

Minnesota Counties



A quarterly publication of the Association of Minnesota Counties.

Lake County Commissioner Rich Sve Elected 2020 AMC President

Lake County Commissioner Rich Sve was elected president of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) at the Annual Conference in St. Cloud in early December 2019. Sve is the first Lake County Commissioner to ever hold this position.

As president of AMC, Sve will preside over board meetings, be the primary spokesperson for the association and represent AMC at both state and nationwide meetings. Sve will work with the AMC Board of Directors, which includes county commissioners from across the state.

"We cannot underestimate the value of our organization and the influence that 87 united counties has in Minnesota," Sve said. "AMC would not exist if not for your membership and it would not be the effective association it is without our engaged members."

Other 2020 AMC Officers include: First Vice President Todd Patzer, Lac qui Parle Commissioner; Second Vice President Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner; Secretary/Treasurer Larry Lindor; Pope County Commissioner; and Past President Scott Schulte, Anoka County Commissioner. ■



Rich Sve and wife Rhonda following his election as AMC President in December.

County Achievement Award Winning Program Profiles

WINTER 2020

January
February
March

VOLUME 64, ISSUE 1

By Ryan Erdmann, AMC Member Engagement Coordinator

Each year since 1977, the Association of Minnesota Counties has recognized valuable innovations and improvements in county government through its County Achievement Awards. Projects selected for an award must demonstrate at least one of the following criteria.

- The achievement may be utilized by other counties and/or provide lessons for other counties to draw from.
- The achievement is highly innovative in nature.
- The project resulted in tangible benefits for the county and/or community (such as reduced costs, higher efficiencies, improved systems or services).
- The achievement required substantial initiative, leadership and commitment.

Minnesota counties are innovative problem-solvers, and in order to further promote county excellence, collaboration and the sharing of "best practices," we asked the winning counties to share more detailed information about each of the four award-winning programs, including background on why the program was designed and how others could replicate in their own counties.

Continued on pages 10 -11.

Swift County Commissioner Gary Hendrickx Receives 2019 AMC President's Award

Swift County Commissioner Gary Hendrickx received an Association of Minnesota Counties' (AMC) President's Award for 25 years of dedicated service and exemplary leadership in county government. 2019 AMC President Scott Schulte (Anoka County Commissioner) selected Hendrickx to receive this honor.

The prestigious President's Award is presented to an individual who has a deep history of public service to their community and to their county.

Commissioner Hendrickx was first elected to the county board in 1996 and has served the public for more than 22 years. Within Swift County, he is known for being supportive of staff development by encouraging staff to broaden their thinking beyond their individual job. He is also a champion for the professionalization of county government through development of county administration and human resources.

Hendrickx is a champion of joint powers work as a method to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of his rural area. He has served on the Regional Development Commission, Woodland Centers Mental Health Board, the Private Industry Council, 6W Community Corrections, Southern Prairie Community Care, and PrimeWest.

As AMC president in 2017, Hendrickx transformed the governance of the association by pushing the board to think strategically and generatively while chairing AMC's first Governance Committee. AMC has turned to Hendrickx many times over the years for leadership on challenging topics, like mediation for health care procurement. ■



President's Award winner Swift County Commissioner Gary Hendrickx (left) and Scott Schulte, Anoka County Commissioner and 2019 AMC President (right).

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Happy New Year!

By Rich Sve, Lake County Commissioner, 2020 AMC President

As renditions of *Auld Lang Syne* fade now that we're settled into the new year, I'm thinking about the lyrics of the song asking if there is a need to abandon all past endeavors, while suggesting that we look fondly on deeds done and acquaintances made...and yet a new year seems to suggest the need for change and the overwhelming need to put forth a New Year's Resolution.

I find myself reflecting and reminiscing of resolutions made in past years. The decision to no longer make those resolutions comes easy since keeping them has never seemed to endure.

This new year has me looking back over the past twelve months. Similar to a performance review, I'm asking myself, "what were the successes, the deficiencies, and which unfinished tasks remain?" Fortunately for our organization, together we have established an AMC 2020 priorities road map. Although a different type of New Year's resolution, it puts us in good stead for the upcoming session and prepared to continue the work for those we represent throughout the year.

The AMC Executive Committee met with Gov. Tim Walz recently to discuss our AMC Priorities and we spent some time on the transportation funding. We discussed with the governor our work to find solutions through the Bridging Divides Initiative, and how well our consensus building exercises worked during our district meetings.



From left to right: AMC Secretary/Treasurer Larry Lindor (Pope), AMC First Vice President Todd Patzer (Lac qui Parle), AMC President Rich Sve (Lake), Gov. Tim Walz, AMC Second Vice President Mary Jo McGuire (Ramsey), AMC Past President Scott Schulte (Anoka), and AMC Executive Director Julie Ring.

We covered a number of subjects with the governor during our short time together which included County Based Purchasing, Child Welfare and DHS accounting errors. All subjects were well received and of concern to the governor.

As a reminder before the start of the legislative session, taking time periodically to review our 2020 legislative priorities is beneficial. It will keep those items in the forefront and prepared to speak to the issues. Here is a quick refresher:

- **Environment and Natural Resources:** Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Funding.
- **General Government:** Preserving Tax Base and PILT Sustainability.
- **Health and Human Services:** Procurement/County-based Purchasing; Child Welfare—Reducing Disproportionality; Protecting Counties from DHS Financial Errors; Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Reform.
- **Public Safety:** Community Supervision.
- **Transportation & Infrastructure:** Transportation Funding; Bonding for Local Road and Bridge Programs.

You can find more detailed information on our state and federal legislative priorities by visiting www.mncounties.org/legislative.

Personally, I look forward to 2020 and its prospects, challenges, and rewards. We have an engaged membership, dedicated leadership, and a staff that ROCKS!

As we welcome a new year and a new decade, ask yourself, "What does 2020 hold for you? What does it hold for your County? What does it hold for our collaborative work at AMC?"

I look forward to working with each of you throughout this New Year. Let's all enjoy the prospects of 2020! ■

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To Contribute: Story ideas, articles and photographs are welcome. Please e-mail pizinger@mncounties.org.

