



UNC

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Psychiatry

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

“The qualities of the people who have made the Center so successful, especially their energy, creativity, passion, and commitment, have also made the Center’s response to the COVID 19 crisis so effective. I’m proud to be part of this amazing team.

Dr. John Gilmore | Director, Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health



Austin Hall, MD
Medical Director



Lorna Moser, PhD
Director, Institute of Best Practices



Thava Mahadevan, MS
Director of Operations



Beth Rossi, BA
QA/QI Director & Clinic Manager

10 Years Strong 20 Programs and Growing!

- STEP Clinics (3 counties)
- Wake Encompass
- NC Psychiatric Research Center
- IPB (Integrated Primary & Behavioral) Health Care
- Comprehensive Mental Health
- HomeLink
- ACT Teams (state wide)
- Community Resource Court
- UNC Case Management
- IPS (Individual Placement & Support) Employment
- Eight Recovery Programs
- The Farm at Penny Lane
- Wellness On Wheels
- Brushes with Life
- Horticulture Therapy
- CORA Food Pantry
- Institute for Best Practices
- NC Community Psychiatrists' Leadership Network...and more!

Providing Care to the Mental Health Community during the Pandemic.

The Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health has always believed in treating the “whole” person. This means providing safe environments, treatments, and basic life necessities like food. However as more and more businesses and services shut down due to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the CECMH had a problem on its hands – how would they provide the services that its clientele had come to expect from them? The Solution – an energetic and passionate team of providers, social works and creative thinkers.

The Farm at Penny Lane reinvented its Horticulture Therapy program by providing safe, no-contact delivered vegetable plants to participants to take care of while at home. They also created safe delivery Heat and Eat Meals; the food provided by local restaurants and the Farm at Penny Lane to provide enough meals for clients and their families for 10 weeks. The Wake STEP Clinic also created a centralized food pantry filled with non-perishable food items and hygiene products that could be easily accessible to clinicians and case managers to pick up and deliver to clients at risk.

With basic necessities provided, the CECMH set its focus on treating client mental illnesses. Teletherapy was quickly established and for those who did not have access to the necessary technology, a prepaid smart phone with needed apps loaded and unlimited data for 6 months was loaned to them. The Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams continued to provide in-person treatments but with additional precautions to prevent any coronavirus spread.



A Party to Celebrate Hope and Living a Life without Limits.

"Hope Grows Here" was the theme of the Sixth Annual No Limits Gala hosted by the CECMH last November at the Carolina Club in Chapel Hill. This phrase is the slogan for the CECMH Farm at Penny Lane in Pittsboro, NC; a location that focuses on alternative recovery methods for individuals with mental health, and the focus of the Gala.

"The farm symbolizes hope, resilience and recovery for people impacted by serious mental illness. Our focus is on strength and self-determination of the people we serve at the farm and create an environment that minimizes stigma and promotes wellness," said Thava Mahadevan, CECMH Director of Operations.

Highlights to the evening including dancing, dining, and a silent auction. NC House Representative Verla Insko received the 2019 Advocacy Award, for her continuous support for mental health initiatives. The Center also introduced its partnership with UNC School of Social Work and XDS, a non-profit, to bring affordable housing to those with mental illness in the form of the Tiny House Community.

**“
Our Advisory Board is
filled with amazingly
dedicated individuals
who want to see the
CECMH succeed.”**

Since its inception in 2014, the CECMH Advisory Board has consisted of a mix of Center staff, family members of individuals with mental health, and advocates pushing for mental health awareness. In 2020, the board decided to undergo a series of strategy meetings that resulted in a focus on, Advocacy, Advice, Fundraising, and Development.

The Advisory Board also said a sad farewell to its current Chair, Mr. Michelle Williams, whom had been a member of the board since 2015, but welcomed David Pope from SAS, as its new Chair.

Community Resource Court Celebrates 20 Years!

For 20 years the Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health has been assisting individuals diagnosed with mental disorders whom have become defendants in the court system of Orange and Chatham counties through its Community Resource Court program. The CRC represents a type of "mental health court" that assists defendants with mental illnesses and underlying substance abuse problems by providing alternatives to court disposition and assisting them with the mental health and substance abuse treatment they need. With the support of both the local criminal justice system and the treatment providing community, participant in the CRC program have acquiring necessary skills needed to maintain a healthy, crime-free lifestyle.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) receives nearly \$500,000.

The Laura and John Arnold Foundation awarded the CECMH nearly \$500,000 to study how ACT teams help individuals with serious mental illness. For the next three years, Lorna Moser, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Center's Institute for Best Practices, will be the principal investigator for the study.

"There's been greater attention nationally to implementing ACT, which is exciting," stated Lorna Moser in a January issue of UNC's Vital Signs. "Similarly, there are so many questions we need to answer to be smart about implementation efforts. It's not just a question of access, it's also about quality. Availability of a supportive policy, adequate funding, access to alternative services likely impact good faith efforts to implement ACT."

ACT teams are well-known for their success in providing transition support for individuals with severe mental illness as they move from a facility to living in the community. Currently the Center has over 80 ACT teams all across the state of North Carolina. During its last fidelity review in 2016, the Center's Wake County ACT team was one of the highest scored ACT teams in the state.