

Mental Health CONNECTICUT

2022 Annual Report



Progress  
is the attraction that  
moves humanity.

– Marcus Garvey



mental health  
CONNECTICUT

## Partners in Progress

### PROGRESS

is a moving target. It's messy. It pushes you. And, when the work is transformative, progress can surprise you and reveal things you didn't see coming.

Over the past decade, our investment in infrastructure and reliable systems has built a solid foundation from which to grow and expand. Innovation and improved outcomes are seen across the organization, while new resources allow our teams to invest in personal and professional growth. To be in the company of partners, advocates, academics, and leaders who are working together to address the Social Determinants of Health is true progress for us all.

As we reflected on the acceleration of our organization's development and growth, we quickly found our attention being pulled towards how we show up to the world. We had questions.

Does the visual representation of MHC share the full picture of who we are and who we are becoming? What future are we inviting others to join us in? How do we make sure we are a beacon for others who also want transformative change?

These questions, and many more, revealed that it was time for a brand refresh. This is more than just a new logo, look, and feel. The visual representation of MHC will now have more complexity, movement, flexibility, energy, power, togetherness, and most of all, more invitations for others to see themselves in where we are headed.

### OUR BRAND

refresh launching today reflects both the strides we've made and the potential that is to come. It brings us one step closer to realizing our vision for a future where wellbeing is rooted in respect for the condition of being human.

MHC's core areas of focus in advocacy, education, and service are a part of Connecticut's community-based system of mental health that we helped build over 100 years ago. Today, MHC continues to evolve to better meet the needs of the individuals, families, and communities that we serve, and we want our supporters—our partners in progress—to be with us every step of the way.

**Scott Brabant**  
Board Chair

**Luis B. Pérez, LCSW**  
President & CEO

The MHC "Let's Face It" Campaign deployed to engage directly with our community.

### Our New Brand Identity

MHC believes the abstraction of community-wide wellbeing is a tangible, powerful force for change. Our new visual representation is an invitation to find the energy and the vibrancy of how community is a catalyst for wellness. We see evidence now more than ever that working together in partnership is the only way we will see true progress. Join us as we enter an exciting new chapter for MHC!





When you  
live your  
values,  
it shows.

**HIGHLIGHTS**  
FY 2021-2022

**SUPPORT**

**REMI KYEK Honored as 2021 Connecticut HealthCare Hero**

Named in 2021 as a "Connecticut HealthCare Hero," by the Hartford Business Journal (HBJ) and recognized by Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz during Women's History Month, MHC's Chief Experience Officer Remi Kyek was recognized for implementing prevention and intervention measures to support our direct care staff of 200+ as MHC shifted from 90% in-person to 75% virtual service delivery during the height of the Coronavirus pandemic. Remi's efforts were instrumental in helping to keep turnover low and provide zero lapse in service in 2020. Remi continues to be an inspiration to us all at MHC!

[Read the HBJ article](#)

[Read our blog here](#)

**EXPANDING Training and Support for Direct Care Staff**

Responding to the ever-evolving workforce development needs, resources have been added and Training Team support and curriculum have expanded. The added training staff allowed MHC to successfully shift from local staff training delivery to a robust and centralized construct, resulting in consistent curriculum and efficiency in planning and delivery. The development of a standardized training schedule and the addition of new training topics, as suggested by staff members, have also proven to be successful enhancements.



## ACCOUNTABILITY



### MHC Receives CARF ACCREDITATION

“Program participants shared that the staff members are capable, caring people who ‘do this work for all the right reasons.’”

“MHC’s residential care staff members enthusiastically assist the participants in living more independently and managing their own affairs.”

MHC received our triennial accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) after having successfully completed a comprehensive assessment of the organization in May 2022.

Findings from the report reflect multiple strengths, including MHC’s success in helping participants

improve their independence, skilled residential counselors, leadership’s commitment to staff satisfaction, and innovative wellness programs. One of the CARF representatives applauded MHC for having superior programs and commented that MHC’s facilities were the best they had seen in their 30 years as a CARF accreditor.



## SAFETY

### Strengthening Our Commitment to SOCIAL JUSTICE

MHC continued to prioritize the practice of cultural humility for all MHC staff through strategies outlined in an updated cultural competency plan. Activities included MHC staff participating in monthly learning collaborative sessions and story club meetings presented by the Equity, Social Justice & Antiracism (ESJA) Advisory Committee, made up of dedicated staff volunteers from across the state. The ESJA also created cultural corner boards at all MHC facilities and offices which promotes learning and engagement activities for a featured culture each month.