Census Bureau Seeks Workers in All Counties to Assure Complete Count

The US Census Bureau is seeking applicants for hundreds of open census-related positions across the state of Minnesota. With competitive pay and flexible hours, census jobs are a great part-time opportunity for people to earn a good wage while doing meaningful work in their own community. County employees are encouraged to spread the word about the need for census workers, and to consider applying themselves.

Census workers will strive to count every person in every county. An accurate census is important because the results have significant political and economic impacts on our communities. They determine our representation in Congress, and help inform how billions of dollars are distributed for social services, transportation, hospitals, and more.

There are opportunities to work for the census in all Minnesota counties. In fact, more than two thirds of counties have filled less than half of the available positions. Open jobs include census takers, recruiting assistants, office operations supervisors, clerks, and field supervisors. With pay rates of \$16 to \$27.50 per hour, and flexible scheduling, census work is ideal for anyone 18 or older who wants to earn extra money - even people who have other commitments to work, school, or family.

If you know someone who might be a good candidate, or if you yourself want to help ensure that every Minnesotan is counted this year, you can call 1-855-562-2020 (select option 3) or visit the state's 2020 Census website mn.gov/admin/2020-census/ to learn more about jobs in your area. ■

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Federal Perspective

By Megan Knight, Federal Liaison,
Lockridge Grindal Nauen



U.S. Senate

Senate Passes USMCA Trade Deal, Delivering a Win to the President

The Senate approved President Trump's U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement on January 16, handing the president a major political win on the same day senators were sworn in as jurors in his impeachment trial. The Nafta overhaul, Trump's top legislative priority for the past year, cleared the Senate on an 89-10 vote and now heads to the president for his signature. The U.S.-Mexico-Canada agreement passed the House in December on a bipartisan 385-41 vote the day after the Democratic-led chamber voted to impeach Trump.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell applauded the trade deal as a rare moment of bipartisan cooperation. Democrats finally got behind the trade agreement in December after more than a year of wrangling with the Trump administration over changes to provisions regarding labor, the environment, pharmaceuticals and the overall enforcement of the deal.

Senate Sends Spending Bills to President Trump's Desk

Lawmakers have successfully finished the fiscal 2020 appropriations process, passing two major packages in both chambers that the president signed ahead of the December 20 deadline to fund the government. Appropriators cited the lack of interference from outsiders for the relatively smooth finish to negotiations. While the House's activity around impeachment drew much of the public's attention in the fall, top House and Senate appropriators ultimately reached a deal on all 12 spending bills and moved them through both chambers.

The Senate passed the eight-bill domestic spending package 71-23. That measure included Agriculture-FDA, Energy and Water, Interior-Environment, Labor-HHS-Education, Legislative Branch, Military Construction-VA, State and Foreign Operations, and Transportation-HUD appropriations. The Senate passed the four-bill national security spending package 81-11, which included Commerce-Justice-Science, Defense, Financial Services and Homeland Security appropriations. The minibus packages contain a number of significant funding increases and policy priorities called for by local government leaders. Among the changes, an increase of \$125 million for the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), totaling \$3.425 billion, which is the highest amount since FY2011; and an increase of \$100 million for the HOME program, totaling \$1.35 billion. The legislation also contained a full repeal of the 40 percent "Cadillac Tax" on premium health benefits for municipal employees and others relying on employer-provided health care.

Senators Klobuchar, Smith Announce \$22 Million in Funding to Help Rural Businesses

Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has awarded grant and loan funding to Minnesota totaling \$22,140,048 to help farmers and rural businesses reduce energy costs through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Grants totaling \$1,109,430 have been awarded to 32 Minnesota projects and loans totaling \$21,030,618 have been awarded to four Minnesota projects. Minnesota recipients can use REAP grants to install renewable energy systems—like biofuels or power generation from wind, solar, or biomass, for example—and make energy efficiency improvements. Funds can also be used on energy storage projects and energy audits.

Senator Klobuchar Leads Letter to Promote Broadband Deployment in Rural America

Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and John Thune (R-SD) led a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to promote the deployment of sustainable broadband networks as the FCC considers adopting new rules in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) proceeding. The RDOF will award high-cost Universal Service Fund (USF) support to deploy broadband service in rural areas. In the letter, the senators called on FCC Chairman Ajit Pai to ensure that broadband networks built in rural areas using these funds can keep up with future demands for speed and capacity and to hold support recipients accountable for providing adequate broadband service to consumers. The Senators wrote, "If our rural communities are to survive and flourish, our rural constituents need access to services that are on par with those in urban areas. By contrast, it would be an inefficient use of resources to promote services that cannot keep pace with consumer demand and the evolution of broadband in urban areas." Senators Klobuchar and Thune were joined on the letter by 46 of their colleagues, including Senator Tina Smith.

Senator Smith Continues Push for Rural Health Care with Pair of Bills

Senator Tina Smith (D-MN) is continuing to advocate for improvements to America's rural health systems with two bills that she is leading. First, Senator Smith is continuing her efforts with Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) to ensure new and expecting moms living in rural communities get the care they need by calling on Senate HELP Committee leaders to hold a markup for the *Rural Maternal and Obstetric Modernization of Services (Rural MOMS) Act*. Earlier this year, Senator Smith introduced the legislation after hearing from Minnesotans and providers about the struggles families face in accessing maternity and obstetric care in rural areas and small towns. The House companion bill advanced out of the Committee on Energy and Commerce this fall.

Secondly, Senator Smith and Wyoming Senator John Barrasso (R-WY), both co-chairs of the Senate Rural Health Caucus, announced the *Strengthening Our Rural Health Workforce Act*, which would continue the Primary Care Training and Enhancement program and guarantee that the training has a rural focus. The bill also improves recruitment of providers by funding area health centers (AHECs), which help recruit and support practitioners in underserved and rural areas.

Senate Committee holds hearing on PILT and SRS

On November 21, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to discuss Payments In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS). Mayor Stephen Prysunka from the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, testified on the impacts that payments to public lands have on his community's ability to provide services to residents and visitors. Mayor Prysunka made the case for long-term, mandatory funding for PILT and the importance of reauthorizing SRS until a permanent solution becomes law.

