

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2023 / VOLUME 24



Quarterly News & Updates

From the Desk of...

James Parauda,
CEO



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Training and resources for our families

The TCCMO Resource Department expanded earlier this year to enable the agency to be more present in the community and collaborate with other agencies to sponsor important events in each of our tri-county areas. In addition, the Training Department was created to provide learning opportunities on various topics related to the youth and families we serve. Ideally, these two departments will work hand-in-hand out in the community to help inform parents and caregivers about our services as well as other services offered throughout this region. In the past, we have facilitated trainings on suicide prevention, Nurtured Heart Approach®, getting through the pandemic, LGBTQ+ topics, and others. We have also sponsored events for Mental Health and Autism Awareness Months, as well as other special events.



Youth Success Story

Alexander is an incredible young man that has recently graduated from CMO. The Child and Family Team has watched Alex mature and grow over the past year, which has impressed us beyond words! Alex has successfully learned how to identify and understand his emotions, helping him effectively process them and respond healthily using his interpersonal communication skills. The team has watched Alex gain a sense of security, confidence, and empathy in addition to an impressive toolbox of coping, emotional regulation, and ADHD symptom management skills.

Alex started with Tri County CMO with significant emotional and behavioral challenges which were not being appropriately managed by his prescriptions. When he graduated, Alex was completely off medications and thriving to the point where his initial diagnoses no longer fit him. Alex transformed through hard work and dedication to building emotional intelligence, pro-social behaviors, self-discovery, and personal growth.

The Child and Family Team are very proud of all his successes and also would like to recognize all of his mother's hard work - supporting, practicing, and reinforcing the skills Alex was learning in the home. Hannah truly embodies the Nurtured Heart Approach® and her work within their community has fostered strong supportive relationships for their family. Congratulations are due for all these honorable mentions and more! Great work, Alex, and Hannah!

As an agency, we are constantly striving to meet the needs of not only our youth, but also the parents and caregivers. We want to use our agency staff resources to meet the specific needs of our parents/caregivers by offering events and trainings that will benefit their needs and inform them of topics that will help them meet the challenges that their children face each day. I'm reaching out to you to request feedback from you on what topics you would like to have more information about. At the end of this article is a link to a 5-question survey to help plan future trainings and events. This is an opportunity to have your voice heard and support TCCMO in helping meet the challenges of a youth mental health crisis.

To keep up with the events being offered in the community, I also invite you to follow TCCMO on our various social media platforms. It is on those site that you will find events we are sponsoring or are involved in, as well as the events of other agencies being offered in the tri-county area.

I would also ask providers serving our youth to take the survey to help inform us of what trends you are seeing in the community. Also, let us know if you have expertise/knowledge on a particular topic and whether you are willing to collaborate with our agency to provide a training.



Review

★★★★★

Please see the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JHKJ3W3>

Getting to Know TCCMO...

The Quality Assurance Department

TCCMO Quality Assurance Department has grown over the last year to meet the needs of the agency and families served. The department is led by Director of Quality Assurance Victoria Monroe, who recently obtained her doctorate degree in education.

- She is certified in compliance and ethics and has a clinical background in mental health. Victoria has worked with TCCMO for four months and chairs the Compliance, Critical Incident Prevention, and Needs for Quality Improvement Committee. She is also a member of the Technology Committee and High-Risk Youth Committee.

Victoria also functions as TCCMO Privacy Officer and Compliance Officer. She is looking forward to leveraging the quality of data to support compliance, HIPAA, and other regulatory agency requirements.



Victoria Monroe

- Vaishali Kothari serves as Quality Assurance Coordinator, obtained her master's degree in public health, and has a decade of experience with NGO/volunteer involvement. In the six months that she has been with TCCMO, she has joined the Zero Suicide/High Risk subcommittee, along with many other committees. Vaishali looks forward to collaborating with various departments on team-building strategies to ensure that the organization always has quality data to be able to provide optimal solutions and prevention methods for our diverse youth.



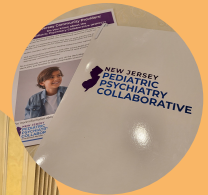
Vaishali Kothari



Community Corner

Caring Partners & Bergen's Promise CMOs

TCCMO and Caring Partners CMO shared information on NJCMO at the New Jersey Psychiatry Collaborative (NJPPC) Conference on September 20, 2023. NJPCC is changing the way we address child and adolescent mental health by leading discussions in developing a collaborative care model to improve access to care during the current children's mental health crisis.



TCCMO and Bergen's Promise CMO represented NJCMO at the New Jersey American Academy of Pediatrics at their 32nd Annual School Health Conference on October 18, 2023. TCCMO is building partnerships with pediatricians, nurses, and other health care professionals to educate them on the Children System of Care and Care Management Organizations services that are available to their patients experiencing mental health and developmental challenges as well as substance use challenges.





