

Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services



Horizontal lines for notes

DMHAS Mission

- The Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services is a health care agency whose mission is to promote the overall health and wellness of persons with behavioral health needs through an integrated network of holistic, comprehensive, effective, and efficient services and supports that foster dignity, respect, and self-sufficiency in those we serve.

Horizontal lines for notes

DSM-5 Diagnosis Criteria

- Hoarding Disorder added to the DSM-5, as a distinct disorder, in the Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders Section
Hoarding disorder is characterized by the persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of the value others may attribute to these possessions. The behavior usually has harmful effects—emotional, physical, social, financial, and even legal—for the person suffering from the disorder and family members. For individuals who hoard, the quantity of their collected items sets them apart from people with normal collecting behaviors. They accumulate a large number of possessions that often fill up or clutter active living areas of the home or workplace to the extent that their intended use is no longer possible.
Symptoms of the disorder cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning including maintaining an environment for self and/or others. While some people who hoard may not be particularly distressed by their behavior, their behavior can be distressing to other people, such as family members or landlords.

Horizontal lines for notes

### Crisis Services

DMHAS provides regional crisis services for adults 18 years of age or older. Individuals can call the line and be screened by a clinician who will determine the next course of action which may include referrals for community services, setting up an in person assessment in the office, dispatching a member of the crisis team to the community for further intervention, or calling 911 for immediate response.

<https://www.ct.gov/dmhas/cwp/view.asp?q=378578>

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### Crisis Services continued

- Hospitalization
  - If the person is deemed to be at significant “risk”, the team may send the person to the hospital for further psychiatric evaluation. In some cases, if the person is unwilling to go to the hospital but it is believed that they are at risk to himself/herself or others, a Physician Emergency Certificate or PEC may be necessary.
  - There are specific criteria that warrant this type of action.
    - substantial risk for physical harm to oneself (suicide)
    - substantial risk for physical harm to someone else (homicide)
    - the person is deemed to be “gravely disabled” This means that the individual is at risk for serious harm because of not being able to provide for their basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter or safety due to a mental illness.
  - Even in these cases, it is important to remember that inpatient hospitalization will likely be short term. It is the goal of the department to provide services to individuals in the least restrictive setting possible.

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### Community Services

- There are a number of DMHAS designated Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHA) throughout the state and complete list is on the DMHAS website.
  - The target population of DMHAS is individuals with SMI or Severe Mental Illness, such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder or bipolar illness who receive Medicaid benefits.
  - Most individuals with Hoarding Disorder will not fall into this category
- DMHAS also provides limited funding to private, non-profit agencies who work with individuals with a variety of mental health and substance use issues. Individuals may find it helpful to contact their insurance company to find out what services may be covered within their benefit package. Those with Husky insurance or Medicaid can contact Beacon Health Options at 877-552-8247 or [www.ctbhp.com](http://www.ctbhp.com).

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### Challenges in the Mental Health Service System

- As a general rule, community mental health services are voluntary. An individual needs to be receptive to help and be an active part of the recovery process in order for it to be effective and create change.
- This can be frustrating for people in the person's life who recognize the issue and especially true for hoarding cases. Often family members, friends and even helping professionals are ready to make change before the individual is ready to seek or accept help. In some cases it may be beneficial for concerned family and friends to seek personal support for themselves around this challenging issue.

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### Presenter Contact Info:

For DMHAS questions/ concerns:  
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