



Newsletter

SPRING/ VOLUME 30

Quarterly News & Updates



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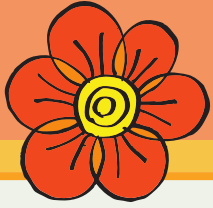
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From the Desk of... *James Parauda, CEO*



If you are reading this newsletter, it is likely because you have or have had a child with CMO services or are a provider within the state's Children's System of Care (CSOC). Therefore, you should be aware that potential federal Medicaid cuts pose significant risks to New Jersey's behavioral health services. The state's Medicaid program, NJ FamilyCare, covers approximately 1.7 million residents, including 830,000 children and 80,000 young adults. Proposed reductions in federal funding could lead to a loss of up to \$10 billion, jeopardizing access to essential services for vulnerable populations including treatment for serious mental illness, substance use disorders, and autism. All of these services are at risk due to potential Medicaid cuts.

Currently CMOs in New Jersey are functioning below the level of reimbursement that they had 12 years ago. Future cuts could impact the quality of services and robustness of our workforce. Medicaid is administered by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, but programming and services within DCF depend upon about \$465 million in Medicaid funding, annually. New Jersey is one of 10 states which benefits from the statutory 50 percent floor on matching funds for most Medicaid services. Reducing the federal match for Medicaid could mean creating a \$38.9 million budget gap for the Children's System of Care.

A summary paper put out by the Department of Children and Families details the impact of federal Medicaid funding and its potential loss: (https://www.nj.gov/dcf/documents/Impact_Congressional_budget_discussions.pdf)

Governor Murphy has expressed strong opposition to proposed federal Medicaid cuts, highlighting the potential loss of up to \$10 billion in funding and the risk of 700,000 working-age enrollees losing coverage. Currently, Medicaid covers most CSOC services and 69 percent of children receiving services through CSOC are insured by Medicaid. Any reduction in federal matching would have to be entirely covered by state funds. NJ will not be able to make up for the level of proposed cuts and therefore services would have to be cut.

At this point, you might be asking, what can I do about this? Advocacy is needed on the federal level. At TCCMO, we are actively meeting with legislators to make sure they understand the critical services provided by the CMOs. We are coordinating and participating in calling and writing federal legislators (Senators and members of Congress) to make sure they know the devastating effects of any cuts to federal Medicaid in NJ. We need everyone to contact their elected officials to voice how valuable the Children's System of Care services are to families and that we don't support the cuts to Medicaid – the need cannot be overstated.

We can use our voices to make a difference and safeguard the services provided by TCCMO and the CMOs across the state that help NJ's children. Stay tuned for additional updates on how to contact your local elected officials about this important topic.



Youth Success Story

One of our own CMO youth, **Caiden Talmadge**, recently shared exciting news that exemplifies the power of the connections he has made while navigating services. His experiences ignited a strong desire for **Caiden** to help others who may face similar challenges.

Caiden applied to the social work program at Centenary University. He recently learned that he was **ACCEPTED** into the program with a scholarship! He attributes his desire to enter the social work field to the connections that have made a difference in his life as well as those that may have hindered him along the way.

Caiden is a very resilient young man who will make a difference in the lives of many youth and families as he begins his next chapter this fall!

Getting to Know TCCMO

In this edition, we are featuring our **Lead Care Manager (LCM) team**! Every Care Manager Supervisor (CMS) is responsible for a team of Care Managers (CMs) that they supervise. Each of these teams also has a LCM to assist with training and provide support in the supervisor's absence.

Caitlin Trotter has been with **TCCMO** for the past eight years. **Caitlin** began at the agency as a Care Manager Specialist, moved up to a CM, and now a Lead! **Caitlin** is the Lead of the Branchburg team that serves the DD/ID population. As a LCM, **Caitlin** strives to share the knowledge she gained from working with families experiencing high levels of challenges.



Getting to Know TCCMO

TJ Cyril has also been with **TCCMO** for the past eight years. **TJ** is another Lead that has moved up from Care Manager Specialist to LCM over the years. **TJ** enjoys mentoring new team members and watching them grow as strong leaders within the agency. **TJ** shared that her multicultural background has provided the ability to connect with people from various cultures, which has been a significant advantage in both personal and professional settings.



