

**Highlights:**

MHM Annual Benefit 2025..... 1 & 2  
 Chairperson’s Notes..... 3  
 Treasurer’s Report ..... 3  
 A View From Here..... 4  
 Mental Health News in NYS ..... 4  
 Impact of the Big Beautiful Bill ..... 5  
 Citizens of the Year Nominations ..... 7  
 2026 MHM Benefit .....8  
 SCCCMH Membership Application .. 9

**SCCCMH Board of Directors**

**Peggy Lounsbury**

Chairperson  
 plounsbury@saratogacare.org  
 518.583.8371

**Leslie Ives**

Vice Chairperson

**Robert Lounsbury**

Treasurer

**Amanda Blodgett**

Secretary

**Chrissy Hechemy**

Social Chair person,  
 Annual Benefit Co-Chairperson

**Melodie Masterson**

Webmaster, Social Media Chair

**Heather Wolfe**

Grants Chairperson

**Steve Bault**

Board Member

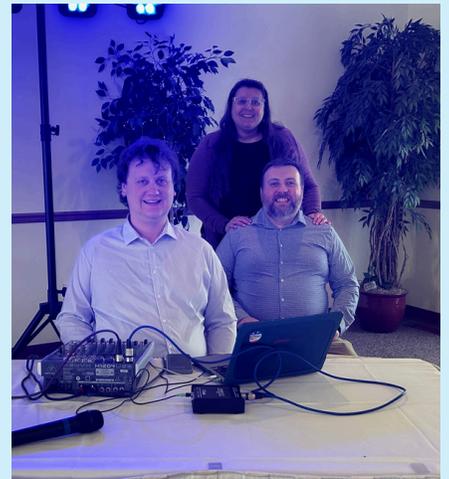
**Meghan Bowdish**

Board Member

**Mental Health Matters Annual Benefit  
 In Pictures - April 26, 2025  
 Recognizing Southern Adirondack Independent  
 Living Center (SAIL) as the  
 2025 SCCCMH Citizen of the Year**



Mental Health Matters 2025 Annual Benefit Continued...



Thank you to our 2025 Mental Health Matters Benefit Sponsors



## **CHAIRPERSON'S NOTES**

**By Peggy Lounsbury**

SCCCMH currently has a few openings on our Board of Trustees. We are a small nonprofit organization with a mission to:

- Provide program development and enrichment grants to organizations that support people living with mental illness
- Offer education and awareness opportunities for both professionals and the public
- Advocate for essential care and services, including lobbying elected officials and government representatives
- Increase awareness and reduce stigma surrounding mental illness.

Our Board meets once a month from 5:00–6:00 PM on the third Thursday of each month. We do not meet in December, July, or August.

Each year, we produce a Fall and Spring newsletter, award approximately three grants, and host our major fundraising event in April—an evening with dinner, dancing, raffles, and a live auction.

Even though we are small, our impact is meaningful. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Trustee, please contact Peggy Lounsbury at [plounsbury@saratogahospital.org](mailto:plounsbury@saratogahospital.org) or 518-583-8371.

We will invite you to attend a meeting as our guest, and then follow up to see if our Board is a good fit for you.

## **SCCCMH TREASURER'S REPORT**

**By Robert Lounsbury**

In the fall of 2025, we found ourselves navigating a government shutdown—something no one seems to welcome. As Treasurer of SCCCMH, I want to assure you that despite the uncertainty in our country, we continue moving forward one step at a time. Change may not always be immediate or visible, but our committee remains committed to maintaining strong financial footing throughout this fiscal year while continuing our mission to reduce stigma and support our mental health community.

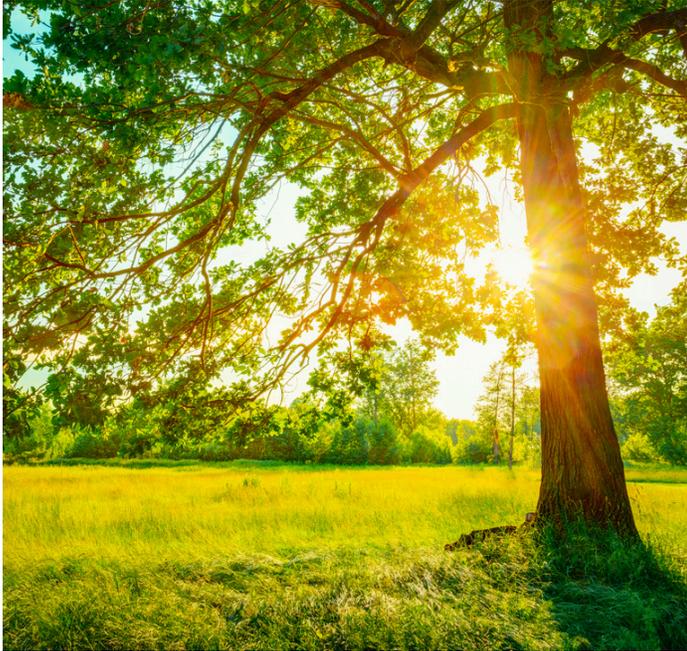
Economic challenges affect us all, and we are not immune. Yet even within these constraints, we remain steadfast in our advocacy and educational efforts for those living with mental illness here in Saratoga County. We are pleased to have recently approved a grant for The Friends of the Saratoga Springs Public Library for our 2025–2026 fiscal year. We are also excited to once again present our major fundraising event—the Mental Health Matters Benefit—which will be held on April 18, 2026.