PRIDE IN PARTNERSHIP

- The quality assurance department also oversees Medicaid eligibility for youth enrolled at TCCMO. This February 2024 will mark the two-year anniversary of Ariadna Gomez at TCCMO. Ariadna's current role in the QA department is PE Specialist. She focuses on ensuring that all youth that are enrolled at TCCMO have adequate coverage and receive the appropriate services.

Ariadna enjoys being part of the Workforce Development Committee and collaborating with colleagues, as well as being part of other committees within the agency.



Ariadna Gomez

- Carmin Franco is also a PE Specialist at TCCMO. She has worked for the organization for one year. Before being employed at TCCMO she worked for the Financial Assistance Department at Hunterdon Medical Center as a Medicaid Eligibility Specialist. The biggest part of Carmin's current role is assisting families with establishing Medicaid eligibility in order to receive services and have access to resources.

As a PE Specialist, Carmin enjoys it when our youth are approved for Medicaid and can start/continue receiving services. Carmin strongly believes that everyone, especially children, should have access to healthcare. Being part of the reason youth are able to continue receiving the services they need brings her joy and a strong sense of accomplishment.



Carmin Franco



Tri County CMO (TCCMO) was honored to present at the Hunterdon County Prosecutors Office- Crisis Intervention Team (C.I.T.) Program on October 25, 2023. The C.I.T. program focuses on training and building community relationships to help law enforcement and mental health professionals respond to those experiencing a mental health crisis.

TCCMO received backpacks filled with school supplies courtesy of the Somerset County Commission on Status of Women's "First Class" School Supply Collection. The backpacks were donated to TCCMO youth for the 2023-2024 school year. Tri County wishes all students and families a safe and successful school year.

Somerset County Youth Services Commission and TCCMO co-hosted the Somerset County Youth Resource Fair on 10/6/23 at the Somerset County Vo-Tech High School. Forty agencies shared their resources along with the Montgomery Youth Advisory Board students who volunteered their time and smiles to run a youth activity table for youth attendees.



Advocacy Corner



TCCMO's Advocacy Committee is committed to staying on top of all public policy and legislation that impacts its families and staff. As part of this effort, staff from TCCMO attended Hill Day at Home, organized by the National Council on Mental Well Being. This event allowed participants to hear virtual presentations on important policy and legislative initiatives and then learn how they can contact legislators to impact change, ultimately securing funding for key behavioral health programs and services before the 2024 election cycle dominates the conversation. The goal of Hill Day is to make mental wellbeing, including recovery from substance use challenges, a reality for everyone.



Discussion focused on two important mental health acts. Ensuring Excellence in Mental Health Act supports the future of certified community behavioral health clinics. A Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) is a specially-designated clinic that provides a comprehensive range of mental health and substance use services to anyone who walks through the door, regardless of their diagnosis and insurance status. This model has provided expansion in states' capacities to address the overdose crisis and established innovative partnerships with law enforcement, schools, and hospitals to improve care, reduce recidivism, and prevent hospital readmissions. The model allows for individualization, adaptation, and evolution to assure needs are met for each person as they evolve. There are over 500 CCBHCs that are operating in 46 states across America. See <https://tinyurl.com/3cwvnykz> to learn more about this legislation.

Another legislative issue that was discussed included the 9-8-8 Implementation Act which includes expanding their services to fund mobile crisis response teams and to build the capacity of crisis centers in underserved communities.

To contact your legislator using the National Council on Mental Well Being's website, go to: <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/get-involved/be-an-advocate/write-your-legislator/>.

With a few simple clicks, you can weigh in on important policy issues.



Holidays aren't always "the most wonderful time of the year"

The holiday season is often viewed as a time for celebration, gathering with friends and family, and sharing tokens of love and smiles. Although, for some, it is a reminder that they don't have a close relationship with their family, don't live near friends, or don't have a significant other to celebrate with. Also, as people gather with their families, this time of year may be a reminder of loved ones lost. Even if you have the opportunity and means, the holidays can be quite stressful for some. It can be financially overwhelming, lots of planning, the stores are crowded, and traveling is chaotic. Individuals that don't necessarily enjoy the holidays might be viewed as a "scrooge" or a "grinch."

Unfortunately, not everyone realizes that the holidays can be difficult for some. Dealing with these feelings can be lonely and depressing. Reaching out to others for help during a seemingly wonderful time of year may not be comfortable to do for many, which may cast them deeper into isolation. It is important to look at those around us during this time of year and recognize who might need some extra support this season, as well as checking in with ourselves to make sure we are coping with our own stressors and emotions. Below is an information link to help yourself or acquaintances remain resilient through another holiday season.