Katie Saultz has worked at **TCCMO** for almost six years. **Katie** has also been promoted from Care Manager Specialist to LCM throughout her time at the agency. **Katie** finds being a Lead rewarding because it involves helping CMs become more confident in themselves and their work.

As a party planner and dance mom, it's no surprise that **Yahaira Gonzalez** brings the party to **TCCMO** every day! **Yahaira** has been with TCCMO for over eleven years. She feels her team is unique in that they utilize their personal experiences to help their children and families overcome obstacles.



Jaamirra Hamm has been with **TCCMO** for two years and was at another CMO prior. **Jaamirra** enjoys seeing new care managers grow into the role and building their confidence.

Emily DeSantiago has worked at **TCCMO** for almost three years. **Emily** appreciates being able to help CMs in becoming their best, professional selves. **Emily** is also an animal lover, has two dogs, and enjoys reading.



Getting to Know TCCMO

Molly Hornbrook has been with **TCCMO** for almost twelve years! She shared that she likes being able to assist her team with meeting their goals.



Lamar Scott has worked at **TCCMO** for almost eight years. He is a great support to his team and always tries to make people laugh.

Gabrielle Shea has worked at **TCCMO** for almost three years. She is dedicated to helping the families that she serves and supporting her team to do so as well.



Dot Carroll has been with **TCCMO** for eleven years! **Dot** does a wonderful job at helping new CMs find their way and is always available to provide advice and guidance.



Growing Greatness

Let's discuss Stand 3 of the **Nurtured Heart Approach: ABSOLUTELY CLEAR!**
How many of us have told a child "Clean your room!"

This statement could mean different things for different people, especially our intense kids, so we need to be more detailed. For example, "clean your room" could be "make sure there is nothing on the floor, your clothes are put away with the drawers shut, and your bed is made".

Being detailed and making these requests clear in advance creates opportunities for more positive interactions.

It also moves youth in the right direction because they know what is expected of them.

This week, try being more specific. See if it makes a difference in how things get done.

TCCMO offers small group trainings twice a month. Come find out more!



Pride in Partnership

April is Autism Awareness Month, and **TCCMO** was honored to co-host both the **Warren County Annual Autism Awareness and Special Needs Resource Fair** on April 3rd and the Hunterdon County Autism Awareness and Special Needs Resource Fair on April 29th.

These events provided families with valuable opportunities to learn about local autism and DD/ID providers, access essential resources, and participate in educational breakout sessions and parent panel discussions.

Attendees also had the chance to connect and network with other caregivers of children with special needs, fostering a stronger support network within the community.

The success of these events was a community effort, and we thank Hunterdon and Warren County CIACC for their dedication supporting our community.





Community Corner

Celebrating Community Impact: TCCMO Awards CRD-RFP Grants to Support Local Initiatives!

In our summer edition, **TCCMO** recognized two agencies that support our communities by awarding them CRD-RFP grants! We're excited to share with you the incredible impact they're making! First, we have Raritan Valley (NJ) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated which created a Mentoring Program: Youth Thriving, an intervention program for health, creativity, opportunity, and longevity.



Breaking Barriers: United Way of Hunterdon County Expands Bilingual Mental Health Access!

The **United Way of Hunterdon County** has also created Thriving Communities: Bilingual Mental Health Access, which will deliver a minimum of six free community outreach educational workshops in Spanish with the goal of increasing awareness of and access to mental health services.





F Y I



National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

March is **National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM)**. Established in 1987, this month aims to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in and contribute to their communities. The theme for DDAM in 2025 is "We're Here All Year." While it is nice to have a month dedicated to celebrating the unique contributions of individuals with developmental disabilities, while drawing awareness to areas where more support and inclusion efforts are needed, this theme reminds us that there are ways to raise awareness and advocate for individuals with disabilities all year long. Even something as simple as making sure someone with a disability can participate in the fun can have a huge impact. Check out <https://nacdd.org/ddam2025/> for more information.



Teen Mental Wellness Day

World Teen Mental Wellness Day, observed on March 2nd, raises awareness about the mental health challenges teenagers face. It encourages open discussions about mental well-being and highlights the importance of providing emotional support.