U.S. House

Congressman Emmer Secures \$10 Million for Mental Health Services in Farm Country

Congressman Tom Emmer helped to secure \$10 million for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) to give states additional resources to provide mental health services for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. The Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) was first authorized in 2008, but it did not receive any funding and therefore lapsed. Congressman Emmer introduced the *STRESS Act* in 2018, which would renew FRSAN, helping to support Americans in rural areas who suffer from a lack of access to mental health care. The *STRESS Act* language was included in the final version of the Farm Bill that was signed into law.

Congressman Stauber, Senators Announce \$2.1 Million for Little Falls Airport

Congressman Pete Stauber (R-MN-08), along with Senators Smith and Klobuchar, announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded the Little Falls/Morrison County Airport a grant of \$2.1 million for infrastructure improvements. The grant funding awarded from the DOT will allow Little Falls/Morrison County Airport to improve its infrastructure by constructing a runway.

Congressman Peterson Re-Introduces Promoting Rural Exports Act

Congressmen Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Kelly Armstrong (R-ND) have reintroduced the bipartisan *Promoting Rural Exports Act* in the House of Representatives. The bill creates a Rural Export Center, which will help rural businesses access international markets and work to increase their exports. The creation of a Rural Export Center within the U.S. Commercial Service will help these businesses across Minnesota and North Dakota, as well as rural communities across the country, increase their exports and grow their businesses.

Key Provisions of the *Promoting Rural Exports Act* include:

- Directs the Assistant Secretary of Commerce to establish a Rural Export Center at the U.S. Commercial Service to help rural businesses export their products;
- Requires the Rural Export Center to be centrally located and not in a major metropolitan area;
- Directs the Rural Export Center to provide customized market research services to help rural businesses target their exports;
- Directs the Rural Export Center to conduct strategic planning and export support services for rural businesses; and
- Requires the Center to make data relating to its effectiveness publicly available on its website.

Congressmen Peterson Introduce Bill to Help Rural Hospitals

Congressman Collin Peterson (D-MN) also introduced the bipartisan *Rural Hospital Frontier Workforce Fairness Act* to provide Sole Community Hospitals with increased funding to hire staff.

Under current law, Sole Community Hospitals in "Frontier States" benefit from the "Floor on Area Wage Index for Hospitals in Frontier States" to offer higher wages to employees. While this provision has been effective in strengthening the rural health workforce in Frontier States, it has placed nearby facilities in non-Frontier States at a significant disadvantage when competing for employees in the same geographic area. The *Rural Hospital Frontier Workforce Fairness Act* addresses this problem by applying the Floor on Area Wage Index for Hospitals to any Sole Community Hospital located within 75 miles of a Frontier State's border.

White House & Administration

Second Round of Reconnect Program Application Window Opening January 2020

The ReConnect Program offers loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in areas of rural America without sufficient access to broadband. The application window for the second round of funding will open on January 31, 2020.

The awards made under this program are designed to bring high-speed broadband to rural areas that lack sufficient access to broadband. The delivery of broadband connection and high-quality service seeks to enable technologies critical to rural communities, such as precision agriculture, and ultimately fuel long-term economic development and opportunities in rural America.

Continued on page 5.

Final Opportunity Zone Rules Expand on Safe Harbors

The Department of the Treasury provided an additional 62-month safe harbor for startup businesses seeking to qualify for the tax-advantaged opportunity zone program, the agency said in more than 500 pages of guidance. Treasury Secretary Mnuchin said that these regulations are designed to provide certainty for investors and expand the flow of capital into communities that have been left behind. The program was created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, allows an investor who sells an asset and reinvests the gains in a qualifying opportunity zone fund to defer taxes on the gains until Dec. 31, 2026. It also forgives taxes on gains from investments held in opportunity funds for at least 10 years. Currently, 8,764 census tracts have been designated as opportunity zones by state and local officials.

USDA Announces \$550 Million for High-Speed Broadband Infrastructure in Rural America

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the availability of a second round of \$550 million in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Reconnect Pilot Program funding appropriated by Congress. The application window for this round of funding is set to open January 31, 2020. Secretary Perdue made the announcement alongside Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds while congratulating the Farmers Mutual Telephone Company of Stanton, Iowa, for receiving \$6.4 million in first-round Reconnect Pilot Program funding to connect 477 households, 35 farms and 21 businesses in Montgomery and Page counties.

USDA will make available up to \$200 million for grants, up to \$200 million for 50/50 grant/loan combinations, and up to \$200 million for low-interest loans. The application window for this round of funding will close on March 16, 2020. These grants, loans, and combination funds enable the federal government to partner with the private sector and rural communities to build modern broadband infrastructure in areas with insufficient internet service. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas.

USDA Invests in the Expansion of Rural Education and Health Care Access in Minnesota

USDA Rural Development State Director for Minnesota Brad Finstad recently announced more than \$730,000 for two projects that will expand access to education and health care opportunities in rural Minnesota. Education Innovation Partners Cooperative Center is receiving a \$500,000 grant to provide distance learning services to 28 sites across six Minnesota counties: Aitkin, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis. USDA's investment will enable approximately 1,500 teachers to provide distance learning opportunities for 21,000 students, annually.

CentraCare Health System is receiving a \$234,648 grant to establish a telemedicine project and address the shortage of specialty care physicians in rural areas. Video equipment will be placed at 10 locations in eight central Minnesota counties: Kandiyohi, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Renville, Stearns, Swift, Todd, and Wadena. An additional 73 individual patient sites will be added as a result of this project with an estimated additional 2,000 patients served over the project's two-year period.

USDA Finalizes Rule Expanding SNAP Work Requirements

On December 5, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service finalized a rule to narrow state options to waive work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Under current law, ABAWDs – individuals 18 through 49 who are not disabled or caring for children or other dependents – may only access food assistance through SNAP for three months in a 36 month period unless they are working 20 hours a week or enrolled in an employment or training program.

States have long had the option to request state-wide waivers or partial (county or county-equivalent) waivers to exempt this population from the time-limit by meeting certain criteria for high levels of unemployment or limited available jobs. The final rule, which goes into effect April 1, 2020, significantly reduces the ability of states to receive these waivers by limiting the qualifying criteria and geographic scope.