### Mental Health Awareness Month Campaign: LET'S FACE IT

For Mental Health Awareness Month in May, MHC partnered with ConnectiCare, WTNH News 8, and 31 Connecticut residents who shared the unique ways stigma has impacted them and how they found ways to heal and move forward.

During the campaign, WTNH helped us to share the stories far and wide, while ConnectiCare and donors from across the state helped us raise over \$40,000 for Write On!, a unique program for individuals who want to find their voice and share their truth through the healing power of writing and storytelling.

We invite you to read the stories from our campaign and to post your story using #LetsFaceIt. Thank you for your support!

[Watch WTNH media coverage of Let's Face It](#)



**RESPECT**

**Climate Staff Survey Shows EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS**

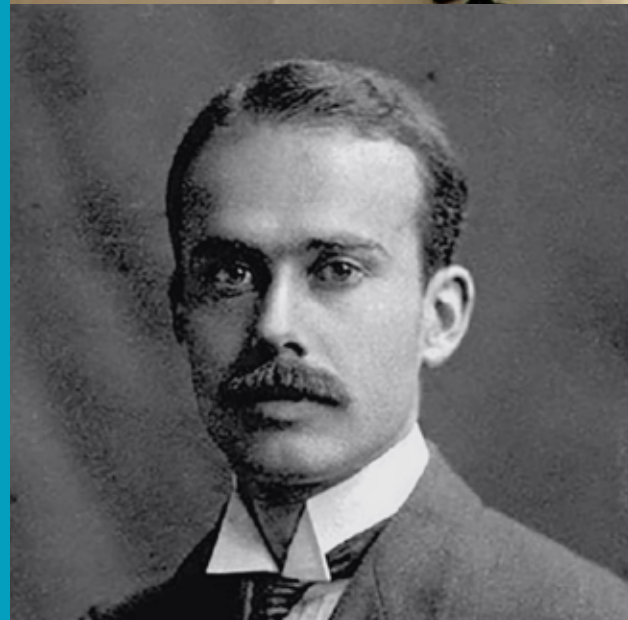
MHC’s annual Climate Staff Survey showed valuable results, demonstrating that between 2020 and 2022, the organization made significant improvements in overall ratings and in all areas. In 2022, MHC showed significant strides resulting in an overall positive response rate of 83% (an increase from 75% in 2020) and a response of 4% negative, which is an outstanding rate according to industry standards.

Every area showed improvement between 2020 and 2022, including job satisfaction, problem solving and decision making, communication, and management effectiveness. Survey results also showed that MHC has lower than average employee turnover, according to industry benchmarks.



”MHC has surveyed and listened to their employees consistently since 2018, and the changes they’ve made are clearly making a difference. MHC should be very proud of their responsiveness to employees’ needs and the work environment they are creating.”

– Jim Berson, Consultant, FIO Partners



**TRUST**

**MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY Leads the Way in Connecticut**

During the 2022 legislative session, nonprofits in the state and across the human services sector achieved many critical legislative victories. Among the successes was an unprecedented \$220 million in increased funding for nonprofits which was made possible by the great work of the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance), and combined efforts of hundreds of advocates and non-profit providers. MHC was also pleased to see important legislation passed in CT that addresses the worsening children’s mental health crisis, the result of working with legislators from both sides of the aisle and with a diverse group of coalition partners. This year MHC added more resources to our advocacy team to continue elevating mental wellness as a priority across systems and for all CT residents.

**MHC Supports Connecticut Historical Society Exhibition**

In November 2021, members of Mental Health Connecticut joined many others in the community at the Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) to attend the exhibition opening of “Common Struggle, Individual Experience.” MHC staff and our President & CEO Luis Pérez and other mental health professionals and advocates were invited to provide subject matter expertise and support in the concept phase of the exhibit’s creation.

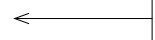
CHS’ exhibit featured individual stories and perspectives from both the past and present, encouraging visitors to explore how society seeks to understand and care for the mind and mental health.

[READ MORE](#)

**Re-Affiliation with Mental Health America**

MHC has once again re-affiliated with Mental Health America (MHA) for the next 5 years, joining more than 200 organizations in 42 states across the US and continuing a legacy of advocating for over 100 years of positive change for people living with mental health conditions. In the re-affiliation letter MHA commended MHC for establishing the Connecticut Parity Coalition and other advocacy successes, providing critical housing options, programs in supportive employment and supported education, and receiving MHA’s Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health certification.

