



Saratoga County Citizens  
Committee for Mental Health

# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023

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**2023 SCCCMMH Citizen of the Year:  
 Donna Cohen, MD**



Dr. Donna Cohen has been named the SCCCMMH Citizen of the Year for 2023. Dr. Cohen will be honored at the Mental Health Matters Benefit on Saturday, April 29, 2023 being held at the Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge. The registration form for this event is included with this newsletter or register on-line: <http://www.scccmh-saratoga.org/general-news/2023-mental-health-matters-benefit>

Donna Cohen, MD has worked as a psychiatrist for over 30 years, beginning her career in western Massachusetts, where she worked in a variety of settings from 1992-2013. Dr. Cohen moved to the Saratoga area in 2013 and her contributions to the local mental health community since that time are immeasurable. She has been employed by the Saratoga Hospital system since December 2013, working initially as an outpatient psychiatrist at the Saratoga County Mental Health Center from 2013-2018. She additionally spent about two years of that time period as the staff psychiatrist for the county's PROS psychiatric rehabilitation program. In addition to her outpatient work, Dr. Cohen provided intermittent coverage on the inpatient mental health unit from 2013-2018. She began working full-time on the MHU in December 2018 and was just recently able to celebrate retirement from her full-time role at the beginning of this year. In true Dr. Cohen fashion, she has continued to provide coverage at the hospital and support for her colleagues since her official "retirement." We could not be more grateful for the person and mental health professional that she is.

**Continued, p. 2, Dr. Cohen**

**CHAIRPERSON'S NOTES**

**By Peggy Lounsbury**

Spring is very busy for the SCCCMH. You will read about the "Changing the Lens on Homelessness" event on March 1<sup>st</sup>. This came about as a result of a SCCCMH Board discussion where we realized that people are probably biased against people who are street homeless because of the lack of understanding and awareness. Be sure to read about this successful event. In the future the SCCCMH Board is thinking of using the "Changing Lens" theme for other topics, like mental illness, suicide, etc.

A group of us went to Mental Health Matters (MHM) Lobby Day on March 8<sup>th</sup>. The SCCCMH rented a bus and offered free rides to Albany for the purpose of learning more about the governor's proposed budget. We marched in support of MHM and met with elective representatives.

We are busy planning our annual MHM Benefit Fundraiser event scheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup>. The registration for the benefit is attached to this newsletter.

**Continued, Dr. Cohen...**

Kate Evanico, SCCCMH Board member, says of Dr. Cohen, "I have been lucky enough to work professionally with Dr. Cohen in a variety of capacities over the past decade, as well as get to know her on a more personal level over the past few years. I am beyond thankful for the personal and professional guidance she has provided me with." Dr. Cohen's contributions to the local mental health community extend well beyond her work as a psychiatrist. She regularly contributes to local mental health and human services agencies and is often present showing support at community events and fundraisers. Some of the words that come to mind when I think of Dr. Cohen include: genuine, hardworking, intelligent, compassionate, loyal, dedicated, diligent (but never obsessional) and kind-hearted. Dr. Cohen is also humble, as is evident by her response to being nominated 2023 Citizen of the Year:

*"Frankly, I was surprised when I got this award because I don't feel I have done anything special except to try to be a conscientious, caring person to my patients and colleagues. It's been easy because I inherently love people and (unfortunately) love to work."*

**2023 SCCCMH MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS  
BENEFIT FUNDRAISER**

**Saturday, April 29, 2023**

**Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge**

**6:00 – 10:00 pm (Reservations Required)**

**Honoring Citizen of the Year:**

**Dr. Donna Cohen, Psychiatrist  
Saratoga Hospital Medical Group –  
Inpatient Mental Health**

**RSVP by April 18, 2023 by completing the  
reservation form or on-line.**

**For questions or more info  
Call SCCCMH Chairperson,  
Peggy Lounsbury, at 518-583-8371**



**Donate your Birthday on Facebook  
to Benefit SCCCMH**

Using Facebook's fundraising tool, you can donate your birthday to a SCCCMH.

To donate your birthday, simply click on the fundraising tab on your News Feed. From there, you can select SCCCMH as the charity you want to give to and set your fundraising goal as well as your fundraiser's end date. You can invite your friends directly to the fundraiser, so they can help you celebrate your birthday by helping the mental health community in Saratoga.



The Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health and the Saratoga County Alliance to End Homelessness



**PRESENT:**

# CHANGING THE LENS ON HOMELESSNESS

A public discussion on homelessness and mental health in Saratoga County

The Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health and the Saratoga County Alliance to End Homelessness presented “**Changing the Lens on Homelessness: a public discussion on homelessness in Saratoga County**” in hopes to bring fresh perspective on homelessness. The event began with a video featuring stories of individuals who have or are currently experiencing homelessness in Saratoga.

