



ADAMHS Board Nearing First Year Serving Erie County

In 2021, there were big changes in the way in which mental health and substance abuse services were funded in Erie County. The Mental Health Board of Erie & Ottawa Counties was dissolved and Erie County established its own board, the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Erie County.

The primary function of the board is to fund vital programs and services for individuals with mental health or substance abuse disorders. The ADAMHS board does not directly provide services, but works with and supports agencies that do. They receive funding from a variety of sources, including federal and state grants, as well as local levy funds voted on by Erie County taxpayers. Members of the community in favor of Erie County establishing its own board believed that we confront unique challenges pertaining to mental health and addiction. They advocated for a new board because they expected that a new board would be better able to meet the tremendous need in our community while respecting taxpayer dollars.

This has been the mission of the ADAMHS board and staff since we started on October 1, 2021. In the first year, there was much work to be done to complete the transition. The board worked diligently with the Erie County Auditor's office and the new Ottawa County board to ensure financial resources were fairly and correctly distributed. The ADAMHS board sold the past board's office on Perkins Ave in Sandusky and moved into the Erie County Services Center at 2900 Columbus Avenue, Sandusky. And the board ensured that the vital services provided by the old board were maintained.

The ADAMHS board decided to create an RFP (request for proposal) process for Fiscal Year 2023 so that all agencies, existing and new, could apply for funding in an unbiased manner. The result of the process was a further understanding of the tremendous need for services in the community and the establishment of new funding levels for providers. One example is the board's decision to increase funding for prevention programming in school districts for mental health.

Data from the Erie County Health Department shows that COVID-19 and other factors have worsened an existing mental health crisis across the nation and in Erie County in the last few years. Our leaders will continue to look for innovative ways to support individuals with mental health and substance abuse challenges, and the ADAMHS board looks forward to being part of that process. We also look forward to partnering with the new NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Erie County to support clients and their families when they are working through recovery.

The pandemic also led to an increase in overdose deaths and relapse. The ADAMHS board is proud to support detox services at the Erie County Health Department as well as sober living facilities such as Becky's House and Kamms Corner. Our community is very blessed to have grassroots organizations such as Sandusky Artisans and Erie Shore Network that provide tremendous support to those on their journey through recovery and we are proud to support them.

We know the impact these organizations have on the data and are committed to supporting a continuum of support services.

If you or a loved one needs treatment, don't hesitate to ask for help. Call one of our providers today or dial 988, which is the new mental health crisis line.

Firelands Counseling & Recovery 419-557-5177

Bayshore Counseling 419-626-9156

Erie County Health Department 419-626-5623

The Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board of Erie County will continue to provide critical support for those in need and remain good stewards of the taxpayer's dollar.