<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/November-2015/Tips-for-Managing-the-Holiday-Blues>



Growing Greatness



As another school year has kicked off, TCCMO and Family Support Organization (FSO) have been invited to take part in the DREAMS Initiative for a second year. The DREAMS Initiative is the Children's System of Care's partnership with the New Jersey Department of Education. Through this partnership, public schools throughout the state of New Jersey have the opportunity to receive training and mentoring from Certified Nurtured Heart Approach® trainers. Mentors will support local school districts in training and implementing the approach that has been infused into the Children's System of Care. Along with providing Nurtured Heart Approach® trainings and assisting with the implementation, all schools and mentors will attend a series of trauma-informed trainings. Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, mentors will assist the schools in implementing the approach through regular monthly meetings. Two staff members per district will become Certified Nurtured Heart Approach® trainers and they will work closely with the mentors on sustainability planning. The Certified Nurtured Heart Approach® trainers at TCCMO and FSO are looking forward to another year of spreading the knowledge of the approach and continuing to build our strong relationships with local school districts.

TCCMO facilitates Nurtured Heart Approach® trainings for system partners, organizations, schools, and families. If you are interested in more information on a training, please contact:

Nicole Del Duca at ndelduca@tricitycmo.org.

Tri County CMO presents...

Nurtured Heart Approach

The Nurtured Heart Approach® focuses on: Self-regulation, Transforming the way children perceive themselves, their caregivers, and the world around them, Teaching children that they will receive recognition through positive behavior, Supporting children as they build a positive portfolio of themselves, or "Inner Wealth™", Seeing intensity to be a powerful quality that, if developed correctly, can drive children to amazing achievements.

January 11th 10am-1pm
Microsoft Teams

To register please contact Nicole Del Duca via email
ndelduca@tricitycmo.org or
text 908-256-0254



Developing Resiliency with Engaging Approaches to Maximize Success

Nurtured Heart Approach

November is Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is the week before Thanksgiving 11/13-11/18. The first ever event to raise awareness on these two issues was at Villanova University in 1975. Although there have been many events spreading awareness since 1975, National Homeless Youth Awareness Month was first declared in 2007. One of the many goals at TCCMO is to support and build healthier communities for the youth and families we serve. Here are a few resources whose goals are to help alleviate any stress regarding these issues. McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law that ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for displaced children and youth. In New Jersey, specifically in Warren, Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, you can get help by requesting more information and visit McKinney-Vento / Contact Us (bergen.org) or by visiting NJ Homeless Liaison's- Warren, Hunterdon and Somerset Counties: District Liaisons (nj.gov).

You can also visit these resources: Family Promise of Warren County, who has been serving homeless families since July 2008, provides the full continuum of housing services and is dedicated to serving homeless children and their families at About Us | Family Promise of Warren County | United States (wcfamilypromise.org)



Secondly, Family Promise of Hunterdon County since 1990 advocates for families and individuals experiencing homelessness to help guide them to self-sufficiency and permanent housing. Visit them at Programs - Family Promise of Hunterdon County, Inc. (familypromisehc.org).



Lastly, in Somerset County you can visit Safe Harbor and Port of Refuge at Safe Harbor (ship908.com) who provide services from basic needs to counseling services, emergency housing placement, and housing referral alternatives for homeless. They provide services for those close to homelessness with severe substance abuse and/or mental health illness and services to those who need time to adjust to life off the streets and to develop a willingness and trust to accept services to transition to permanent housing.



Here you can find resources whose common goals are to help those in vulnerable situations with food, basic needs, and assistance at no cost to ensure a more stable and successful future. In Warren County you can visit The Outreach Connection, Inc., Washington Community Food Pantry, and/or Open Cupboard - Food Pantry and Thrift Shop (opencupboardfoodpantry.org)



In Hunterdon County you can visit Flemington Food Pantry, Delaware Valley Food Pantry - Feeding Families Since 1955 or Open Cupboard - Food Pantry and Thrift Shop (opencupboardfoodpantry.org).



Lastly, in Somerset County you can visit Non-profit Community Food Pantry | Raritan Food Pantry | Raritan NJ and/or visit Home - Food Bank (somersetfoodbank.org).



*Click each logo for more info

EVENTS HELD BY TCCMO

Professional Development for School Counselors

On September 5th, the TCCMO Training Department presented at Franklin Township school district's professional development meeting for their school counselors. The Training Team presented a "screening and discussion" of the iMPACTFUL films' documentary entitled "ANGST". The film explores youth anxiety and all the many ways that it can manifest in youth.

There were 22 educators in attendance, and they found the film to be engaging and "powerful". The attendees felt that it would be a great idea to offer this to their district's families. This was a great opportunity to spread the word about the importance of recognizing the signs and symptoms of anxiety in our youth today. Word has been spreading quickly about this TCCMO program offering for the communities we serve!