[LEARN MORE](#)



# The people we served.

# The impact

# we made.

This year we continued to see impact realized directly in our programs and at scale. The quality of our delivery is a testament to our staff. With each program at various stages of growth, our teams consistently invest in what MHC is working toward without losing sight of what we are working on.

**PROGRESS** in  
Our Programs

## MHC and MHA's IDONTMIND Program Bring Write On! Across the Globe

Mental Health America's IDONTMIND program and MHC joined forces to bring MHC's Write On! curriculum to young adults from across the U.S. and in two other countries. The nine-week virtual writing workshop is based on the idea that writing and community support can be powerful tools in the self-discovery journey. An average of 78% of participants reported that they "feel more confident in having a conversation with others about mental health" as a result of the workshop.

[READ MORE](#)

"MHC has built an incredible resource with the Write On! Program. Sharing our personal mental health journeys is a powerful tool. We're so proud to partner with MHC to bring this class to the IDONTMIND community and continue to turn awareness into action."

— Edward Schmit, Co-Founder, IDONTMIND, Mental Health America





## MENDING ART Makes Strides in the Community

MHC's Mending Art was recognized as an honoree at the 2021 Litchfield Hills Creative Awards. These awards highlight local individuals, organizations, businesses, programs, projects, and events that positively impact the region through the arts, history, culture, and creative means. This year's theme was "COVID Heroes," which recognized those who adapted or provided creative solutions to the challenges caused by the pandemic.

In April, Jose Martinez, Artist and MHC Program Participant, exhibited his work at the Five Points Annex Gallery in downtown Torrington, CT. From Jose: "Framing and labeling my own drawings, for this exhibit, gave me a sense of 'Being a part of' and was teaching me other needed areas of art. It was a feeling of accomplishment, like, this moment was completely confirmed. It definitely helped me learn not only about creating pictures, but also the other side of proper presentation of myself and many more important things that it takes to make it happen."

- Jose Martinez, Artist and MHC Program Participant

[READ MORE](#)

## EXPANDING SERVICES for Housing Insecurity

The past year has seen significant growth of MHC's services to support individuals experiencing housing insecurity. MHC has been recognized in Connecticut as the agency that provides same-day support for individuals seeking housing through United Way/211. MHC provides training to our sister agencies to help eliminate the wait time for housing across Connecticut. The positive outcomes have resulted in a renewal of all MHC funding, as well as increases in funding support, which has allowed for additional staff and expansion of the program's geographic footprint across the entire state.



: Jose Martinez (3rd from left) and his exhibit in the Five Points Annex Gallery in Torrington, CT.





## **MENTAL WELLNESS in the Workplace Offerings Expanded**

Companies that joined the MHC Collaborative came from various industries in Connecticut and the Northeast to invest in making mental wellness a priority in the work environment. Using Mental Health America's Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health as a road map, MHC delivered strategic level assessments and integrated evidence-based practices to support employees at all levels of the organization. Psychological safety, remote work options, support for managers, workforce shortages, work-life balance, strategies for self-care, and access to mental health services were among the top challenges expressed in organizations.

"Working with MHC has truly been what I envision as a shared partnership. One of the best parts of The Collaborative was the deep dive assessment and how MHC took the time to really understand what we needed. The team at MHC listened to our feedback, and when things had to be adapted for FCP Euro, it was clear that MHC was invested in this work being the best that it could be for the specific demands of our employees, and our unique culture and workplace environment."

—Nicole Batista, Wellness Coordinator, FCP Euro

### **Growth in our GROW PROGRAM**

The participants' engagement in all aspects of GROW (Gardening, Recovery, and Opportunities for Wellness), from seeding to upkeep with the gardens and MHC's three greenhouses, increased steadily. This year, a greater number of participants joined the program at all of MHC's residential sites. Continued collaborations with local agricultural experts, the state of Connecticut, and local businesses helped MHC expand GROW. This year, participants gave much of their produce to MHC's Independence Center (IC) as well as selling to area businesses.

### **ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT in Residential Programs**

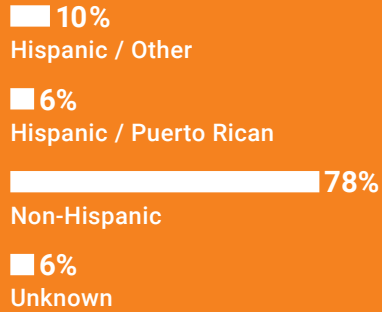
MHC continued to make great strides in our environments of health and wellness. Leadership and scattered site program staff in all regions have relocated or expanded their offices to our 24-hour program sites in Torrington, Waterbury, Danbury, Bridgeport, Stamford, and West Hartford. This was a necessary shift that has resulted in more staff availability for program participants and easier transitions to different programs or level of care due to the greater familiarity of the staff and program itself. It also has allowed for a single site in each of our regions where all participants, potential participants, funders, and community collaborators can connect with MHC.

