

CMHA provides unique mental health care

By CHARLES PAULLIN
STAFF WRITER

PLAINVILLE — There is an organization located in New Britain helping people in several communities throughout the state.

With the administrative offices located at 270 John Downey Drive and satellite offices in Waterbury and Torrington, Community Mental Health Affiliates, provides mental health services to many in the

area.

The business began in Southington as a consortium group for the old New Britain General Hospital, Wheeler Clinic and Bristol Hospital, with the mission of raising funds and distributing them among the groups. Due to funding changes in the late 1980s

though, the business moved to New Britain and began to administer its own services to the chronically ill.

"The population of people often times went into state hospitals for long periods of time" said Raymond Gorman, president and

CEO. "When they came out, they had to pay for health needs, had needs for housing, for jobs, for transportation, and that's how CMHA began to serve them."

Now with a staff of about 400, CMHA serves about 6,500 adults, children and families a year across

12 locations with a \$23 million operating budget.

Those services include outpatient services for both mental health and substance abuse, prevention services such as smoking cessation and educational programs on substance abuse, residential support and

vocational services, among others.

The business also provides a social rehabilitation center, where people can congregate, attend events, seek fellowship, write a resume and more, said Gorman. The staff also works with the criminal justice system to promote jail diversion to help provide a more normalized recovery program and provide savings to the state.

"We want to be a one-stop, seamless portal for our clients," said Gorman.

CMHA became the first in the state to be designated by the Joint Committee on Accreditation as a behavioral health home, meaning the company not only deals with psychiatric issues but also medical services.

The company also became a local mental health authority and is responsible for the

provisions to the mental health population in their service area, which consists of New Britain and the five surrounding towns.

CMHA also provides clinical therapy services for businesses that have employees in need of such services, offers training for downtown businesses on dealing with inebriated individuals and provides mental health First Aid training identifying disgruntled employees in the workforce. CMHA also utilizes electronic recordkeeping, meaning medical histories can be accessed at anytime from any location.

Soon, CMHA will also offer later evening hours and will be open on Saturdays with a full service pharmacy for clients and the community, once they consolidate their New Britain offices to their recently purchased 227 Main St. location.

"Managing the care for these folks is really important," said Gorman. "They are people that have significant behavioral health challenges. We like to think our role is not only to serve the clients, but also the community," he added.

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Community Mental Health Affiliates, Inc. (CMHA) is a private non-profit treatment provider headquartered in New Britain, with 12 locations in 3 cities throughout northwest and central Connecticut. CMHA partners with clients and the community to promote recovery from mental illness and addiction, treating more than 6,500 adults and children each year. CMHA is Connecticut's first fully Joint Commission accredited Behavioral Health Home.

Visit www.cmhaacc.org to learn more.

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