USDA Announces FY20 Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program

The USDA has announced the next round of funding for its Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to support the provision of clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and stormwater drainage for households and businesses in eligible rural areas. All facilities receiving funding must be used for a public purpose. Funding may be provided as a loan or as a combination of a loan and a grant. Eligible applicants include most state and local government entities with fewer than 10,000 people, private nonprofit organizations, and federally recognized Indian tribes. Applicants must have the legal authority to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed services or facilities, and must be otherwise unable to obtain commercial credit on reasonable terms. ■

LOCKRIDGE GRINDAL NAUEN Federal Relations Group will continue to work diligently on behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties and with the Members of the Minnesota Delegation on the aforementioned issues and continuously report back with updates. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (202) 544-9840 if you have any questions or if there are any areas of interest you would like an update on that were not discussed in this article.



The New Clearinghouse – Not the Publisher's Kind

By Melanie Ault, DDA Human Resources, Inc.

Employers are all winners with the new drug and alcohol Clearinghouse for CDL drivers! The Clearinghouse finally positions employers with the ability to access accurate and comprehensive data about an employment applicant's drug and alcohol testing and rehabilitation results.

What is the Clearinghouse?

The Clearinghouse is a database that gives employers, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), state driver licensing agencies, and law enforcement personnel real-time information about Commercial Driver's License (CDL) employee and applicant drug and alcohol violations. With secure, online access to thorough and comprehensive information, employers can make informed hiring decisions and thereby enhance roadway safety.

The FMCSA is the first DOT agency to run a Clearinghouse. Expect the other DOT agencies to follow in the coming years.

Why is a Clearinghouse needed?

The FMCSA focuses on reducing crashes, injuries, and fatalities, involving large trucks (like snowplows) and buses. As a federal Department of Transportation (DOT) regulated agency, the FMCSA is required to implement drug and alcohol testing requirements for safety-sensitive transportation employees.

While a testing program has existed for years, the FMCSA saw problems. The program relied exclusively on the applicant to fully and truthfully divulge all positive results of drug and alcohol testing with former employers, as well as incidents when the applicant had applied and tested but failed the test and therefore was never offered employment. That history was not always fully disclosed to prospective employers. Likewise, previous employers did not always provide requested information. As a result, the hiring employers, including counties, were not necessarily getting a full and complete history on previous positive test results.

To prevent information from being forgotten, withheld, or misrepresented, the FMCSA is implementing the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse, a national database. Participation is mandatory.

Who needs to register with the Clearinghouse?

All employers using CDL drivers in safety-sensitive positions. It does not matter if the employer does not have a US DOT number – All employers who operate a commercial motor vehicle (intrastate or interstate) must register. There is no exception for counties. CDL drivers who are seeking new employment.

Third-Party Administrators of employers' drug and alcohol testing programs, and others acting on the employer's behalf.

In what ways would a county use the Clearinghouse?

As the employer, a county would use the Clearinghouse in three ways: 1) to report drug and alcohol violations and compliance updates; 2) for the required annual, quick check on existing employees' licenses; 3) for electronically checking the testing history on a CDL employment applicant. These electronic checks in the Clearinghouse are called "queries."

At least annual checks on current employees are needed to verify that there has not been a drug or alcohol violation (including with a secondary employer) since the previous check. To verify this information, counties will run a "limited query" in the Clearinghouse. The employees will need to sign an initial consent form to permit the county to run the mandated limited queries.

In addition, counties will check the CDL Clearinghouse as part of pre-employment investigations to determine whether the prospective employee is prohibited from performing safety-sensitive functions (like driving a snowplow) due to unresolved drug or alcohol program violations. Counties will run a "full query" to discover detailed information about any (un)resolved violations. Applicants must provide specific, electronic consent permitting the county to run the full query.

When a limited query of an existing employee shows a flag that more information exists, the county will then need the employee to provide electronic consent to run a full query to obtain more details. Just because there is a flag in the limited query does not necessarily mean the employee is prohibited from driving or performing safety-sensitive duties; the employee may have properly completed rehabilitation requirements, for example.

Fees

The FMCSA charges \$1.25 for each query, whether limited or full. Employers buy query "bundles" containing various numbers of queries. If a limited query on a current employee flags the existence of additional information requiring a subsequent full query to be run, there is no additional charge for the full query.

The query fee is a small price to pay for an investment in knowing your CDL drivers have maintained compliance with drug and alcohol testing program requirements. That makes us all winners in the Clearinghouse! ■

For model CDL employment resources, see our Knowledge Base at www.amcddahrsupport.com/home.



Annual Meeting Recognizes 40 Successful Years

The State/Sunwood Room at the Kelly Inn in St. Cloud was nearly at capacity when Board Chair Felix Schmiesing called the 40th MCIT Annual Membership Meeting to order Dec. 9. Finance Manager Cheri Donovan reviewed the finances of MCIT. She announced that MCIT had again received an unmodified audit opinion for 2018 from the independent audit firm of Eide Bailly LLP.

2018, 2019 Financial Reports

Highlights from the 2018 financial statement:

- Member contributions of \$34 million represented a \$1.1 million decrease from 2017, influenced largely by aggregate rate reductions in the workers' compensation division.
- 2018 revenues were \$36.4 million, while expenses for the year totaled \$32.8 million.
- Net investments yielded \$2 million in income, a decrease of \$2.5 million from 2017.
- Claims paid and changes in reserves increased from \$17 million in 2017 to \$21.1 million in 2018. The increase was a result of a growth in workers' compensation and property/casualty claims payments, and the adjustment required at the conclusion of the actuary's year-end analysis.
- Reinsurance premiums paid in the amount of \$4.7 million remained fairly constant compared to \$4.5 million in 2017.
- A dividend of \$11.8 million was returned to members.
- MCIT ended 2018 with a fund balance of \$75.7 million.
- Donovan also reported on the unaudited finances of MCIT as of Sept. 30, 2019. Of particular note:
 - Member contributions of \$25.5 million are \$400,000 more than at that time in 2018, which is influenced by the increase in members' exposure base and the slight reduction in aggregate rates in both divisions.
 - Net investment activities total \$3.6 million, which is comparable to earnings at the same time in 2018 of \$3.7 million.
 - The increase in total paid claims of \$16.8 million compared to \$13.9 million as of Sept. 30, 2018, is attributed to larger payments for liability and property claims (gross of expected reinsurance recoveries of approximately \$1.6 million).
 - Total revenues year to date are \$34.5 million, and total expenses year to date are \$33.8 million.
 - A dividend of \$10 million was declared earlier in 2019 and paid in November.

