



Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board Minutes

Date: Wednesday, January 7th, 2026

Time: 2:00 PM CT

Location: Region 1 Planning Council, 127 N Wyman Street, Rockford, IL 61101 or virtual at [Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board YouTube Page](#)

Called by: Mary Ann Abate: President

Members: Richard Kunnert: Vice President, Dr. Bill Gorski: Secretary, Dr. Terry Giardini: Treasurer, Andrell Bragg-Shaw, Rev. Dr. K. Edward Copeland, Tim Nabors, Jeff Nielsen, Dr. Amanda Penney, Mohammad Yunus

Director: Jason Holcomb, Region 1 Planning Council

Agenda:

A) Call to Order: President Mary Ann Abate called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM

B) Roll Call

- Mary Ann Abate: Present
- Andrell Bragg-Shaw: Present
- Dr. K. Edward Copeland: Present
- Dr. Terry Giardini: Present
- Dr. Bill Gorski: Present
- Richard Kunnert: Absent
- Tim Nabors: Present
- Jeff Nielsen: Present
- Dr. Amanda Penney: Present
- Mohammad Yunus: Present
- Jason Holcomb: Present
- Guests:

- **R1 Planning Council:** Chelsey Glatz, Alex McCann, Reagan Hilbrant
- **City of Rockford:** Mayor Thomas McNamara, Mary Trujillo, Becky DiDomenico, Christopher Greenwood, Joel Givens, Joseph Sculuca
- **City of Rockford Health and Human Services:** Angie Walker, Owen Carter
- **Rockford Fire:** Shannon Kopp, Chief Rebecca Tyo, Jon Larson
- **Rockford Park District:** Jessica Stinberg
- **Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition:** Todd Kisner
- **Rosecrance Living:** Melissa Crowell
- **Winnebago County Sheriff's Department:** Sana Siddiani
- **Second First Church:** Karen Hill
- **Renest Recovery Support Services:** Christina Hobson
- Stephen Marshall

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C) Public Comment

1) Angie Walker, City of Rockford Health & Human Services

- Notes: Ms. Walker expressed her concern for the federal government's possible withdrawal of funds that support people experiencing homelessness. The City of Rockford Health & Human Services, lead entity for the Northern IL Homeless Coalition and lead applicant for HUD Continuum of Care Funds (CoC), These funds account for \$2.9 million, \$2 million of which stays in Rockford to support seven permanent housing programs for homeless individuals with a diagnosed disability. These programs serve 194 households and 334 individuals who will be at risk of becoming homeless again if federal funds are withheld.

2) Todd Kisner, Chair of the Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition

- Notes: Mr. Kisner explained details about HUD's proposed funding changes in its FY25 grant application. HUD is proposing a 30% cap on permanent housing for CoCs. This will reduce the Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition's funding to \$833,000; its largest housing program currently runs at \$1,079,000. 136 housing units are currently funded through CoC funds, down to 40 after the change. In addition to the loss of funds, HUD wants to move toward supporting transitional housing (street outreach) projects instead of permanent housing, requiring 40 hours of case management for tenants which will tax the staff's resources. HUD narrows the definition of 'people with a disability' to those with physical or developmental disabilities, excluding those with mental illness or substance use disorder. HUD is proposing implementing camping bans in communities, helping providers in law enforcement criminalize homelessness, and other harm reduction opportunities as positive points on the application, which are all detrimental to the fight against homelessness.

3) Mayor Thomas McNamara, City of Rockford

- Notes: Mayor McNamara illuminated issues that the Rockford community will likely be facing. There will be a loss of millions of dollars, almost immediately making hundreds of people homeless and impacting the entire city, not just Rockford's Health & Human Services department. This will also negatively impact the mental health progress the community has made until now. It is not just a homeless issue, but a community-wide crisis that will stress other public agencies such as law enforcement and libraries. He wanted to make the board aware of the dramatic change that the community will be facing, including impacts that will be felt by the organizations and programs that the Board currently funds.



