



Newsletter

SPRING 2024 / VOLUME 26

Quarterly News & Updates



WARREN HUNTERDON SOMERSET
TRI COUNTY
Care Management Organization



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From the Desk of...

James Parauda

CEO

This year, Tri County CMO, as part of the NJCMO (www.njcmo.org) partnered with four other CMO's to host a legislator breakfast that was held on February 28th that focused on the current mental health crisis. Legislators were invited to hear from youth and family advocates that have been affected by the ongoing mental health challenges facing the families we serve as a CMO.

Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin was honored at the event for his development of the Children, Family and Food Security Committee, within the assembly. This new committee supports many bills that affect our CMO youth and family challenges, such as youth with problematic sexual behaviors, emergency mental health care needs and suicide prevention.

As Vice President of NJCMO, I spoke to attendees about the services that CMO's provide to the community and how they make a difference in the lives of youth and families throughout the state of New Jersey.

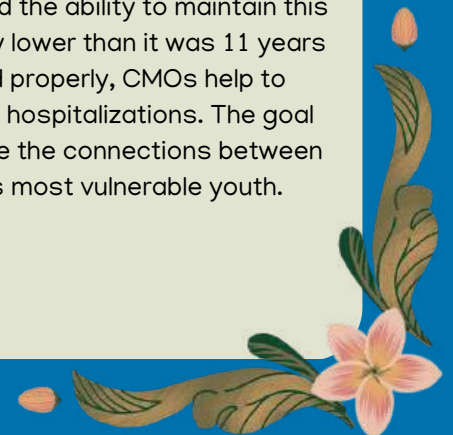
The presenter that touched the hearts of all in attendance was Patrick. Patrick, a graduate of CMO services, shared his personal experience related to managing his diagnosis of autism and building social and coping skills. He discussed how CMO has had a positive and life-saving impact on himself and his family. His humorous and honest presentation garnered a standing ovation! To hear more about his presentation follow the link. ([Youth Video](#))

Carrie Anne is a mother of six CMO youth who was there to speak on her experience with CMO and the tremendous support she has received from her in-home providers. Carrie Anne also advocated to her local legislators on the need for more children's mental health services in her county and in rural areas of New Jersey.

In addition to the youth and family, The Hamilton Lab of Rutgers University did a presentation about their ongoing research to inform suicide prevention programs and promote adolescent mental health in New Jersey. The lab is directed by Jessica L. Hamilton, PhD who is the Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology and Clinical Psychology PhD program at Rutgers University- New Brunswick Campus. For more information on the statistics shared in their presentation on suicidal thoughts and behaviors in NJ teens follow this link. [CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System 2021](#)

Shortly after this event, NJCMO hit the ground running in our advocacy efforts to increase the CMO's Medicaid reimbursement rates for the FY2025 budget year. With the CMO's annually serving over 30,000 youth throughout the state who need crisis or longer-term mental health care, we are the backbone of children's mental health services in New Jersey.

Care Management Organizations (CMOs) are currently facing an increasingly challenging financial situation as annual budgets continue to erode causing concerns about quality services and the ability to maintain this nationally recognized model. The CMOs' Medicaid reimbursement rate is currently lower than it was 11 years ago, although the cost of providing services has risen considerably. When funded properly, CMOs help to reduce out-of-home treatment stays, youth in detention centers and psychiatric hospitalizations. The goal of this annual event and advocating is to help legislators and the community make the connections between policy and funding and the delivery of crucial mental health services to the state's most vulnerable youth.





Youth Success Story

As the first youth that was ever assigned to Jay, Audrey holds a special place in their heart. Audrey and her family were dealing with some severe challenges that led them to seek help from TCCMO. Jay recalls seeing “tremendous growth” in Audrey from when she first enrolled in TCCMO. They attribute this to Audrey’s resiliency, her mother’s “endless love,” and the therapist who helped Audrey learn how to navigate her diagnoses. Finding the right school for Audrey was another pivotal moment in her journey; thanks to the tireless efforts of her care manager, she settled in at the Developmental Learning Center, was taken under the director’s wing, and has been thriving ever since. We know Audrey will continue to overcome any challenges that come her way and wish her and her family the best!