Poised for the Future

Following the election of officers (see accompanying article), MCIT Executive Director Robyn Sykes recapped 2019. Sykes called MCIT a grand experiment that was necessitated 40 years ago as a response to insurance companies abandoning public entities. With no expectation of longevity, little thought was given to rate adequacy or the need for fund balance. But as the program grew in success, expectations changed.

Today, MCIT has a solid understanding of members' exposures. Combined with loss experience, MCIT has a rating strategy that addresses the financial needs of the Trust, which includes the cost of operations, reinsurance and 40 years of claims experience.

Consistent reserving philosophies give the actuary confidence in the future cost of claims. By strategically investing MCIT's assets to match the duration of claims, MCIT remains fully funded. Being fully funded safeguards the membership from uncertainties that might affect MCIT, such as an unexpected change in legislation, adverse case law, etc.

MCIT Board Election Results

Pursuant to MCIT Bylaws, four seats were up for election during the 2019 Annual Meeting. Incumbents in the four seats sought re-election. In October, MCIT called for candidates. Ron Antony, chair of the Nominating Committee, announced that no letters of interest had been received. Antony placed each incumbent into nomination. There were no other nominations.

Sherburne County Commissioner Felix Schmiesing and Stearns County Auditor-Treasurer Randy Schreifels were unanimously re-elected to the board for four-year terms, expiring Dec. 31, 2023.

Jackson County Commissioner Don Wachal was appointed to the board in 2019 to fill the term of former Watawan County Commissioner Scott Sanders that expired Dec. 31, 2019. The membership unanimously elected Wachal to a four-year term expiring Dec. 31, 2023.

Winona County Commissioner Marcia Ward was appointed to the board in 2019 to fill the unexpired term of former Waseca County Commissioner Dan Kuhns. The term expires Dec. 31, 2020. Ward was unanimously elected to complete this term.

Counties Shine During 2019, Earn MCIT Awards

MCIT Board Chair Felix Schmiesing announced the recipients of MCIT's annual awards during the 2019 Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust Annual Membership Meeting held in St. Cloud Dec. 9. Preventing and mitigating losses is important to the overall success and stability of MCIT, so every year MCIT recognizes three counties that excel at risk management and loss control.

On behalf of the entire board, Schmiesing congratulated the winners on their accomplishments and presented plaques to the recipients during the Awards Ceremony at the Association of Minnesota Counties Annual Conference.

Criteria used to identify recipients include performance in risk management and loss control efforts, responsiveness to program initiatives, and property/casualty claims and workers' compensation claims administration.

County of the Year: STEARNS COUNTY

MCIT honors the county that has set the standard of excellence in risk management and loss control. For 2019, Stearns County earned this distinction. Its leaders proved to be aggressive in their efforts to educate and inform staff on techniques to mitigate exposures and provided superior assistance when claims arose.

Outstanding Performance in the Property and Casualty Division: CHISAGO COUNTY

Chisago County consistently improved its loss ratio through its commitment to implementing better loss control and risk management methods and its dedication to protecting county property and citizens.

Outstanding Performance in the Workers' Compensation Division: CASS COUNTY

Cass County continually improved its experience modification factor and reduced its claims in the areas of workplace injury and illnesses, was committed to reducing employee injuries and had an overall focus on loss control and risk management. ■

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Individuals Honored for Outstanding Service at the AMC Annual Conference

Two county administrators received awards for excellence and dedication to county government during AMC's Annual Conference in St. Cloud last December.

Lake County Administrator Matt Huddleston received the **Association of Minnesota Counties' (AMC) 2019 'Outstanding Service Award'** for exhibiting excellence, innovation and dedication to his work in county government.



Lake County Administrator Matthew Huddleston (center) received the AMC Outstanding Service Award from AMC President Rich Sve, Lake County Commissioner (left), and AMC Past President Scott Schulte, Anoka County Commissioner (right).

Huddleston began his public service career in Mille Lacs County in 2001 before joining Lake County in 2005 as the Planning & Zoning Administrator. In July 2008, he was appointed Lake County's first County Coordinator. In January 2012, he was further promoted to County Administrator. He also continued as Planning & Zoning Administrator until 2015. He is the county's spokesperson for public relations.

Huddleston brings a voice of reason when involved with emotional and contentious subjects. Under his leadership the county established a Labor Management Committee, completed a Classification & Compensation Study, transformed the Personnel Committee, and reconfigured the Department Head meetings.

Huddleston facilitated a cooperative arrangement for a Shared Highway Engineer Service Agreement with neighboring Cook County. He also steered the financing and construction of a new Highway Facility after a fire consumed the previous structure in December 2016. Huddleston has

been a champion of maintaining state and federal Payment In Lieu of Taxes, as well as Thye-Blatnik payments. He is involved with the development and funding of Split Rock Wilds, Lake County's mountain bike trail project.

In addition to these many roles, he was the main point of contact for the Lake County Fiber to the Home Project. This \$66 million project demanded an extraordinary amount of his time. His diligence, involvement, and oversight guided this project from its inception in 2010 through its sale in 2019. The project had three management companies, many contractors, numerous contracts, and continual contact with Rural Utilities Services in Washington, DC.

Throughout the additional projects and substantial increases in workload, Matt has never lost sight of his responsibilities to the County Board, Department Heads, staff and the residents of Lake County.

Rice County Administrator Sara Folsted was selected to receive the **"Joe Ries Excellence in County Management Award"** from **Minnesota Association of County Administrators (MACA)** by association president Rebecca Young, Stevens County Administrator, on December 9 during the Association of Minnesota Counties' (AMC) Annual Conference in St. Cloud.

Folsted was the Renville County Administrator prior to joining Rice County in 2016. Folsted's key leadership strengths were identified as her ability to focus and unify the people around her in order to accomplish the county's goals. Her peers also recognized that Folsted is always focused on building better county management across the state through engagement and information sharing.

