



DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES, DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH **ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Report to Onondaga County Legislature March 24, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Onondaga County administers and oversees a coordinated system of mental health and substance use services for adults in the community. The County receives state aid through the New York State Offices of Mental Health (OMH), Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS). These funds support treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery services for residents with mental illness, developmental challenges and substance use disorders.

Funding is primarily directed toward Adults with the most significant and complex needs. Through contracts with community providers, the County supports a range of services including outpatient treatment, crisis services, rehabilitation, and recovery supports.

In addition to managing these contracts, the County provides oversight and system coordination. The Division monitors the performance of programs it funds and works collaboratively with all OMH- and OASAS-licensed providers operating in Onondaga County to ensure services are accessible, coordinated, and responsive to community needs.

The County's behavioral health system relies on partnerships across multiple sectors. These include hospitals, law enforcement, service providers, community-based organizations, and organizations representing individuals with lived experience. These partnerships help ensure individuals in crisis or in need of ongoing treatment can be connected to appropriate services.

We partner closely with the Onondaga County Department of Social Services – Economic Security to plan for and support individuals who are unhoused or housing vulnerable, ensuring coordinated access to benefits, housing resources, and stabilization services. We also collaborate with the County Department of Health to support individuals with substance use challenges across the full continuum of care, from prevention to treatment and recovery supports.

The Division of Mental Health assesses community needs, plans for service capacity, and works to improve coordination across the behavioral health system. Prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services are intended to reduce the impact of mental illness, developmental challenges and substance use disorders on individuals, families, and the community.

Through the strategic use of state aid, County funding, provider oversight, and community partnerships, Onondaga County maintains a structured system of care that focuses resources on residents with the highest levels of need.

2024-2028 STRATEGIES

Each county in New York State develops a multi-year behavioral health strategic plan that outlines priorities for serving individuals experiencing mental health, substance use, and developmental disability challenges. In Onondaga County, this plan is informed by community focus groups, ongoing stakeholder meetings with providers and partners, and analysis of statewide data and county Results-Based Accountability reporting to identify gaps and guide system improvements.

1

Prevention

Prevent the onset or escalation of mental health and substance use challenges

- Community prevention collaborations
- School-based behavioral health supports
- Drug and suicide prevention education
- Expansion of MTSS and Student Assistance Programs

2

Access to Services and Supports

Increase access to treatment and community supports

- Expand outreach/navigation (Adult SPOA)
- Increase outpatient service locations
- Increase overdose prevention strategies
- Peer and family support networks
- Workforce initiatives

3

Focus on High Need Population

Improve services for individuals with complex behavioral health needs

- Expanded crisis response (988, mobile crisis)
- Supportive housing expansion
- Transportation solutions for crisis care
- Specialized interventions (FACT, Youth ACT, CSIDD)
- Law enforcement referral portal

4

Data and Accountability

Use data to guide decision-making and system improvement

- Results-Based Accountability across programs
- Quarterly outcome reporting
- Integrated data review with county analytics
- Data-driven planning and oversight

LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

Onondaga County works with community providers, hospitals, and New York State agencies to ensure residents have access to a full range of mental health and substance use services. These services include crisis response, treatment, recovery supports, housing, and prevention programs. These services are provided through local agencies and specialized treatment providers and are often funded through Medicaid, Medicare, managed care, or New York State aid through Onondaga County.

LEVEL	SERVICES	PROVIDERS
Crisis and Immediate Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline • 911 Emergency • Mobile Crisis Teams • Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center • Psychiatric Emergency Rooms 	Contact Community Services, Helio, Liberty St. Joe's, DOH SUD Crisis Team, Upstate Medical University
Community Based Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatient Mental Health and SUD • Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) • Care Coordination • Transitioning from incarceration • Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) 	Hutchings, Upstate, Helio, Liberty Resources, St. Joe's Syracuse Recovery Services, Crouse, Conifer Park, Professional Counseling Services, SCHC, Tully Hill, CCSI
Peer Support and Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Support • Recovery Centers • Family Peer support for SUD recovery • Veteran peer program • Peer-run overnight respite programs 	ACCESS CNY, Catholic Charities, Helio, St. Joe's, Prevention Network, Clear Path for Veterans
Housing and Residential Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported housing programs • Treatment apartments • Congregate and single-room housing • Residential treatment for SUD 	CCSI, SPOA, ACCESS CNY, Helio, Liberty Resources, The Salvation Army, St. Joe's
Inpatient and Hospital Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychiatric inpatient treatment • Medically supervised withdrawal • Inpatient treatment for substance use disorders 	Hutchings, Helio, St. Joe's, Upstate

ACCESSING SUPPORT

NO WRONG DOOR APPROACH

Access to services is coordinated through a “No Wrong Door” model, ensuring individuals can enter the system through multiple pathways and be connected to appropriate care regardless of where they first seek help.

Adult Single Point of Access (SPOA)

The SPOA, established in alignment with New York State Office of Mental Health guidelines, serves as a centralized referral and review process for individuals with serious mental illness. It:

- Standardizes access to high-need, community-based services
- Prioritizes individuals based on level of need
- Facilitates timely linkage to services such as care management, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), and housing supports

Adult Mental Health Outreach Team

A dedicated five-member outreach team works proactively across systems to identify and engage individuals who may not independently seek care. The team:

- Partners with hospitals, providers, and law enforcement
- Accepts self-referrals
- Conducts direct outreach, engagement, and system navigation support

System of Care Network

A robust cross-system network ensures coordinated, individualized responses for individuals with complex needs. This includes established referral pathways with:

- Hospitals
- 911 and 988 crisis systems
- Mobile crisis teams
- Housing providers and shelters

Court Navigator Team

Focused on individuals involved in the criminal justice system with mental health needs, this team provides:

- Targeted outreach and engagement
- Navigation support across systems
- Connections to appropriate treatment and community-based services

CNY Crisis Network

A coordinated network of three mental health crisis teams, a substance use disorder (SUD) crisis team, and emergency services to:

- Align crisis response practices
- Ensure individuals in crisis receive timely, appropriate, and coordinated interventions-especially 911 (4th Lever)

Case Monitoring and Transitions

Focused on supporting individuals under Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) and those transitioning from forensic settings, ensuring continuity of care, adherence to treatment plans, and timely coordination of services to promote stability and successful community integration.

