

FY 2021 - 2022 | September 2022



ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

**May 1, 2021 - June 30, 2021*

Association for Children's Mental Health

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ACMH is Michigan's statewide, non-profit, family-run organization providing advocacy, peer support, education and information to families raising children and youth with emotional, behavioral and mental health challenges across Michigan and the communities who support them.

ACMH's Mission:

That all Michigan children and youth with emotional, behavioral and mental health challenges and their families live in safe, welcoming communities with access to needed services and supports.



Fiscal year 2021-2022 was full of important and often urgent conversations about children's mental health as emerging and escalating needs of children and youth in our state mirrored that of the nation. Declared by the U.S. Surgeon General to be in a youth mental health crisis requiring swift and decisive action to protect not only the future and wellbeing of our youth but of our country. A national spotlight which highlighted longstanding challenges facing Michigan families seeking mental health care and creating a new sense of urgency to address both new and existing barriers in capacity and access flooding the growing gap between the number of children, youth and young adults needing services in our state and those receiving it.

ACMH remained a key and steadfast statewide advocate and partner throughout these challenging times. While continuing to serve as a beacon of help, hope, peer support and sense of 'community' for families across our state raising a child with mental health needs and youth and young adults experiencing them. Seizing both the moment and the renewed sense of urgency it created as an opportunity to encourage statewide leaders, policymakers and partners to utilize the experiences and expertise of families and ACMH resources to inform and guide statewide strategies, efforts and initiatives aimed at mitigating the current crisis in our state and to enhance statewide capacity to better understand and respond to the unique needs of youth with mental health challenges and their families. Working together to create real and lasting creating and true family/professional partnerships that will move us all closer to the mission ACMH, ensuring that ALL Michigan children/youth with mental health challenges and their families live in safe, welcoming communities with access to needed services and supports.

Community, Family & Partner Trainings

ACMH provided a variety of quality learning opportunities this year. All trainings were once again limited to virtual venues but were still a success due to the dedication and creativity of ACMH staff keeping online events engaging for interactive for participants. Examples of trainings created or facilitated for families and community partners across Michigan included:

- *Supporting Our Kid's Mental Health Needs and Our Own as We Navigate Changing School Environments* providing 4 workshop sessions for 85 participants including families, community partners and educators from across Michigan.
- *Supporting Your Child's Mental Health Needs - Back to School Webinar* for 38 families.
- *Family Engagement and Family Driven/Youth Guided training for Project AWARE sites.*
- *'From Prescribing Treatment to Partnering in Planning: Family Driven Youth Guided Treatment'* co- facilitated with MDHHS at the Self Determination Conference.
- *Children, Youth, Parents and Caregivers Instead of "Clients", "Kiddos", "Cases" and "Consumers"* session at the Mental Health Board Association Conference.
- *The Strategic Thinking of Michigan's Preeminent Advocacy Organizations: Hearing from their Leaders* Community Mental Health Board Association Conference keynote session headlined by ACMH, ARC MI, NAMI and MHAM for 196 participants.

Workshops, technical assistance, or informational sessions were also facilitated to support groups such Child/Family Mental Health Services Administrators, local CMHSPs, Healthy Transitions, Project Aware and Juvenile Justice/Mental Health pilot sites. Topics included:

- ACMH services and supports
- Peer roles
- The benefits of formal and informal parent and youth peer support
- Family-Driven Youth-Guided Care
- Building collaborative relationships between youth, families and professionals
- Family Engagement
- The benefits and importance of family voice

Parent Support Partner and Youth Peer Support

ACMH is a statewide leader in the development and expansion of family peer support and was instrumental in the continued growth and success of Michigan’s Youth and Parent Peer Support services this year. By the close of September 2022, ACMH will have trained 45 Cohorts of 304 Parent Support Partners (PSPs) and 25 Cohorts of 135 Youth Peer Support Specialists (YPSSs) and provided ongoing support to the 141 PSPs and YPSSs currently providing peer support services and the communities that employ them across Michigan. As the Statewide Coordinating and Training Partner for both Parent Support Partner and Youth Peer Support, ACMH provided the following training, coaching & technical assistance activities this fiscal year:



In addition, ACMH engaged in ongoing outreach and public awareness activities and continuous efforts to enhance YPS/PSP services, training and coaching curriculums and ensure model fidelity, informed by authentic family voice to ensure access to quality peer support services that are Family Driven-Youth Guided and meet the needs of youth and families across our state. Other activities this year included creating a virtual *Introduction to Youth Peer Support* webinar and helping to plan the work of the newly created *Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup* tasked with ensuring PSP/YPS project materials, training and activities meet the needs of all participants and reflect and honor the diversity of our population and the state and partnering with MDHHS to update YPS and PSP Medicaid Manual language.