Since 1999, the current president of the Minnesota Association of County Administrators (MACA) selects one MACA member annually to receive the "Joe Ries Excellence in County Management Award" for demonstrating exemplary service and leadership in the field of county management. ■



Rice County Administrator Sara Folsted (center) received the MACA Joe Ries Excellence in County Management Award in December. Also shown here are members of the Rice County Board of Commissioners and other staff on hand to congratulate her for the honor.



The award was presented to Carlton County by 2019 AMC President Scott Schulte, Anoka County Commissioner (left) and BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke (right).

Carlton County Receives 2019 County Conservation Award

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) have selected **Carlton County's Right-Sizing Culverts for Infrastructure & Environmental Benefits** project to receive the **2019 AMC-BWSR County Conservation Award**. The award was presented by 2019 AMC President and Anoka County Commissioner Scott Schulte and BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke. "Carlton County leveraged resources at all levels to protect and improve infrastructure to prevent future flood damage while simultaneously creating environmental benefits," BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke said. "We commend their efforts to protect their communities while furthering conservation efforts." ■

Anoka and Washington Counties Technology Corridor Receives 2019 Economic Development Award

The **Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Development (MAPCED)** selected the **MN Technology Corridor**, a partnership between **Anoka and Washington Counties and Connexus Energy**, to receive their **Excellence in County Economic Development Award**. In 2018, Connexus Energy, Anoka and Washington counties developed a partnership in the effort of marketing land along the I-35 corridor between the two counties towards technology users. The MN Technology Corridor is the first of its kind, public-private partnership that brought together not just two counties, but five cities, five area fiber providers, two power companies, an industry site selector and MN DEED. The partnership saw the opportunity to promote the region towards technology users because of the assets available in the area such as abundant fiber, large power capacity, and more. ■



Officials and staff from Anoka and Washington Counties accepted the MN Technology Corridor economic development award.

Local Public Health Association 2020



Legislative Action Priorities

By Richard Scott, Carver County Public Health Director & 2020 LPHA Chair

After legislative successes last session, Local Public Health Association (LPHA) members look forward to working with the legislature to promote and protect the health of Minnesota residents in 2020.

This session, we will be working on the following items:

- **Streamlining Minnesota's Food Safety System:** Oversight of Minnesota's retail food system is split between the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), which results in a confusing maze for food establishments when interacting with the system. Ensuring food is safe for consumers and preventing foodborne illness is a fundamental public health responsibility. LPHA supports consolidating retail food protection activities under MDH and supports maintaining the authority over food supply and distribution, manufacturing and farming with MDA. These changes will eliminate redundancy and streamline costs, improve the consistency of application of food regulations, and make it easier for local business to interact with the system.
- **Prevention Youth Tobacco and Nicotine Addiction:** The popularity of e-cigarettes is booming, with one in four MN 11th graders reporting that they vaped within the last 30 days in the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey. Nearly all adult smokers start smoking before the age of 21, and many kids turn to older friends and classmates as a source of tobacco products. With recent passing and enactment of Tobacco 21 at the federal level, state action is still necessary to protect Minnesota's young people. LPHA supports a state-level Tobacco 21 policy to align state law with federal law, removes penalties on young people who purchase, possess or use tobacco and improve reporting.

Further, LPHA supports regulations on flavored tobacco and nicotine products. Menthol, candy and fruit-flavored tobacco products are attractive to kids and can lead to a lifetime of tobacco addiction and disease. Flavors are used to mask the harshness of tobacco and other chemicals but are just as addictive and harmful as unflavored products. Although there has been limited federal action on flavored e-cigarettes, LPHA supports further regulation at the state level to ensure a prohibition on the sale of all flavored tobacco products, as part of a comprehensive approach to reverse the e-cigarette epidemic and reduce nicotine's harm in our state.

- **Investing in Local Public Health:** The Local Public Health Grant is the state's main investment in core services mandated to local public health by state statute. It provides flexible funding to local governments, so they can direct dollars to address needs in their communities. An over-reliance on local tax levies and unstable and unpredictable grant funding has compromised the local public health system's capacity to respond to current and emerging threats. Additionally, maintaining stable prevention funding for the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) to help Minnesotans live healthier, longer lives and continue to drive down state health care costs continues to be a priority for LPHA. Overall, LPHA supports funding to direct more dollars to prevention including emergency preparedness, statewide health improvement, mental health, public health nuisance, prevention of communicable disease, and emerging health threats.
- **Enhancing Services for Children with Asthma:** Approximately 90,000 Minnesota kids in every corner of the state struggle with asthma. In addition to health-related complications, the financial impacts of asthma on Minnesota are great. In 2014, asthma cost Minnesota an estimated \$669.3 million in medical expenditures and lost work days. Health education, combined with in-home inspections and allergen reducing products such as vacuum cleaners or air filters, reduced asthma symptom days by 21 per year, reduced missed school days by seven per year, and reduced acute health care visits to the ER, Urgent Care and unscheduled office visits. LPHA supports changes to Medical Assistance coverage to allow for reimbursement of home visits by a registered environmental health specialist or risk assessor to identify asthma triggers and delivery and instruction on use of durable low-cost medical equipment.

We are thankful for the expertise and commitment of our members and the ongoing support from AMC and other affiliate organizations. We look forward to working together to make 2020 a healthy and productive year! ■

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MACO 2020 Legislative Priorities

By Troy Olsen, MACO Lobbyist, and MACO Legislative Committee members

MACO will continue to be an active participant in the legislative process during the 2020 Legislative Session. The legislative team has been working with MACO members for the several months on setting priorities for the 2020 Legislative Session. Here are some that will receive MACO's attention:

- **Reducing the mandate for publishing full sample ballots and election notices.** Counties can reduce costs in communicating election and ballot information other than publishing in a printed media outlet. Alternative methods include website, email, and phone. Information is delivered in an effective, efficient, and less-confusing manner and saves the expense of printing in a medium such as a local newspaper.
- **Appropriate funds or establish a grant program for clean-up and maintenance expenses counties are required to pay regarding abandoned tax-forfeited "orphan" sites.** Counties currently must use local property tax dollars to clean up sites impacted by pollution, hazardous substances, dilapidated structures, or petroleum tanks which oftentimes results in unplanned budget issues.
- **Permit voter signatures to be captured electronically on electronic pollbooks.** Accepting electronic signatures streamlines the voting process in precincts that use this proven and tested technology while also collecting an electronic version of the signature for easier auditing and verification.
- **Modernizing Recording statutes.** Updating current statutes, eliminating obsolete language and modernizing some of Minnesota's statutes governing Recording.
- **Support increased fees for transactions to cover all costs for the services now being performed at the deputy registrar offices.** Deputy registrars provide a valuable local service for customers throughout the state and fair compensation is needed to continue to provide these services.
- **Reduce the time period for municipal holds and of the DNR classification process for tax-forfeited lands.** Limiting the time for municipal holds of forfeited

land and setting a maximum time for the DNR to respond to classification and sale lists will speed up returning tax forfeited property to the tax rolls or to public uses.