I am proud to say that our committee continues to operate responsibly and efficiently, keeping expenses low to ensure that we remain a strong and sustainable nonprofit serving the Saratoga County mental health community. As we prepare to say goodbye to 2025, let us remember the ongoing needs of the individuals we serve and renew our commitment to creating meaningful change—together.

Thank you for standing with us and for continuing to champion the importance of mental health for everyone.

## **THE VIEW FROM HERE**

**By Carolyn G.**



Over the years I've had people say to me that I should write a book - this is an abbreviated book.

My childhood was chaotic. My father was emotionally and sexually abusive. The sexually abusive behavior stopped when I was 17. I never told anyone until I was in my 20's. I came to know that God was with me all the time.

I was a nurse for over 40 years. I lived with my friends and their 12 children. Yes I said 12 children. They became my family. I didn't have counseling until my 20's. I married when I was 42 and my husband was 34. We had some hard times, but God helped me. He has healed me of the PTSD and my mental health diagnosis. Yes, I still have mental illness but I lean on God to help me.

In 2014, I started going to Unlimited Potential/Northern Rivers. These people are like my family now. I talk to one of the counselors when I need to. My life is good and Unlimited Potential/Northern Rivers helps me.

## **Mental Health News in NYS:**

On May 9, 2025, Governor Hochul signed a bill which allots \$196 million dollars to “strengthen the mental health care system”, \$160 million dollars towards the expansion of forensic inpatient beds, and “strengthens New York’s Involuntary Commitment Laws and Kendra’s Law.”

Governor Hochul announced that New York State has been recognized as a national leader in mental health based on a new report compiled with publicly available federal data.

‘The State of Mental Health in America’ ranked New York number one nationally when analyzing data from 17 common mental health measures using the data gathered in 2022 and 2023 – the year Governor Hochul launched her multi-billion-dollar investment to strengthen the state’s system of care.



**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.

## Impact of the Big Beautiful Bill in NYS

The healthcare provisions of the Federal Reconciliation Legislation (aka “Big Beautiful Bill”) will severely jeopardize the Essential Plan and New York’s healthcare system.

Stay informed. Contact your NYS Representative and Senators in Congress, and let them know your concerns!

- Funding for the Essential Plan is calculated based on federal premium tax credits, which is used to reimburse providers for care.
- The Legislation eliminates premium tax credit eligibility for almost half of current enrollees and cuts more than 50% of the program’s funding.
- Combined, the provisions of this Legislation equate to over \$10 billion in annual losses for New Yorkers and our healthcare economy.
- The loss of this funding will impact every community in the state.
- Uninsured consumers will still seek care in hospitals and will need other social services to maintain their health.
- Hospital financial losses will result in job losses and harm local economies.
- Over 730,000 individuals will lose their federally-funded Essential Plan coverage, of which 506,000 will move to Medicaid and 224,000 will become uninsured.

### For Mental Health Professionals:

The New York State Office of Mental Health is pleased to share a dedicated webpage designed to support training initiatives for behavioral health providers across New York State. This webpage serves as a centralized resource, offering access to a variety of training opportunities, materials, and tools to enhance your practice and better serve individuals in need.