Support to other Family, Youth and Peer Support Roles and Organizations

In addition to ACMH's role with YPS/PSP, ACMH also provide ongoing training, technical assistance and support to other formal peer support initiatives such as Healthy Transitions peers and others in an effort to enhance or enrich the peer continuum; ensure access to quality peer support across the state; increase state-wide understanding of various peer roles and support and improve the role and acceptance of youth and parent peers.

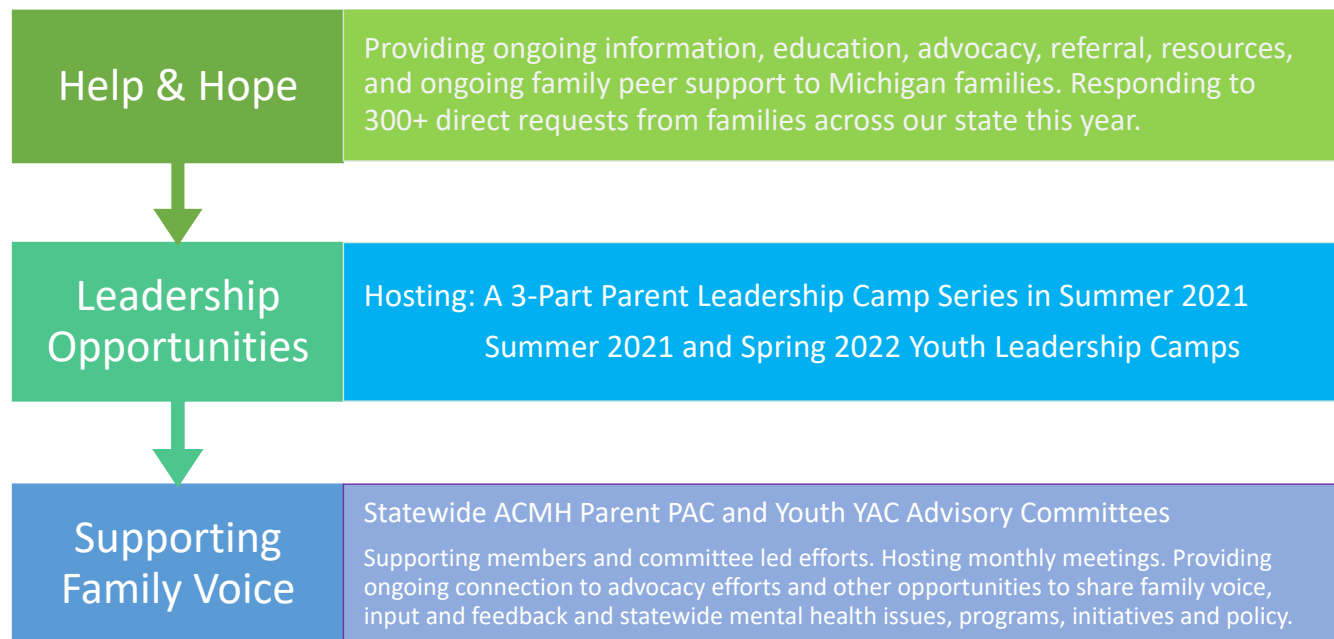
ACMH also remained dedicated to providing and increasing access to quality Informal Family Peer Support across our state and supporting organizations who provide it. Activities included:

- Supporting Ottawa County System of Care providing information, support and resources including ACMH parent leadership and family advocacy materials, curriculums and the Family Support Group Toolkit as they work to engage and develop local family leaders.
- Providing information, resources, technical assistance and materials with MI Alliance for Families as they developed a professional development series on trauma informed care designed to support their statewide staff of Parent Mentors and the families they serve.
- Distributing ACMH Parent Support Group Toolkits to families and communities working to start or sustain local support groups. Recent recipients include: teachers, the Air National Guard Family Readiness Office, Ottawa County Parent Consultant Group and a Family Support Specialist at the University of Michigan. Other Toolkit work this fiscal year included the creation of a module on *Successfully Facilitating Online Groups*.
- Sharing ACMH information, resources and materials at community events such as the Air National Guard Base Exceptional Family Member event.
- Participating in MDHHS's Statewide Family/Advocacy Organizations meetings providing ACMH resources and technical to support statewide family peer support opportunities.
- Providing ongoing technical assistance, resources, and support to MI Family Voices.
- Partnering with YouthMove MI, Neutral Zone, ASK Family Services and others to better support and enhance youth engagement and leadership opportunities across our state.