Community Corner

Tri County CMO’s very own Community Engagement Coordinators, Nicole Russo and Marlin Hernandez had the pleasure of being invited to Bridgewater–Raritan Regional High School to present to their staff on school avoidance. They presented along with the Education Partnership team from Somerset County. The team included Children’s Inter Agency Council Coordinator, Kristy Soriano, The director of Mobile Response and Stabilization Services, LaToya Zeller, DCP&P’s FSSI, Adam Pinkney, and Family Intervention Crisis Unit Clinical Supervisor, Rich Palumbo. The presentation consisted of success stories from each agency, reasons behind school avoidance, suggestions/ideas for transitioning students back to school, legal consequences of school avoidance, suggestions for parents, and lastly how to address and overcome cultural barriers.



Getting to Know TCCMO...

The HR Department

The HR Department ensures that TCCMO staff have what they need in order to support the youth and families that we serve. The department is led by Kimberly Camuso with support from Maria Alvarez.

Kimberly has been with TCCMO for five years as the Director of Human Resources. Her HR experience has been with companies providing a service to people in need, including nursing and rehabilitation centers, assisted living, and disability services. The companies have ranged in size from 60 employees to 19,000+ employees. Kimberly appreciates how dedicated TCCMO's employees are and the comradery of team members. Kimberly is thoughtful and considers different perspectives when addressing issues.

Maria is TCCMO's Human Resources Specialist and has been in this role for one and a half years. She finds fulfillment in working for an organization that is focused on making a positive impact on the community, particularly on assisting youth and families. Throughout Maria's career, she has held diverse positions that have equipped her with a wide range of skills and experiences. Maria holds her MBA and continues to demonstrate a commitment to learning, improving, and applying skills that can help the agency succeed.

"Maria is amazing at finding ways to streamline and improve our electronic processes. She is so patient and detail-oriented working on a project."
- Kimberly Camuso



"Kim's unwavering dedication to finding a solution to any situation, coupled with her understanding and compassionate approach, has truly made a positive impact on me and my colleagues."
- Maria Alvarez



Pride in Partnership



Tri County CMO (TCCMO) is pleased to announce that Kevin Dyches (Training Specialist), will be collaborating with the Somerset County Jail in the Raising Resilient Youth program for incarcerated parents. Kevin, who has been employed at TCCMO for 9 years, has developed a passion for assisting individuals facing adversity and when he was presented with an opportunity to provide parenting classes for those that are incarcerated, he knew that this was meant for him. While Kevin's fulltime job is at TCCMO, he is also a father, and his primary goal is to be a great father while being present for his children. Program participants have the opportunity to attend individual parenting classes where stages of parenting will be discussed and Nurtured Heart Approach techniques will be provided. This program is available to all incarcerated parents at the jail who are seeking to maintain relationships with their children. Kevin is hopeful that this program will provide an opportunity to overcome stereotypes that are often associated with individuals that are incarcerated and parents from various races and cultural backgrounds.



Growing Greatness



Many of us have had the joy of witnessing a child in our life taking their first steps. We do not scold them or lecture them for falling. We celebrate the small steps and encourage them to continue. Why is it that this mindset of celebrating baby steps changes over time? It doesn't have to be that way.


By utilizing the Nurtured Heart Approach®, we make every opportunity a moment for success, including all of the baby steps along the way. We are in charge of where our energy is going...are we going to use our energy to celebrate the small successes or are we going to use it to energize the negative? The choice is yours!

For more information on the Nurtured Heart Approach® contact
Nicole Del Duca at ndelduca@tricountycmo.org





Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International



A survey team from CARF International will be visiting us on June 17– 18, 2024 to evaluate how well we meet international standards of quality. The survey will tell us what we are doing well and what ways we might improve. As a result of this survey, we may earn accreditation. As a part of the survey, the surveyors will interview people who receive services, their families, our staff and others. If you would like to talk with one of the survey team members, please let one of our staff members know.



carf INTERNATIONAL

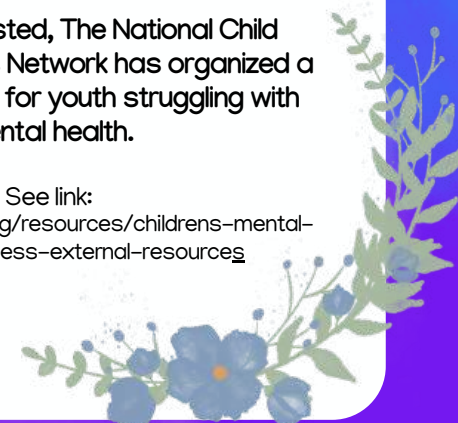
TCCMO Addressing Mental Health Crisis

In 1949, May was declared as Children's Mental Health Awareness Month. Mental health impacts all humans, especially the youth of our society. A healthy mind is a necessity for a child to develop appropriately and one day become a successful adult. Development takes many forms in terms of preparing a child for adulthood. Some areas include social, emotional, physical, and behavioral development. Tri County CMO takes pride in recognizing the importance of youth mental health and uses the Wraparound Model of Care to address the various areas of development that can be impacted by poor mental health.