- **Support modernization by requiring electronic submissions of well certifications through the Department of Health.** Electronic submission of well certificates by the Department of Health is cost-effective and will lead to efficiencies in operations for counties, the state, and submitters.
- **Eliminate felon name-change possibility through marriage process.** Allowing a name change through the marriage process requires applicants to complete additional work and may result in a potentially unauthorized change, and there are other avenues in current law for a name to be changed outside the marriage process.
- **Allow local deputy registrar offices to offer expanded service to customers such as local online purchases, by-mail transactions, or kiosk services.** Deputy registrars want to provide the best customer service possible by meeting customers' needs and expanded services, such as kiosks, have been used effectively in other states.

MACO supports efforts that simplify, modernize, and make more efficient the operation and administration of county government services. MACO members are committed to providing effective services related to property tax administration, elections, licenses/registrations, vital records, and recording and look for any opportunity to work towards this objective. Our members and membership represent many of the administrative sides of county government and enjoy a healthy relationship with legislators as subject matter experts. We look forward to working with AMC and other groups at the Legislature to further these important items.

MACO Legislative Committee Co-chairs: Michael Stalberger, Blue Earth County; Julie Hanson, Scott County; Amber Bougie, Hennepin County; Betti Kamolz, Brown County; Debby Erickson, Crow Wing County. ■



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Anoka County Human Services Leadership Mentorship Program

Background

Initial planning for a leadership program started in 2016, with an advisory taskforce composed of leaders from the five departments in the Anoka County Human Services Division. Staff from Community Social Services and Behavioral Health, Corrections, Economic Assistance, the Job Training Center, and Public Health Nursing and Environmental Services worked with the Human Services Manager to determine the goals and structure of the leadership mentorship program. The advisory taskforce developed a 12-month mentorship program based on research and best practices that was implemented in October 2018.

Why take on this project?

Many newly hired leaders don't have formal supervisor training or the necessary support from more seasoned peer leaders. Anoka County Human Services leaders face many unique challenges, due to the nature of our work, and it can be easy to get lost in the sea of information and pulled in many directions. Having access to critical leadership support in the first year can shape a supervisor's success with the transition and enhance development of necessary skills to coach staff and move programs in the right direction. This program is a critical part of succession planning by supporting the next level of staff who will advance in the organization.

How does it work?

New and seasoned supervisors, managers and directors interested in participating in the Leadership Mentorship Program completed interest forms, identifying individual expertise as well as areas to expand their professional growth. The advisory taskforce paired mentors and mentees based on information from the interest forms, with final approval made by the division directors. The inaugural year saw nine mentor/mentee matches with each pairing committed to meeting at least one and a half hours each month. Mentors and mentees, paired across departments, addressed topics common to leadership such as: employee performance, communication, and integrity in decision making.

Goals, set by both mentors and mentees, remained the focus of their dialogue throughout the year. Additionally, they connected on a personal and professional level by sharing leadership tools such as books, articles and videos.

Measures of Success

Seventy-seven percent of the initial pairings were still meeting by the end of the first year and the majority plan to continue meeting past their one-year commitment. A mid-year survey indicated most matches met their goals through this opportunity. The program averaged four out of five in overall satisfaction.

How could other counties follow this model?

There are a couple of critical factors an organization must consider in order to succeed: there must be buy-in from departmental leadership to champion the program and capacity of the staff to build it and make it work. Development of the best practices will be county/culture specific and should be based on a common understanding of why this will be beneficial to the organization. In addition, structure and materials are essential. While the goal is for the pairs to be self-guided, they need tools to help get them started. The committee or work group that develops the program should continue to be involved as a "sounding board" for both mentors and mentees throughout the program. ■



Washington County Dosage Probation

Background

Washington County Community Corrections is one of two sites in the nation creating a new way to deliver probation services to adult offenders, called Dosage Probation. Dosage Probation relies on an offender's internal motivation to change behavior. Probationers may shorten the time they are under probation supervision by actively participating and completing programming to reduce the likelihood of future criminal behavior. It is more efficient and cost-effective than the traditional model of supervision, in which probationers are sentenced to years of supervision with or without behavior change conditions. Dosage Probation gives probationers control over how long they would like to be on supervision, determined by how hard they want to work to change their behavior. A person's effort determines the length of supervision sentence.

Why take on this project?

Dosage adds the next level of intervention to the best practices the county was already implementing. A program like this also enhances motivation for change by giving a level of control to the person being supervised.

How does it work?

An offender is sentenced to a term of probation, say five years. At the first meeting with a probation officer, the probationer participates in a risk assessment that scores the person on how likely he or she is to commit another crime. Each level of risk calls for a specific number of "targeted dosage intervention hours" (referred to as dosage hours) the offender must complete to be discharged from

probation. The bar for what counts towards these hours is high, making the standard quite rigorous. Once the client has served at least one year of probation and has completed the dosage hours, which include the conditions of probation, the probationer is granted a discharge from the sentence.

If probationers choose not to participate in the dosage program, they remain on probation for the duration of their sentence. Targeted dosage hours must address the top five areas that lead to criminal behavior. These areas are: 1) criminal thinking patterns and values; 2) poor decision-making skills; 3) anti-social peers; 4) family/marital stressors; and, 5) chemical abuse. Probationers are referred to program providers, who have been identified by the Community Corrections Department as offering research-based services directly related to these areas. Probation officers are also trained to administer cognitive-behavioral interventions, which count toward the required dosage hours.

