for consumers to address all of their health concerns in one stop. Their mental health appointments, physical health appointments, laboratory testing needs and pharmacy are all in one place. All of these components work and communicate with one another regularly to make sure each consumer is getting the highest quality of care.

"We're continuing to adjust and make the best use of the space," explained Colleen Sproul, SCCMHA's Health Home and Integrated Care director. "From what I've heard and seen, both staff and consumers are excited about the new look and the modern services that accompany it. It was apparent that during the planning of the construction, a lot of thought was put into the look and feel of the space, but also the personal safety for everyone that would be utilizing it. Those details make such a huge impact on how well staff adjusts to the space and consumers adapt to the services."

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Great Lakes Bay Health Centers staff has the ability to meet with up to 15 consumers per day in the new space and are on site three days a week. Health Home staff meets with approximately 15 consumers per week outside of those three days and the lab can run up to five draws per day. In addition to these appointments, SCCMHA Medical Director Dr. Tadeo and her team also utilize the space to meet with their regularly scheduled consumers.

"I honestly believe that the renovation at our Hancock building speaks volumes to how much we are willing to invest in the consumer experience," Sproul said. "The space and the environment is a reflection of our intention to provide whole healthcare to those we serve. We want everyone who comes in to feel valued and respected when seeking help for their healthcare needs, and I think we did a pretty good job of achieving that goal. This wasn't just an investment in new chairs and art on the walls; it was an investment in our commitment to provide the best possible care in the best possible environment."



Flashback of construction progress at SCCMHA's Hancock Street building throughout 2015.

Continued from page 1

Cierzniewski is using the funds he earns from his service on the SCCMHA Board of Directors to fund his account, which he uses to help cover his living expenses, including rent and utilities. "The time I spend on the SCCMHA Board is really important and meaningful to me," he said. "It is life changing to have an opportunity to directly use the funds I get from this work without jeopardizing other benefits I receive. This is a chance for me to achieve some of my long-term goals and live a life I really want for myself."

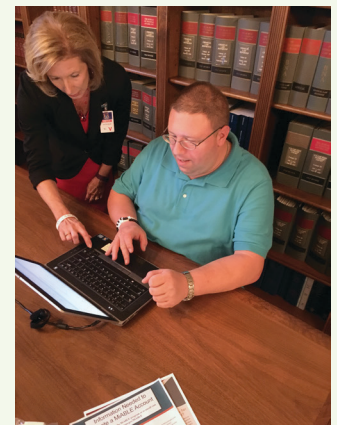
Funds in a MiABLE account can be used tax-free for a variety of qualified disability expenses, including:

- Education
- Housing
- Transportation
- Employment training and support
- Assistive technology and personal support services
- Health, prevention and wellness
- Financial management and administrative services
- Legal fees
- Expenses for oversight and monitoring
- Funeral and burial
- Other expenses approved under regulations

Michigan taxpayers can also claim up to a \$5,000 tax deduction for a single filer for contributions made to a MiABLE account, and up to \$10,000 for joint filers.

An individual, whose disability occurred on or before their 26th birthday, may qualify to open an account if they are eligible to receive SSI, SSDI, or have been diagnosed by a qualified physician with a physical or mental disability resulting in marked and severe functional limitations that are expected to last no less than 12 months.

For more information about the MiABLE program and to register for an account, visit their website at miable.org or call 1-844-656-7225.



SCCMHA Board Member and consumer Mike Cierzniewski signs up for his MiABLE account with guidance from a MiABLE representative at the kickoff event held at the State Capitol on November 1, 2016.

Holidays, Observances & Events in Saginaw April, May, June

April

*National Autism
Awareness Month*

2 – World Autism
Awareness Day

7 – World Health Day

14 – SCCMHA Offices Closed
in Afternoon for Good Friday

May

*National Mental Health
Awareness Month*

7-13 – Children's Mental
Health Week

10 – MACMHB Walk a
Mile in My Shoes Rally
in Lansing

18 – Everyday Heroes
Banquet at Horizons
Conference Center

29 – SCCMHA Offices
Closed for Memorial Day

June

*National PTSD
Awareness Month*