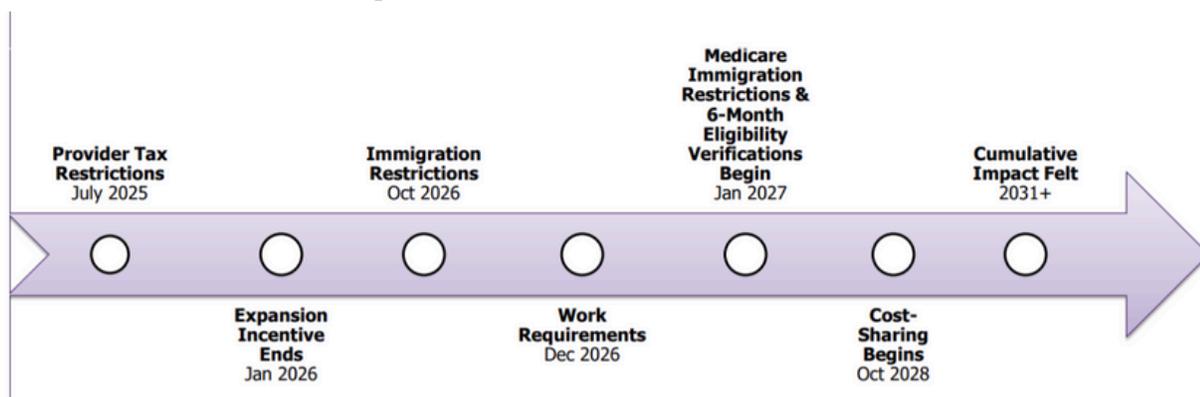
This training webpage features:

- Live or self-study sessions tailored to the behavioral health field.
  - Resources on various topics such as trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention.
  - Opportunities for continuing education credits.
- Visit the webpage here:

[omh.ny.gov/omhweb/planning/training-for-providers/](https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/planning/training-for-providers/)

We encourage you to explore the webpage and take advantage of these high-quality learning opportunities. Thank you for your continued dedication to improving mental health services in our communities.

## Implementation Timeline



## **SCCCMH MISSION**

The vision of the The Saratoga County Citizens Committee (SCCCMH) is to cultivate a Saratoga County where mental health is prioritized, stigma is eradicated, and every individual has equitable access to comprehensive, person-centered care and supportive community resources, enabling them to live fulfilling, integrated, and productive lives.



## **Submit Mental Health News and Views Articles**

Consider submitting an article for the “View From 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. Submit your articles via e-mail to [info@SCCCMH-Saratoga.org](mailto:info@SCCCMH-Saratoga.org).

## **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 Peggy Lounsbury or visit our website for more information and download an application.

## **Mental Health First Aid Training**

**MHANY provides 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 is a 5-step action plan** that offers 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/>



**MHANYS**  
Mental Health Association  
in New York State

### **Citizen of the Year Nomination Form**

The Citizen of the Year Award recognizes people and organizations that directly or indirectly provided support to the mental health community or consumers in Saratoga County. SCCCMH honors one worthy nominee annually.

Criteria: A nominated individual or organization has a record of serving the mental health community in Saratoga County in one or more of the following ways:

1. The nominee promoted a better understanding of mental health issues, reducing stigma associated with mental illness.
2. The nominee managed personal mental illness with courage and grace, promoting a better understanding of mental health issues and reduction of stigma associated with mental illness through contributions to the community.
3. Through work in the mental health community, the nominee has created or improved community programs to foster a supportive, caring environment for individuals with mental illness.
4. The nominee's community contributions have brought greater, more positive awareness to mental health issues.

**PLEASE SUBMIT NOMINATIONS BY FEBRUARY 1, 2026**

**Nominee Information (Please print or type):**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe in detail, and with examples, how the nominee meets one or more of the above criteria (specify the criteria by number above). Use a separate sheet if more room is needed.

Information about the person(s) making this nomination:

YOUR NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP TO NOMINEE, IF ANY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to: SCCCMH, COY Committee, P. O. Box 820, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
Or E-mail to SCCCMH Chair, Peggy Lounsbury: [PLounsbury@saratogahospital.org](mailto:PLounsbury@saratogahospital.org)



## **SAVE THE DATE**

**Mental Health Matters Annual Benefit**

**Saturday, April 18, 2026**

**Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge**



*The evening includes: Delicious buffet by Simply Food by Maura,  
Great dance music from DJ Mike Rafferty, Raffles and a live auction!  
Join us as we raise essential funds to support mental health in our community!*

### **JOIN SCCCMH!**

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

Please consider a charitable gift to SCCCMH. You can honor or memorialize someone while making a difference in the mental health community.



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

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

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



**Thank You for  
Your Support!**

We need the continued support of people like you to help in our advocacy efforts toward improving Mental Health Services in our county and to remove the stigma associated with those who live with Mental Health issues. We provide grant money to agencies that want to start up services or initiatives that improves the lives of those they serve in Saratoga County! Please follow and share our Facebook page to spread the news!

The 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 SCCCMH unless specifically stated.

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



For more information, contact:

Chairperson: Peggy Lounsbury

Phone: 518-583-8371 Email: [plounsbury@saratogacare.org](mailto:plounsbury@saratogacare.org)

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

### **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM**

*Revolving Membership for one year from the date you join SCCCMH*

**SCCCMH Mission:** 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.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**PLEASE CHECK ONE:**

New Member     Membership Renewal     Remove my information from SCCCMH mailing

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email 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. Please 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!!**