Measures of Success

By letting individuals control their fate, dosage probation motivates clients to change their behavior, reduce recidivism, and reduce their length of supervision. This saves valuable resources making it a "win, win" situation for both clients and taxpayers. Washington County has had 71 probationers successfully complete dosage probation. Upon completion of their dosage requirements, all 71 were discharged early from their original probation term. Collectively, 216 years of probation supervision, an average of three years per person, were saved by those 71 individuals.

How could other counties follow this model?

Relationships are the most critical factor is bringing a program like this to a county. There needs to be a bond and shared goal of system improvement with all of the



criminal justice stakeholders: County Attorney, Judges, Law Enforcement, etc. In addition, the relationships with community providers, who are delivering the programming, must be strong. In order for staff to map out the program, providers need to be onboard and the stakeholder engagement has to be thoughtful and deliberate. ■

Stearns County Mental Health Steering Committee



Background

The Stearns County Mental Health Steering Committee developed a collaboration of community partners to create positive, innovative changes. In 2015, there were targeted interventions on specific populations impacted by mental health issues. For example, there was a Veterans Protocol Workgroup and a Homelessness Workgroup. The partnerships developing at that time included the local health system through CentraCare's Mental Health Initiative. In 2016-17, these intersecting yet fragmented activities were first connected and, then, a consolidated effort was developed into a Mental Health Steering Committee.

Why take on this project?

As with most of Minnesota, Stearns County identified mental health as the second highest community concern in its 2015-2019 Community Health Improvement Plan. In addition, the collateral issues and determinants associated with mental health needed to be addressed (e.g. chemical use, adverse childhood experiences, jail, detox, homelessness, ER visits). The committee quickly identified a "revolving door." The same clients received the same services repeatedly with no improvement in outcomes and at a high cost to taxpayers, the local health system, etc.

How does it work?

The Steering Committee includes a wide-range of partners, including the Court System, Court Administration, County Attorney, City Attorney, Human Services (Community Corrections, Community Supports, and Public Health), Law

Enforcement, Central Minnesota Mental Health Center, St. Cloud VA, CentraCare, Stearns County Jail, and Stearns County Sheriff's Office. The Committee is co-chaired by a Judge and Human Services Director. The committee meets regularly to discuss progress, address issues, identify and address barriers, engage others as needed, and oversee several subgroups focused on addressing mental health in the community. Excellent outcomes have been achieved as a result of this effort.

One example of the innovative work was the creation and implementation of the Community Action Team (CAT). This initiative involves Law Enforcement, CMMHC, Community Corrections, Community Supports and CentraCare (using a Coordinated Care Clinic that provides services to hard to reach communities and provides health services in the jail) to begin to address clients who are frequent users of community services such as the emergency room, county jail, and detox that were not only expensive, but ineffective services for those in crisis. This multi-discipline team of law enforcement officers, nurses, social workers, and mental health providers use public data from law enforcement to identify persons who frequently have their civil rights terminated and tend to be frequent users of these expensive and ineffective services.

This team now works with individuals to determine their needs and then acts to meet those needs. In many cases, the team works to creatively address the hard to impact determinants of health such as housing, access to care, and employment. The team also maximizes resources across systems to the benefit of those they are serving. Next steps include the creation of a mental health/law enforcement co-responder model that will begin in January 2020.

Measures of Success

This approach is unique and has yielded significant positive results for people suffering from mental illness, addiction and other behavioral health issues. It can change a person's path and provide hope for a new future. Our data shows that, after CAT intervention, these clients are using expensive/ineffective community resources significantly fewer times. Law enforcement data shows a decline of people being placed in custody at detox, the emergency room, and jail which also means reduced use of law enforcement resources. For example, after CAT intervention the use of detox, emergency room, and jail by - just one client - showed a reduction in direct annual costs from \$27,861 to only \$200. CentraCare tracked expenses for people served by the CAT team for three months before intervention and three months after intervention. Total costs incurred by CentraCare for this time period were decreased by approximately \$400,000.

How could other counties follow this model?

Start with belief that the effort will create the outcomes, lead with "yes." Cooperation and Collaboration are key. Create connections at all levels of the organizations involved and build the shared values and relationships to make this a partnership. Make sure the right people are included. To do this, track frequent users, see what systems they touch, and make sure that system is at the table. While a step-by-step approach to building relationships and creating the solutions is critical, the process can be kick-started by beginning with the assumption that you have this problem and moving to next steps from there. ■

Traverse County Substance Use Outpatient Treatment Option

Background

Traverse County took a unique approach back in 2017 and sent their Social Services Director back to school to obtain the Licensed Addiction Drug Counselor (LADC) credential. After completion of the education and training in July 2018, the county then proceeded to pursue a 245G Outpatient Treatment license, to provide the services to county residents locally. The Substance Use Outpatient Treatment Option opened its doors, January 1, 2019.

Why take on this project?

Traverse County was one of a handful of counties that did not have a substance use treatment provider within the county. The closest programs were 35 and 40 miles away, respectively. With the 2020 Substance Use reform came the requirement for Licensed Addiction Drug Counselors to provide the comprehensive assessments. There is a lack of LADC's statewide and nationwide, and the reform left most counties and potential clients in a bind, in terms of meeting future assessment and treatment needs.

How does it work?

This program provides a local treatment option to residents. Although other counties may choose to seek services here as well, many of the Traverse County clients do not have a valid driver's license and would otherwise be required to attend inpatient treatment or not receive treatment at all. It also provides an option for the provider to attend Drug Court and integrate services with the criminal justice system, mental health providers, as well as social services. Overall, it provides a streamlined and efficient way for clients to access services in Traverse County.

Measures of Success

Clients are provided an option to access Peer Support Recovery services as an enhanced benefit set. Fifteen clients have accessed the treatment program through October 31, 2019, with additional clients obtaining assessments and referrals for other services.

How could other counties follow this model?

Evaluate the "economy of scale," if there are other resources available privately, as a small program can lead to burn out quite easily. It would be nice to have two counselors to rotate or provide back-up for groups. Some services are best through private providers and some are best through the county, so be sure to evaluate the necessity of having a substance use disorder program before building one. "If you build it, they will come, but is it the best option?" ■



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