It's crucial to recognize the pressures that teens face: academic stress, social media influences, and navigating relationships, all of which impact their mental health. This day reminds us to foster a supportive environment where teens feel safe expressing their emotions and seeking help when needed.

Promoting strong mental wellness includes encouraging healthy coping strategies, active listening, and seeking professional help when necessary. Prioritizing mental wellness helps teens build resilience and navigate the complexities of adolescence with greater confidence and well-being.

Link: Celebrating World Teen Mental Health Day



Ready to make a big impact?

Partner with us to fundraise for Tri County CMO families
—email Deja Amos today! damos@tricountycmo.org

Or click the button below to **DONATE** directly from our Website!

DONATE ❤️





Events held by TCCMO



Tri County CMO Training Department 

Is offering the following IMPACTFUL film screenings to our school and community partners. Choose one or all of the social impact films in the Mental Health Trilogy to view as a community. Film Screenings will be followed by post-film community panel discussion and Q&A. Please contact the **TCCMO Training Department** @ trainingdepartment@tricitycmo.org if interested in learning more about this series and how to schedule a screening.

Angst
Learn more at AngstMovie.com

Angst is a film-based program that aims to raise mental health awareness and remove the stigma surrounding anxiety. The program helps young people and their families recognize when anxiety goes beyond a healthy level by providing interviews, tips, and expert advice.

RACE TO BE HUMAN
Learn more at RaceToBeHumanMovie.com

RACE to Be Human is a program that offers actionable strategies for self-reflection and awareness. It combines insights from diverse experts to empower individuals and communities to respect and honor family, dignity, and diversity. The program fosters a sense of belonging and unity across all ethnicities.

UPSTANDERS
Learn more at TheUpstanders.com

"The Upstanders" is a film-based program that explores bullying and cyber-bullying, shares proven strategies, and promotes character building. It inspires qualities such as kindness, honesty, respect, empathy, trust, and connection, and highlights the importance of modeling empathy and resilience to transform attitudes and actions.

LIKE
Learn more at TheLikeMovie.com

The LIKE is a film-based program explores the impact of social media on our lives and the effects of technology on the brain and on learning. Understanding that virtual connection is a huge part of our socialization and can have many benefits, how do we use it to best inform, educate and inspire us to self-regulate, so we can enjoy a more balanced and fulfilled life?



WANT A BETTER CONNECTION WITH YOUR KID?
THEN CHECK THIS OUT

 **Nurtured Heart Approach**

The Nurtured Heart Approach is an essential set of strategies for transforming the most intense children:

- Transforming the Way Children Perceive Themselves, Their Caregivers, and the World Around Them
- Teaching Children They Will Receive Recognition Through Positive Behaviors
- Seeing Intensity as a Powerful Quality That, If Developed Correctly, Can Drive Children to Amazing Achievements

THIS WILL BE CONDUCTED VIRTUALLY TWICE A MONTH

Every 2nd Tuesday of the Month 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
Every 3rd Wednesday of the Month 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM
To sign up, contact **Janet Hrehowesik** at (908) 255-5697 or jhrehowesik@tricitycmo.org. Or scan the QR code



JOIN US FOR
HUNTERDON COUNTY

AUTISM AWARENESS & SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE FAIR

ON-SITE CHILDCARE WILL BE PROVIDED

IN COLLABORATION WITH HUNTERDON COUNTY CIACC & HUNTERDON HEALTH SPECIAL CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

APRIL 29, 2025
THE ARC OF HUNTERDON COUNTY,
53 FRONTAGE RD SUITE 150,
HAMPTON, NJ 08827
6:00-8:00PM

COME & ENJOY!
• PARENT PANEL DISCUSSION
• FACE PAINTING
• 25+ RESOURCE TABLES
• RAFFLE & GIVEAWAYS

GUIDING YOUR FAMILY & SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD FROM EARLY YEARS TO ADULTHOOD

SCAN THE QR CODE OR CLICK THIS LINK TO REGISTER



Tri County CMO Board Members

Lesley Schwarzman
Leslie Brusser
Dan Kerr
Avril Okeke

Daphney Rene - Board Chair
Melissa Fowler - Vice Chair
David Yazujian - Secretary
Pam Jacobs - Treasurer

Sakina Ladha
Alina Wells
Linda Di Filippo
Maggie Ryan

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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