Here is the link to the video:

<https://www.riseservices.org/changing-the-lens-on-homelessness/>

Following the video, Margo Sheridan, who was featured in the video, shared about her experiences with homelessness.

**Continued....**

The event was attended by 175 people, including Saratoga Springs Mayor Ron Kim, Assemblywoman Carrier Werner; and Tom Roohan, Chair of the Mayor’s task force on homelessness.

RISE Outreach Program Director, Victoria Furfaro, moderated the discussion and the esteemed panel of experts shared how their agencies are working to help the individuals experiencing homelessness and answered questions from the audience about homelessness and how the community can help those who are unhoused.

**Continued, p.5, Homelessness**

***Become a part of the Voice of Saratoga County Mental Health Community.***

***Join SCCCMH Today!***

**JOIN NOW!**

Consumers, family and friends, mental health professionals and others, please join the SCCCMH now for the new year. As a member of SCCCMH, you will get our newsletter, and more important, you will help SCCCMH carry-out our mission to be the voice of people living with mental illness in Saratoga County. The more members we have, the more power we have to influence local and state government.

Also, consider a charitable gift to SCCCMH. You can honor or memorize someone and help make a difference in the mental health community, too.

**Give power and your support to the mental health community...join today!**

SCCCMH Newsletter is the official publication of the Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health, P.O. Box 820, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
[www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org](http://www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org)

The views expressed in this newsletter represent the opinions of the authors and do not represent the official position or opinions of the SCCCMH unless specifically stated.

The SCCCMH Board of Trustees reserves the right to decide the content of the newsletter, and reserves the right to review, revise, shorten or deny articles for publication. Articles submitted for publication consideration should not be longer than 250 words unless the author is specifically invited to do so. Also, submitting the copy as a Microsoft Word document or typed within the body of an e-mail message is preferred. Send articles to the Newsletter Editor’s e-mail address. Articles not submitted electronically can be mailed to the address above.

## Mental Health Matters Albany Lobby Day

By Peggy Lounsbury



On March 8, 2023, SCCCMH board members, other professional and consumers from Saratoga, took a trip to Albany. The SCCCMH rented a bus and offered free transportation to anyone who wanted to participate in the Mental Health Association of NY's Legislative Action Day. Participants from all over the state heard speeches from elected officials and the NYS Commissioner of Mental Health. Then the large crowd marched around the capital building chanting loud enough for the Governor and legislators to hear.

The Saratoga County contingent met with aids for Senator Tedesco and Assemblywoman Carrier Werner. We lobbied for more funding for:

- Supportive housing
- Residential Long-Term Care
- Increased access to transportation
- Mental Health Workforce Investment

## Mental Health First Aid Training

MHANYS' is providing **free** Mental Health First Aid training to individuals who work with or support the **General Public** within Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties. Mental Health First Aid is often referred to as CPR for the mind; it is an evidence-based training that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental illness along with a 3-year certification from the National Council for Behavioral Health.

You are more likely to encounter someone — friend, family member, coworker, neighbor, or member of the community — in an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack. **Mental Health First Aid teaches a 5-step action plan** to offer initial help to people with the signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in a crisis, and connect them with the appropriate professional, peer, social, or self-help care. Anyone can take the 8-hour Mental Health First Aid course — first responders, students, teachers, leaders of faith communities, human resources professionals, and caring citizens.

For more information, visit the MHANYS website:  
<https://mhanys.org/products/mhfa/>



## SCCCMH Grants Available Now

The Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health awards monetary grants to not-for-profit organizations that provide services or assistance to people living with mental illness in Saratoga County. Awards are generally up to one thousand dollars and are distributed three times a year.

Contact Heather Wolfe or visit our website for more information and download an application.

**Changing the Lens on Homelessness:  
Event at the Saratoga Springs  
City Center**



**Homelessness, Continued...**

The panel included:

Jenna Espey – RISE Housing and Support Services

Maggie Fonk – Wellspring Saratoga

Kate Evanico – Saratoga Hospital Mental Health Unit

Stephanie Romeo – Shelters of Saratoga

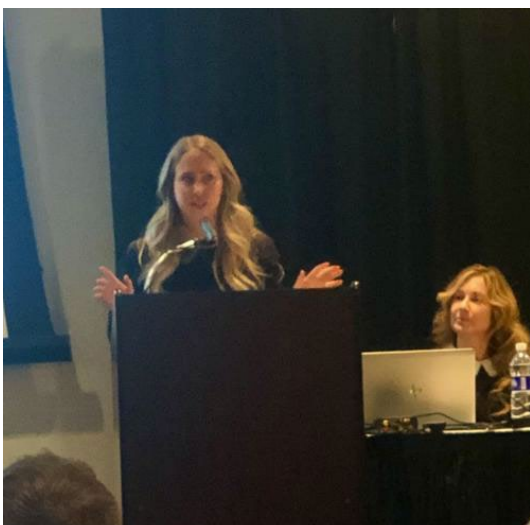
Dr. Michael Prezioso – Saratoga County Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Heather Wolfe – Saratoga County Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Jennifer Myers – Unlimited Potential of Northern Rivers Family of Services

