

Ottawa County

On March 18, 2020 the County of Ottawa announced they are closing all offices to the public. Community Mental Health of Ottawa County (CMHOC) is the exception to this rule, we are the only county office in Ottawa County opened to the public right now. While we are limiting traffic into our offices, we know we are an integral part of the safety net for behavioral health services in Ottawa County and will continue to have offices open to the public for service for as long as we can.

The CMHOC staff have showed they are willing to work hard to ensure consumers and people who are in a mental health crisis continue to have access to services. Our staff are now adapting to providing services via telephone, Zoom and email. To many, it sounds like it would be easy to switch gears from face to face only therapy to primarily telehealth sessions, but it is actually complicated. We have to ensure we continue to protect people's rights and follow the HIPAA guidelines. That means staff are learning how to document this new way of providing services and working hard to ensure we are accurately billing for the services.

We have also had staff express interest in volunteering to pack boxes of food for distribution through local nonprofits or working in group homes as support to ensure the basic needs of the people we serve are met. We have offered mental health consultation to our frontline County partners such as the Health Department to provide crisis debriefing and reminders to pay attention to their staff's mental health needs during this outbreak. In a time of crisis, the staff at CMHOC have shown they are adaptable and wanting to continue to provide high quality behavioral health services.