Schools in Warren and Hunterdon Counties and non-profits agencies have since reached out to schedule their own screenings. Somerset County's Youth Council, which is made up of almost 40 teens from all around Somerset County, have also scheduled a screening for the Fall season! TCCMO is always in search of innovative solutions to help meet the needs of the youth that we serve, and this is just one more example of how we're doing this every day in Hunterdon, Warren, and Somerset Counties. If you would like to host your own screening and discussion, please contact Reginald Rosario, TCCMO Director of Training rrosarion@tricountycmo.org. We hope to see you soon!

18th Annual Liberation Based Healing Conference

TCCMO co-sponsored the 18th Annual Liberation Based Healing Conference with Institute for Family Services. This conference took place at Montclair State University on November 3rd and 4th, 2023. TCCMO hosted a panel discussion on "Redefining Organizations as Spaces for Racial and Gender Equity (RGE)". The conference was focused on giving voice to marginalized communities and underrepresented folk. There were workshops on the impact of enslavement and the role of White supremacy in the lives of everyday people. TCCMO is a strong supporter of building connections in the community that can lead to growth for individuals and the community at-large.

"Liberation looks like accountability, justice, equality, knowledge, community, empowerment, strength and independence. It looks like every one of us. Supporting the mental health and wellness of all communities through shared experiences and critical dialogue."

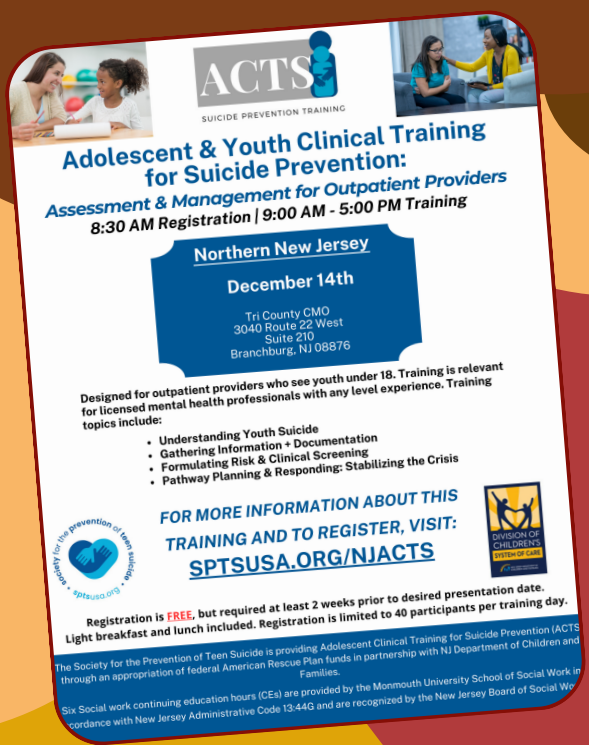


MONTCLAIR
STATE UNIVERSITY



UPCOMING EVENTS

December



ACTS
SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

Adolescent & Youth Clinical Training for Suicide Prevention: Assessment & Management for Outpatient Providers
8:30 AM Registration | 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Training

Northern New Jersey
December 14th
Tri County CMO
3040 Route 22 West
Suite 210
Branchburg, NJ 08876

Designed for outpatient providers who see youth under 18. Training is relevant for licensed mental health professionals with any level experience. Training topics include:

- Understanding Youth Suicide
- Gathering Information + Documentation
- Formulating Risk & Clinical Screening
- Pathway Planning & Responding: Stabilizing the Crisis

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TRAINING AND TO REGISTER, VISIT:
[SPTSUSA.ORG/NJACTS](https://sptsusa.org/njacts)

Registration is **FREE**, but required at least 2 weeks prior to desired presentation date. Light breakfast and lunch included. Registration is limited to 40 participants per training day.

The Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide is providing Adolescent Clinical Training for Suicide Prevention (ACTS) through an appropriation of federal American Rescue Plan funds in partnership with NJ Department of Children and Families.
Six Social work continuing education hours (CEs) are provided by the Monmouth University School of Social Work in accordance with New Jersey Administrative Code 13-44G and are recognized by the New Jersey Board of Social Work



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FRIDAY DECEMBER 15TH
5:00 - 8:00 PM

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FLEMINGTON, NJ 08822

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HOW TO GET REFERRED TO TRI COUNTY CMO

PerformCare can help a parent or guardian connect their child to Children's System of Care services. PerformCare staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide assessment and guidance to families facing challenges to their functioning and well-being.

PerformCare / Contracted Systems Administrator (CSA)

1-877-652-7624

<http://www.performcarenj.org/>

<http://www.performcarenj.org/families/index.aspx> (video guide)

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