ACMH also provided ongoing access to direct family peer support for families through the ACMH phone line and website responding to 300+ direct inquiries from families this fiscal year!

Supporting Families, Youth and Young Adults

ACMH remained a constant and direct source of support, information, referral, advocacy and sense of 'community' for families raising children and youth with mental health needs and youth and young adults who experience them. Providing ongoing access to:



In addition to responding to calls and website inquiries, ACMH provided ongoing information, support and resources to families as they navigated current issues and challenges including difficulty accessing mental health and crisis services and a second year of ever-changing school, community and mental health treatment environments. ACMH also stayed focused on the core work of ACMH providing help and hope to Michigan families and developing and supporting a statewide network of family leaders able to successfully advocate for their children's mental health needs and use their voice of experience to shape and improve mental health services across our state. This fiscal year ACMH supported youth and families, and YAC and PAC members to opportunities to use their voice of experience to inform and improve mental health services and policies in our state. Some examples include: Youth and families sharing expertise for the Governor's Office State of the State Address and YAC members sharing feedback about MDHHS's Stay Well Initiative's youth outreach efforts, supports and learning opportunities including Staywell's *Friends Helping Friends* workshop and PAC feedback on Project Aware Student and Youth Focus Group Protocols.

Awareness and Outreach Activities

This fiscal year began with ACMH honoring Children's Mental Health Awareness by hosting a virtual showcase of video submissions received during *#WalkInMyShoes* a virtual mental health awareness event designed to support youth, young adults and their families share their voice of experience through videos which were then shared on social media spreading hope, connection, and mental health awareness. 60+ community partners, families, youth, state leaders and policymakers attending the live event and were treated to a moving collection of 36 powerful works. The recorded event was distributed across ACMH networks and viewed 318+ times on YouTube. Additional children's mental health awareness resources were shared throughout the month of May including informational materials sent to over 500 recipients including state legislators and leaders, community partners, youth, families, and news agencies across Michigan. Other awareness activities included participating in interviews and connecting families to share their experiences to help inform Bridge Magazine's 3- part series on the state of the state of Children's Mental Health in Michigan. 2022 Children's Mental Health Awareness activities were also virtual with families, youth, caregivers, and providers sharing their stories through photography during *#Worth1000Words*. A video montage of submissions was created and shared on social media and distributed throughout ACMH networks.

Several new outreach tools and informational materials were created and shared this fiscal year, including 4 new informational videos highlighting ACMH services, activities and opportunities including 1. Who is ACMH? 2. ACMH Statewide Youth Advisory Committee YAC 3. Youth Leadership Camp and 4. Youth Peer Support. Updates were also made to YAC and PAC outreach materials and new website pages were created to attract new members and share ongoing information about their work. As 2021 came to a close ACMH's outreach and informational sharing efforts were focused on resources to help support youth, families and communities across Michigan in response to the Oxford School shooting. A *Resources for Youth, Families and Communities Affected by School Violence Page* was created on the ACMH website and populated with resources, informational materials and tip-sheets for youth, families, schools and communities. ACMH newsletters providing ongoing information about issues affecting children and youth with mental health challenges and their families and upcoming events and leadership opportunities were also shared with 600+ Mailchimp recipients, 5,000 website subscribers and broadcasted throughout ACMH and partner networks. Youth Peer Support and Parent Support Partner Newsletters were also shared.

Growth across ACMH's web and social media networks was exciting this year with increases across all platforms which now include over 7,000 subscribers on the ACMH website, 2019 followers on Facebook, 438 on Twitter and 122 on Instagram, as well as 19 subscribers on the ACMH YouTube Channel. 456 posts were made on Facebook and 435 tweets were sent and 85 posts were made on Instagram this fiscal year. In addition, 14 new videos were posted to YouTube and 17 were shared on TikTok which had over 5,101 new views!

Work to improve the functionality of the ACMH's website and refine and expand website and social media platforms as mechanisms for outreach, support, and education for families, youth, providers, community partners and decision makers also continued throughout the year. ACMH continually works to create and implement strategies to increase utilization of ACMH online platforms and interactive online activities and resources as a means to raise awareness about children's mental health and increase access to real time virtual support, which has been especially important throughout the pandemic.