# OUR SUPPORTERS join us in believing that the abstraction of community-wide wellbeing is tangible.

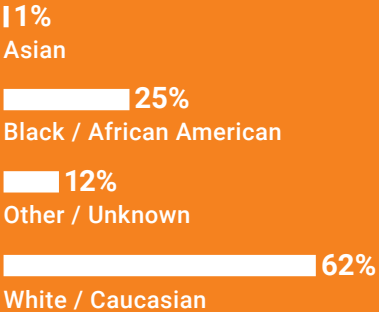
## PROGRESS + OUTCOMES

Now, more than ever, Connecticut residents need access to high quality mental health services and a stigma-free, community-based system of care.

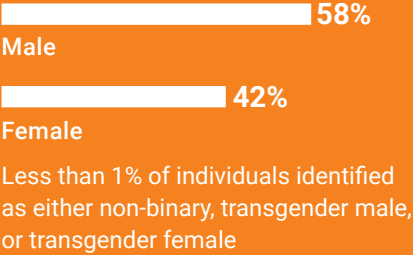
### ETHNICITY



### RACE



### GENDER

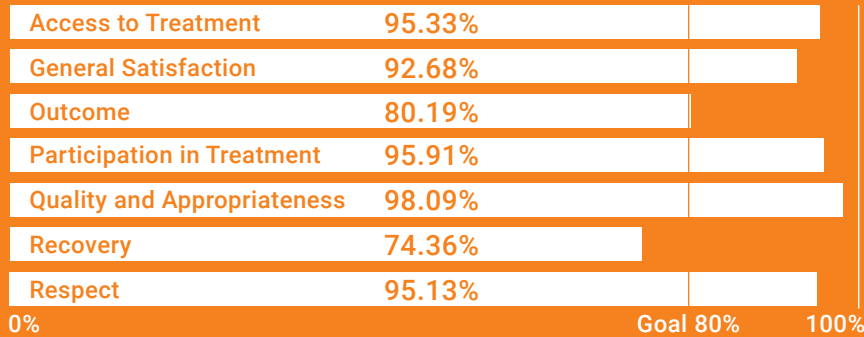


### FUNDING SOURCES



**REVENUE \$16.5M**  
Operating Budget

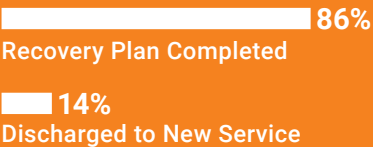
### DMHAS CONSUMER SATISFACTION



### MAINTAINED EMPLOYMENT West Hartford Choices



### SUCCESSFUL DISCHARGE



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### MHC RAISES \$10,000 in 24 Hours

In February, MHC participated for the first time in the Giving Day campaign from Fairfield County's Community Foundation. Thanks to the support of our friends at Stamford Health, MHC raised over \$10,000 during the 24-hour campaign sprint!



## INDUSTRY PARTNERS





## THANKS to Our Donors

We are grateful for the support of all our donors,  
including many who choose to remain anonymous.

### INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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Please excuse any omissions or inaccuracies. For corrections, please email info@mhconn.org



^ Robinson House celebrating Deaf Awareness Week

> Anthony (aka Superman) posing during a social gathering in Bridgeport

>> A new mural in Torrington's Parkview program



## VISION

Mental Health Connecticut envisions a future where wellbeing is rooted in the respect for the condition of being human.

We get closer to realizing this future vision each day through our mission of partnering with individuals, families, and communities to create environments that support long-term health and wellness.

## OUR TEAM

Our workforce of over 200 individuals drive MHC's excellence through their diverse expertise, experiences, and the unifying passion for helping others. Our core set of values aids our ability to work as one team while we maintain a safe and welcoming work environment for all.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Scott Brabant**  
Chair (1/1/21 – present)

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**Domenique Thornton**  
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## MISSION

Mental Health Connecticut partners with individuals, families, and communities to create environments that support long-term health and wellness.

## VALUES

Safety | Respect | Trust | Support | Accountability





mental health  
CONNECTICUT

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