

# Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene Annual Report 2021

## Overview:

- Tioga County Mental Hygiene continues to offer a comprehensive continuum of care for citizens of Tioga County who have needs related to Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and/or Developmental Disabilities. Services continue despite challenges due to COVID-19, the ongoing changes in the Behavioral Health Care System.
- We were fortunate to have had the ability to provide tele-health at the onset of the pandemic. It has allowed county residents to receive treatment who were unable to access care - for various reasons, including COVID, and transportation- which historically has been a barrier for many.
- Provision of services continued without interruption. The use of Tele-Health services was the primary service modality, for the majority of 2021.
- The department has been on the frontlines in dealing with the negative impacts that COVID has had on the overall wellness in our community. We continue to offer same day service / admission / and access to Medication Assisted Treatment.
- The Departments' ability to provide quality and timely care is attributed to system changes that included, uninterrupted on site staff / services, and a tireless, dedicated, resilient workforce. As many are aware front-line workers have been impacted by the pandemic in various ways.
- The department has struggled with filling vacancies and finding qualified candidates again, in the last year. Workforce recruitment has been a challenge due to expanding opportunities available to professionals, attractive salaries, and incentives not offered in the civil service arena.
- We are very proud of our two coalitions that provide a valuable service to Tioga County. The Substance Abuse Coalition, **Tioga Allies in Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP)**, brings new interest, awareness, ideas and support to the community through hosted and planned community events. ASAP also participated and provides several media campaigns.
- **The Suicide Prevention Coalition** started in 2012 and are involved in many community events that intend to increase awareness, train, and provide valuable information for help if needed.

**The Department is charged with oversight, planning, and passing through funds to providers in Tioga County that are part of a continuum of care. Please see below.**

### **Community Services Board**

- The Board continues to educate the Community about Mental health to reduce stigma. The Board is active in reviewing new policy as well as participate in the development of NYS Plan that the Director of Community Service is required to submit every year (was not submitted last year, waiver given due to COVID).

### **Community Mental Health Services**

- **The County Mental Health Clinic** provided **14,870 services in 2021**. The Clinic provides access to care in a responsive, coordinated, and timely manner. Throughout 2020 there was continued focus on engagement, retention, risk management, and consumer outcomes. The clinic continues to provide exemplary 24/7 availability of crisis services. Our OPEN ACCESS service allows individuals to be seen the same day, in person or virtually, removing the barrier of wait time, as immediate access is crucial. There is not a waiting list for Psychiatry. Unfortunately, we have seen an increase suicide attempts.
- **Aspire Hope NY (formally Pathways)** continues to provide supportive services to families with special needs children. This year they have served many families and children within our county. Services include support groups, respite, in-home family supportive services, and recreational activities. The agency has moved to many services they offer – virtually.
- **Rehabilitation Support Services** serves the seriously and persistently mentally ill adults in the community. The Community Residence provides a supportive environment for adults with a focus of assisting residents to function independently in the community.
- **A New Hope Centers** vision: a world where all people are safe, valued, respected, and free. Provides services to any person subjected to abuse or crime. The agency served 395 individuals struggling with mental health.
- **Tioga County Veterans** –This year, specific efforts were increased for outreach, renewed in-person informational events, on-line meetings and trainings’, press conference for the Field of the Forgotten Fallen – recognizing veterans we have lost to suicide, Ruck March to End Veteran Suicide with BBQ and band bash. The efforts resulted in the department reaching 3,076 additional veterans and their families. We are grateful to partner with Veterans Department.
- **Unity House** – Tioga and Tompkins County providing crisis diversion respite beds.
- **Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga** – Have provided supportive/integrated employment to 32 individuals in 2021.

## **Substance Abuse Services**

- **Tioga County Alcohol and Drug Services** continue to be the primary provider of outpatient drug and alcohol services within the County. **During 2021, a total of 4,962 an increase of 1,232 from 2020.** Services were provided, despite limited group activity – this modality proved challenging. We have been on the frontlines in dealing with the negative impacts COVID – including increase in relapse and overdose. We are fortunate to have our own Certified Recovery Peer Advocate, who was instrumental in outreach and reengagement. Other services provided include jail evaluations, Alternatives to Incarceration Program, Driver Impairment Program, Narcan Training, and Random Drug Screening requests by Department of Social Services.
- **Trinity, CASA** provides prevention, education, advocacy, early intervention and referral services to individuals, families and community in Tioga County. The program provides Evidence Based Programs within Tioga County. The program also directs the ASAP coalition. In 2021 ASAP partnered with the Tioga County to implement OD Mapping.
- **State Targeted Response (STR) Grant** – Tioga County was identified as an area needing assistance in reaching persons struggling with opioid addiction. This NYS OASAS chose two agencies – Trinity and ACBC to provide outreach, peer counseling, care coordination, referrals, short term counseling, and prescriptions. This program is totally community based – mobile model. The grant also allowed for a full time employee to be placed in the Tioga County Jail. The mobile teams have worked very closely with many departments in our county.

## **Developmental Disabilities Services**

- **The State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)** vision that all individuals within their care have the right to live in the least restrictive environment and integration within the community continues to be supported, however, COVID has been a barrier in 2021. The OPWDD system has made many changes in delivery of care, provided many virtual services. The primary providers of developmental disability services for the County continue to be:
- **Franziska Racker Centers** – offers a range of services including special education, clinical services, mental health treatment programs, residential opportunities, and community support services for individuals of all ages. Specialized services include evaluation, early education/intervention, family support, autism services, service coordination, and family resource program.
- **Achieve** – provides the integrated employment program within the County as well as supported employment and habilitation services. These services are designed to assist eligible individuals to fully participate in the community through work or volunteer opportunities.