New social media activities this year included multiple month-long social media campaigns to attract new visitors and increase traffic and engagement. Examples include a November campaign enlisting users to share things users are thankful for and in December sharing favorite words of encouragement or quotes to support others during holiday season.



Sharing Expertise

ACMH is dedicated to sharing ACMH resources and the expertise and experience of youth, families and family organizations to help enhance mental health services, supports, policies systems and most importantly outcomes for youth and their families across our state. A major highlight of this fiscal year was ACMH's ability to keep the needs and voices of youth with mental health challenges and their families in the forefront as MI I worked to address the current mental health crisis and critical capacity and access issues that continue to challenge Michigan youth, families and service providers alike. ACMH worked throughout the year to connect family voice and expertise to multiple initiatives and efforts as agencies across our state scrambled to utilize the influx of rescue plan and other funding to implement solutions, plan services or create remedies sometimes without first asking what youth and families might need. Much time and effort was spent this fiscal year partnering with the Advocate Coalition, MDHHS, Community Mental Association of MI, Behavioral Health Advisory Committee and other state legislators and leaders on a variety of statewide mental health policy, advocacy and systems improvement efforts including initiatives to increase access to crisis and other critical mental health services and supports, as well as, projects and proposals to improve, re-envision or integrate mental health services in our state including the recent restructuring of MDHHS's Department of Mental Health Services to Children and Families into the Bureau of Children's Coordinated Health, Policy, and Supports. ACMH has been a champion for the inclusion of family and youth voice and expertise throughout these discussions and efforts.

ACMH remains a trusted statewide partner that many rely on to connect to authentic family voice and youth and families with lived experience. A highlight of this year included a request from Governor Whitmer's office to connect to youth and families with lived experience in preparation *State of the State Address* highlighting mental health services and supports for kids and families. Other examples of work to support family and youth voice and participation across mental health programming, policy and system improvement efforts and discussions include meeting with a variety of partners to discuss strategies for supporting family and youth voice on groups such as the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee, MiKids Now workgroups, Project Aware Sites, and new opportunities for infusing youth and family voice throughout various boards, groups and committees within the Bureau of Children's Coordinated Health, Policy, and Supports. ACMH also shared expertise with the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan and Michigan's Children as they work to include youth and family voice and lived

experience in their work and statewide policy and advocacy efforts. In addition, ACMH participated in several statewide mental health advisory boards and collaborative groups to help ensure the needs of youth families are considered across mental health service, policy and decision making, including: : The Advocate Coalition; the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee BHAC; BHAC MiKids Now Planning Committee and Feedback Forum; Conflict Free Case Management Advisory Group; Crisis Services Unit (CSU) Advisory and Children, Youth and Families Sub-Committees; Disability Rights of Michigan Board and Executive Committees; Healthy Transitions Leadership Team; Juvenile Justice Task Force Advocate/Advisory Board; Maternal-Infant Mental Health Advisory Council; Mental Health Association of MI Board; MC3 Connect Advisory Committee; MACMHB Children's Issues Committee; MI Alliance for Families Parent Training and Information Center Advisory Board; Foster Care Review Board Advisory Committee; MI Family Voices Advisory Board; MHTTC Advisory Committee; Partners in Crisis; Psychiatric Bed Recommendation Advisory Groups; Project AWARE ALL State Advisory; and MDHHS Statewide Family and Advocacy Organizations Advisory Committees. In addition, ACMH participated several community events, including: MI Family Voices and Mental Health Association of Michigan's Strategic Planning Sessions; Disability Rights of MI Board Inclusion Project Meeting; Mental Health Association's Legislative Roundtable, SAMHSA Statewide Family Network National Meetings and Detroit Wayne's Report to the Community.

ACMH remained committed to building and expanding key partnerships this year. Working closely with MDHHS on multiple new initiatives and projects including partnering to create a Statewide Crisis Toolkit as another component of a 'crisis support continuum' for youth, families and providers; sharing ACMH expertise as CCBHC's and others work to implement youth and family peer support options. ACMH expertise and resources were also shared with the Infant Mental Health Young Mothers Advisory Group; MiKids Now; and Maternal and Infant Health as they worked to support peer parents and new leaders at MDHHS to discuss the role and resources of ACMH as MI's statewide family organization. ACMH was also a key statewide partner following the Oxford High School shooting partnering with MDHHS, MI Department of Education, Michigan State Police, Community Mental Health Association of Michigan and other statewide leaders, partners, consultants, and advocacy groups to coordinate statewide response efforts, and share information and resources. And later partnering with the Advocacy Coalition to help prevent reactionary automatic 'push out' of kids with unique and behavioral needs that sometimes follow horrific events in schools.