4) Melissa Crowell, Rosecrance Mental Health Housing and Homeless Program

- Notes: Ms. Crowell explained that Rosecrance partners with the City of Rockford to run the Shelter Plus Care housing program that serves individuals with mental illness and are homeless. Data and lived experiences show this program is successful. It combines permanent housing, integrated mental health services, and long-term supportive relationships with other community partners. She gave an example of an individual who had received services through Shelter Plus Care and is now working for the City of Rockford as a housing services advocate, giving back to the system that helped her.

5) Shannon Kopp, Rockford Fire Department

- Notes: Ms. Kopp explained that the HUD grant program is officially due on January 24 but agencies are not allowed to work on the application, since it is on hold. They continue to hope that funds will come through as promised in FY24 so that they will have some time to plan and reorganize programs so services will continue to be funded. An update from the federal government is expected on January 8. She reiterated that these proposed changes will change the entire landscape of homeless services, making more people homeless and ineligible for transitional housing programs. For those that do secure housing, it will be temporary and exclude wrap-around services. Any assistance the Board can provide is greatly appreciated.

D) **Presentations:** None

E) **Monthly Activity Report - November & December 2025**

- 1) Jason Holcomb, WCCMHB Director, gave the November & December 2025 Activity Report.
 - Notes: Mr. Holcomb mentioned that local data collection for the strategic plan update will be concluded this week. They received 235 responses on the public survey with over 300 perspectives represented (those with lived experience, agency staff, family members, etc.). Key informant interviews on the CCBHC (Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic) hub-and-spoke model will be concluded on January 9, and an empowerment evaluation (mission, values) will be presented to the Board at the February meeting.



F) Action Items

1) November 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the November 2025 Meeting Minutes.

- Raised by: Mr. Nielsen
- Seconded by: Dr. Copeland
- Discussion: None
 - Motion **approved** by a unanimous vote of all Board Members present.
 - Absent Board Members: Richard Kunnert

G) Discussion Items

1) Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Update

- Notes: Mr. Holcomb mentioned that the FY25 program budget closed in October, officially closing out PY4 grants and breaking even. FY25 operations came in under budget, with the exception of legal fees.
- Dr. Gorski asked a clarifying question on expenditure metrics and lag. Mr. Holcomb explained that this is the highest expenditure year, but that this issue of positions filled on aggregate is not the issue like in the past, and explained that turnover of staff adds up to create gaps in spending. Mr. Yunus asked why there is high turnover, which was answered by Mr. Holcomb that it's an issue in the mental health field.
- Mr. Yunus asked a question comparing the WCCMHB administrative budget to other mental health board budgets. Mr. Holcomb answered that the WCCMHB administrative percentage is quite low at three and a half percent compared to the average of ten to fifteen percent.



2) HIPAA Compliant Rideshare Update

- Notes: Ms. Hilbrandt provided mid-year summaries on
 - Complete and incomplete ride totals by month
 - Median cost of rides by month
 - Zip codes served
 - Organizations that are active users of the program
 - Feedback
- Overall, the program has had a positive and successful start with areas to explore for improvement.
- Mr. Holcomb gave a mid-year budget summary. As this is a pilot year for the HIPAA-Compliant Rideshare, usage and expenditure climbed through the first six months and are projected to be under budget for the year. Mr. Holcomb expects that additional organizations will opt in to the program in the next year and will look at the feasibility of scaling up.
- Questions and discussion followed.

1) Other Matters Miami Model

- Mr. Nielsen requested Mr. Holcomb to comment on the workshop R1 staff attended last spring regarding the Miami Model for mental illness and jail diversion. This year's workshop is on April 9 and 10, and money is budgeted for Board Members to attend.

H) Adjournment

1) Motion: For Adjournment was carried. Adjourned at 2:47 PM

- Raised by: Ms. Bragg-Shaw
- Seconded by: Mr. Yunus
 - Motion **approved** by a unanimous vote of all Board Members present.
 - Absent Board Members: Richard Kunnert