**"THE CHILDREN OF TODAY ARE
LEADERS OF TOMORROW."
- NELSON MANDELA**

If you're interested, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network has organized a list of resources for youth struggling with mental health.

See link:
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/childrens-mental-health-awareness-external-resources>



Events held by TCCMO

Warren County's Annual Autism Acceptance & Special Needs Resource Fair

Tri County CMO collaborated with Warren County for their Annual Autism Acceptance & Special Needs Resource Fair in April in honor of Autism Awareness Month. Where we had local special needs agencies who provide an assortment of services come host a table where they were able to share information on their agencies to the community. We also had the pleasure of having special guest speaker Captain Gerald Turning Jr. of Blue Bridge Autism Training, which provides, Autism Response training to police officers and first responders. He provides safety education and coaching to special needs families seeking to build critical relationships with their local first responders.



Upcoming Events



Tri County CMO presents...

Nurtured Heart Approach

The Nurtured Heart Approach® is a philosophy for creating healthy relationships with people in your life.

THE NURTURED HEART APPROACH®

FOCUSSES ON:

- SELF-REGULATION
- TRANSFORMING THE WAY CHILDREN PERCEIVE THEMSELVES, THEIR CAREGIVERS, AND THE WORLD AROUND THEM
- TEACHING CHILDREN THAT THEY WILL RECEIVE RECOGNITION THROUGH POSITIVE BEHAVIOR
- SEEING INTENSITY TO BE A POWERFUL QUALITY THAT, IF DEVELOPED CORRECTLY, CAN DRIVE CHILDREN TO AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS

JULY 17th 2024 10AM-1PM

MICROSOFT TEAMS

To register please contact Nicole Del Duca via email ndelduca@tricountycmo.org or text 908-256-0254



WARDEN HUNTERDOON SOMERSET
TRI COUNTY
Management Organization

Family Support Organization
HUNTERDOON • SOMERSET • WARREN

Annual Family & Community Picnic

FRIDAY, JUNE 28
11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

SIGN UP HERE

Looking for a fun and relaxing way to spend a day outdoors? Join us for a free event for some fun, swimming and delicious food!

Forest Lodge
11 Reinman Rd
Warren, NJ 07059

RSVP BY JUNE 14 TO GUARANTEE YOUR SPOT!

This year the Picnic is supported by Paycom & Somerset Empower





June is Pride Month!

June is Pride Month! Pride Month is a month long celebration with events that honor the LGBTQ+ community, their history, achievements, and ongoing struggle for equality. Pride month began after the 1969 Stonewall riots which were undertaken for the cause of gay rights and liberation. To join the celebration, you can consider options such as attending a Pride parade or another event, educating yourself and others, supporting LGBTQ+ organizations through donations or volunteering, or advocating for LGBTQ+ rights by using your voice or posting on social media.

Events in the counties we serve

Warren County

Pride Day 2024 | DASACC

June 29, 2024 From 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Washington Borough Veterans Park, 44 E Washington Ave., Washington, NJ

Hunterdon County

Pride Parade

May 18, 2024/ starts at 11:00 am

Email flemingtonqts@gmail.com for more information

Somerset County

Pride Prom at Hillsborough Library

June 14, 2024 From 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

379 South Branch Rd., Hillsborough



Tri County CMO Board Members

Leslie Brusser – Board Chair
Daphney Rene – Vice Chair
Pam Jacobs – Treasurer
David Yazujian – Secretary

Erin Karl
Daniel Kerr
Lynne Eaton
Lesley Schwarzman

Melissa Fowler
Sakina Ladha
Avril Okeke
Alina Wells

How to Get Referred to Tri County CMO

PerformCare can help a parent or guardian connect their child to Children's System of Care services. PerformCare staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide assessment and guidance to families facing challenges to their functioning and well-being.

PerformCare / Contracted Systems Administrator (CSA)
1-877-652-7624

<http://www.performcarenj.org/>
<http://www.performcarenj.org/families/index.aspx> (video guide)

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