Michael Moore – CAPTAIN Community Human Services

Heather Crola – Healing Springs Recovery Community & Outreach Center





**FROM MHANYS:**

The Accounting firm, Forvis, recently did a report on the impact of the economy to the not for profit sector, noting that 'with higher costs and demand, nonprofits are struggling to meet expectations' The report also noted that 'more than half of nonprofits eliminated or decreased staff positions, staff hours and program/service' The National report is consistent with what is happening in New York.

The nonprofit sector is also responsible for the caring, support and recovery of individuals in great need. With huge vacancy rates and staff turnover, the impact to the community often seems insurmountable. We are lucky in New York to have such a caring, compassionate and intelligent workforce but they also need to put food on the table. That is why we are imploring the Legislature and the Governor to support the 8.5% COLA. It is time to reverse years of neglect!



**Help SCCCMH Increase Awareness:  
Follow our Facebook Page!**

Please share the SCCCMH Facebook Page with your family and friends and ask them to follow and share our page!

We continue to need your support to help us in our advocacy efforts toward improving Mental Health Services in our county, remove the stigma associated with those who live with Mental Health issues. We provide grant monies to those agencies that want to start up a new service or initiative that improves the lives of those they serve in Saratoga County! Please share our Facebook page to spread the news!

Thank you for showing your support by following our FB page!

**Submit Mental Health  
News and Views Articles**

Consider submitting an article for the "View Form Here" column. This is a powerful way to share your experience as a consumer, family member, professional, or advocate.

Also, appreciated are mental health-related news and stories.

Articles can be around 150 to 250 words .

Summit your articles via e-mail to [info@SCCCMH-Saratoga.org](mailto:info@SCCCMH-Saratoga.org).



For more information, contact:

Chairperson: Peggy Lounsbury  
E-mail: [plounsbury@saratogacare.org](mailto:plounsbury@saratogacare.org)  
Phone: 518-583-8371

Or visit our website: [www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org](http://www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org)  
and check out our **Facebook Page!**

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM FOR YEAR: April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024**

**SCCCMH Mission:** The SCCCMH is a non-profit, charitable organization [501(c)3] whose mission it is to:

**Program Development and Enrichment:** Award grants of approximately \$1000 to agencies and programs in Saratoga County that provide services to people with mental illness or have mental and emotional needs so they can enrich existing programs or expand services.

**Education:** Provide affordable educational opportunities for mental health professionals and consumers of mental health services.

**Advocacy:** Advocate for improved mental health care and services by lobbying government and elected officials.

**Increase Awareness:** Increase public awareness of the needs of individuals with mental illness. For example, increase access to public transportation, decrease stigmas or stereotypes.

**Member Benefits:** Membership fees support the development of mental health services in Saratoga County through grants, educational opportunities, and lobbying, as well as the publication of the biannual SCCCMH Newsletter.

**More Members. More Power. More Benefits.**

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**PLEASE CHECK ONE:**

New Member     Membership Renewal     Remove my information from the SCCCMH mailing list

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_ Prefix/Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

Address  Home  Work: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to receive the newsletter and other notices from the SCCCMH via e-mail, please provide your e-mail address:

\_\_\_\_\_

If you are a provider of mental health services and would like to be included in the Saratoga County Network for Mental Health Professionals and Advocates (SCN-MHPA), then check here:

If you would like to participate in a mental health consumer workshop, then check here:

**Membership fee is based on a “pay what you will” basis (Check One):**

- I want to be a member, but I am unable provide financial support.
- I want to be a member. I will consider a contribution at a later date.
- I want to be a member, enclosed is my tax deductible donation of:  \$10  \$25  \$35 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**MAKE CHECKS OUT TO:** SCCCMH. Do not send cash in the mail.

**MAIL TO:** SCCCMH, P.O. Box 820, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

**MAKE SURE THE VOICE OF THE SARATOGA COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY IS HEARD.....JOIN SCCCMH TODAY!!**



[www.scccmh-saratoga.org](http://www.scccmh-saratoga.org)

For more information about  
the SCCCMH, contact  
Peggy Lounsbury,  
Chairperson,  
at 518-583-8371

The Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health (SCCCMH) is a non-profit, charitable organization that **distributes grant money** to agencies and programs in Saratoga County so they can enrich existing programs or expand services for people with mental illness. The SCCCMH also provides affordable **educational opportunities** for professionals and consumers, **advocates** for improved mental health care and services; and **increases public awareness** of the needs of people living with mental illness.

Saratoga County Citizens  
Committee for Mental Health

P.O. Box 820

Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

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