


How Iris Telehealth Helped **Community Mental Health for Central Michigan** Expand their Care Team with Teletherapists



“We very much feel like we’re working with experts who are committed to assuring that we have the right provider fit and the right resources we’re asking for and do a fantastic job spending time to figure out what those are before they even start.”

**JULIE BAYARDO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SERVICES,
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH FOR CENTRAL MICHIGAN**

Since 2021, **Iris Telehealth** has provided high-quality behavioral health support to Community Mental Health for Central Michigan’s patient population through teletherapy.

BACKGROUND

Community Mental Health for Central Michigan (CMHCM) is a six-county community mental health service provider based in the heart of Michigan. Their vision is to provide the highest quality, cost-effective behavioral health solutions in collaboration with consumers and community partners to help individuals experience recovery, realize their potential, and participate fully in community life.

CMHCM invested in telehealth early, and for the past decade they’ve provided high-quality, virtual care to patients with serious mental illness, developmental disabilities, and children and adolescents regardless of geographic barriers.

CHALLENGES

Finding full-time therapists for in-person mental health care can be a major challenge for healthcare organizations, especially in rural areas. CMHCM needed therapists to work across six different counties, seeing patients from varying cultures with unique population needs. This criteria made finding the right provider fit essential, not only for their patients but for their on-site provider team as well.

CMHCM is dedicated to meeting the needs of all patients in their community who require care, and those case numbers were steadily increasing. This demand can be stressful for providers, and due to the lack of therapists in their region, recruiting new team members isn’t always possible. Despite this challenge, taking care of their providers is a central priority for CMHCM, so figuring out a way to lighten their caseload was critical.

SOLUTION

Iris Telehealth matched CMHCM with three full-time Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs) who helped them meet the unique needs of their patient population and strengthen their provider team. By working with Iris and utilizing their rigorous vetting and matching process, CMHCM was able to find therapists with excellent track records and specialized experience in family treatment.

Throughout the process, the program directors at CMHCM determined their need county by county and outlined the main populations needing a therapist. Determining factors included population, hours needed, types of training, and the provider's background. The team at CMHCM passed the information along to Iris, who began the recruitment process and worked with the team to find the best fit.

Once on-boarded, the Iris providers seamlessly fit into the team's culture, dialing in for meetings and connecting directly and consistently with the on-site team. Each week, the on-site and virtual teams come together to discuss resources and patient needs.

And, the CMHCM team ensured all Iris providers underwent the same employee orientation as the on-site staff, helping them feel more prepared as they got started meeting patients and fully integrating them with their on-site team.

RESULTS

Supplemented by three Iris therapists, CMHCM was able to decrease its provider caseloads and ensured high quality care was available for patients across their six counties. Additionally, with same-day access, patients saw providers more quickly. Not only is this access more convenient for patients, but it's also brought relief to the on-site care teams.

Because of Iris's approach to provider matching, which includes a rigorous vetting process, meet and greets that ensure cultural and organization alignment, and help with licensing and credentialing, CMHCM secured the exact full-time providers they needed.

One of these new providers, Christine Landino, helped engage a long-time patient working to overcome a substance use disorder. Before working with Christine, the patient was seeing a case manager and having trouble engaging in care and attending appointments regularly. However, after working with Christine through the telehealth service delivery option, the patient has consistently attended sessions by simply logging in, and is now employed and reports sobriety.

After successes like these, CMHCM plans to onboard more Iris therapists to supplement their team and assist with substance use. **Iris plays a crucial role in assisting organizations in building their substance use programs** like medication assisted treatment programs, and helps organizations source highly-qualified providers to help with community needs.



Iris Telehealth is proud to partner with an organization dedicated to helping more people get the mental health care they need when they need it. To learn more about **Community Mental Health for Central Michigan's** services, **you can visit their website here.**