Other work focused on strengthening statewide capacity, leadership and skills to understand and utilize Family-Driven, Youth-Guided care, principles and practices, including:

- Partnering with MDHHS to provide training/technical assistance in FD-YG principals and care for MI's Juvenile Justice/Mental Health Pilot sites. Hosting 3 trainings this year.
- Supporting the Community Mental Health Board Association as they work to create a more FD-YG focus and environment on statewide boards and committees.
- Meeting with Community Mental Health Board Association and MDHHS to discuss the need for FD/YG training and support for CMH's across the state.
- Meetings with MDHHS JJ Consultant to discuss strategies to infuse/implement FD/YG practice and philosophy into their everyday work with families.
- Supporting Community Mental Health Board's Children's Issues Committee to guide group discussions and members to be more family-driven and youth-guided.
- Advising Michigan State Representatives to discuss FD/YG language in legislation.



ACMH also provided ongoing technical assistance and support to a variety of local, state and national community and family leaders, groups and organizations. Including:

- MI High School Principal Association to discuss needs of youth with mental health challenges and their families and a two-day Mental Health Summit.
- MI legislators to discuss mental health legislation and possible impacts on kids and families and information gathered during their statewide *Mental Health Listening Tour*.
- Disability Rights of MI to discuss advocacy priorities and possible implications of recent mental health policy proposals and lawsuit settlements on kids and families in our state.
- St. Clair CMH Children's Services to discuss legislation seclusion and restraint in CCIs.
- Detroit based consultant to discuss the Michigan Disability Landscape work.
- Inclusion Project to discuss increasing family voice and board diversity.
- Michigan Health Endowment Fund to discuss possible future projects and partnerships.
- Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health to discuss vaccine hesitancy.
- National Family Advocate to discuss suicide prevention efforts.
- SAMHSA Project Officer regarding the first ladies upcoming visit to MI Project Aware Site.

Staff Training & Professional Development

ACMH continued work to enhance our network of highly qualified family member staff by providing initial and ongoing training, coaching, supervision and mentoring. This fiscal year 363 individual and 116 joint supervision and 6 all staff meetings or retreats were held. ACMH welcomed two new staff members this year providing initial orientation and training. ACMH also supported staff's participation in ongoing training opportunities to support them in their individual roles including supporting 4 staff members to attend the *National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health Conference* and NFFCMH Executive Directors Meeting.

Other examples of staff professional development included participation in webinars such as *Building Blocks of Self Advocacy; Youth Mental Health Journey- Bridging the Gap; Federal Funding in Mental Health: What's Working in School; Building Parent Leadership Skills In Early Childhood; Behavioral Threat Risk Assessment Training; SAMHSA Statewide Family Network Grantee Orientation; FFCMH Effects of Covid on Families; The Work of SAMHSA's Statewide Family Networks in the Lives of Children with Serious Emotional Disturbance and their Families; Fredla's Tips for Supervising YPSs and PSPs* and YouthMove National webinars. ACMH staff also attended the FFCMH *Flip the Script* Event & National Awareness Day Events.



Most recently ACMH hosted a 2-Part Anti-Racism Workshop Series for staff hosted by the *Center for the Study of White American Culture*. This training was the latest installment of a training series focused on ensuring ACMH staff have cultural humility and awareness and are knowledgeable about challenges and issues facing diverse families across our state and creating awareness of how systemic racism, bias and social identities may affect youth and their families and impact health outcomes including mental health.

Acknowledgments

ACMH is proud of our accomplishments this year and will continue work to utilize our capacity as a statewide family organization to serve all families of children and youth with mental health challenges across our state, youth and young adults who experience them and the partners and communities across our state who support them.



We would like to offer a special thank you to the ACMH Board of Directors for their work to support and guide the work of ACMH and all of our FY 2021-2022 funders including:

The Ethel and James Flinn Foundation

Gerstacker Foundation

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Family Action Project

MDHHS Parent Support Partner and Youth Peer Support Projects

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Fostering Healthy Partnerships

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

We appreciate your ongoing support of ACMH, our work and especially Michigan children, youth and young adults with mental health challenges and their families!