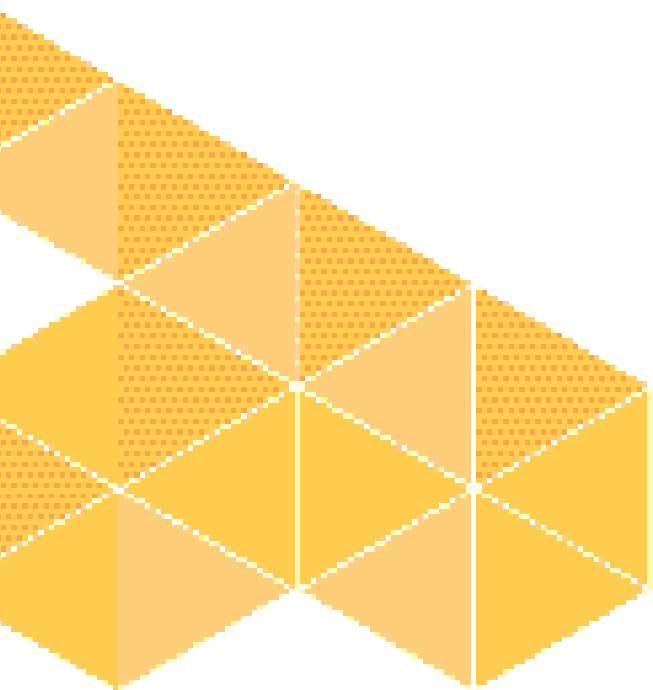


ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT

DECEMBER 2016



**SANDHILLS
CENTER**



Board of Directors

CHAIR

Commissioner Thad Ussery

VICE CHAIR

Commissioner Kay Cashion

SECRETARY

Michele Weatherly

ANSON COUNTY

Commissioner Ross Streater
Priscilla Little

GUILFORD COUNTY

Commissioner Kay Cashion
Dixie Branch
Gart Evans
Costella Donnell

HARNETT COUNTY

Commissioner Barbara McKoy
Tonya Gray

HOKE COUNTY

Commissioner Harry Southerland
Shirley Hart

LEE COUNTY

Walter Ferguson
Vacant

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Commissioner Anthony Copeland
Carol Whitaker

MOORE COUNTY

Commissioner Otis Ritter
Matthew Rothbeind

RANDOLPH COUNTY

Commissioner David Allen
Mazie Fleetwood
Leann Henkel

RICHMOND COUNTY

Commissioner Thad Ussery
Michele Weatherly

PROVIDER COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Jan Herring

HOSPITAL REPRESENTATIVE

Bill Larrison

A message from the CEO

Welcome to the 2016 edition of the Sandhills Center Annual Report. A common theme throughout the calendar year was the effort to reinvest savings toward the future.

Throughout the year, there were many examples of ways that we reinvested savings for the benefit of members, network providers and our community at large.

- ▶ We invested savings back into our nine-county region through rate increases, on more than one occasion, for providers of specific services. This reinvestment helps to ensure that members receive the highest quality services available.
- ▶ We expanded our training calendar to support Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) certification, thereby giving police officers and other first responders the tools needed to handle behavioral health crises.
- ▶ We began the process of opening a centrally-located facility-based crisis center within the catchment area.
- ▶ We invested in Access2Care, an online resource for all residents within the service area. Access2Care allows for greater access to behavioral health self-assessment and referrals, thereby increasing knowledge of services that are available to assist.
- ▶ We increased our support and education to the provider network as they come on board to Sandhills Center's integrated care model to coordinate physical and mental healthcare for more successful outcomes for the whole person.
- ▶ We made significant investments in growing relationships that are critical to Sandhills Center's work. We know these partnerships with stakeholders make it possible for us to take on important issues such as access to services, crisis prevention and more. Because of such collaboration, Sandhills Center and our partners in Moore County were recognized with an advocacy and public awareness award from a statewide organization.

As we enter our fifth year as a local management entity-managed care organization (LME-MCO) in 2017, we want to thank our community stakeholders -- our members and families, network of providers, state and local leaders, and the citizens of Anson, Guilford, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph and Richmond counties for their continued support. We especially wish to thank our Consumer & Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) and Board of Directors members for their invaluable leadership. We also offer thanks to the talented and dedicated staff who make it possible for Sandhills Center to fulfill its mission each day, thereby improving the lives of individuals and families throughout central North Carolina.


Chief Executive Officer
Sandhills Center



Reinvesting savings in services

Throughout 2016, Sandhills Center reinvested savings into various critical services. These increases reinforce Sandhills Center’s commitment to reinvesting 1915 (b)/(c) Medicaid Waiver savings into community-based services.

In February, reimbursement rates were increased for Behavioral Health Long-Term Residential services (5 percent), Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility services (5 percent), Community Support Team services (15 percent), Psycho-social Rehabilitation services (8 percent), Opioid Treatment Services (13 percent).

At the time, Sandhills Center CEO Victoria Whitt noted: “Sandhills Center values the quality residential treatment and community-service options offered to our members by our provider network, and is glad to be able to offer these rate increases. These increases are only possible due to the collaborative efforts of Sandhills Center, our provider network and community partners continually working to provide the right services to assist our members.”

Service rate increases also were announced beginning July 1 for Intermediate Care Facilities (5 percent), Evaluation & Management Coding (7 percent), Outpatient services (7 percent), Psychological Testing (25 percent), and B-3 Individual Respite Care (to \$5 per 15-minute unit).

Sandhills Center is focused on serving our members with the highest quality, evidence-based services available, and by the highest quality clinical staff available. By offering these rate increases, we hope to continue to strengthen our provider network to support our members.

Sandhills Center will continue to look for opportunities to make adjustments to services, reimbursement rates and service delivery models to effectively meet the needs of our members.

**Sandhills Center
is committed to
reinvesting
1915 (b)/(c)
Medicaid Waiver
savings into
community-based
services.**



Important screening tool unveiled

Sandhills Center has launched Access2Care, an evidence-based screening tool to help people who may believe that they are experiencing a behavioral health condition.

Access2Care provides anonymous, confidential online screenings, as well as educational resources and referral information in English and Spanish. The main features of Access2Care include:

- ▶ An online platform that can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the *SandhillsCenter.org* website, or its own independent website address -- *SandhillsCenterAccess2Care.org*. The screening website is convenient and fully accessible through personal computers, mobile phones and tablet devices.
- ▶ Community kiosks, which are privacy booths that are compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The kiosks provide a place for individuals to sit down, take a screening, or use the learning/resource modules. They also offer direct telephone access to Sandhills Center's 24-hour Call Center, which is staffed with licensed clinicians.

Those who wish to take the screenings (for themselves or someone they know) will have a choice between eight different modules. The topics include adult depression, adolescent depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), generalized anxiety disorder, eating disorders, alcohol use and substance use disorders (including prescription drugs).

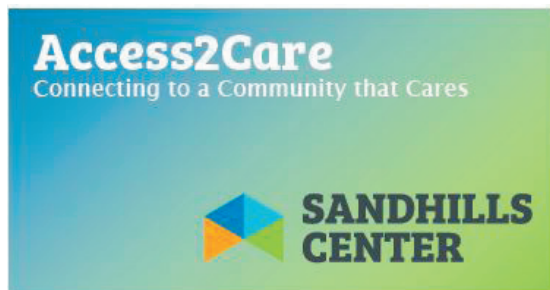
The Access2Care website is available to all residents of the nine county area. Sandhills Center is proud to partner with local organizations to offer privacy kiosks at these locations in Guilford and Harnett counties:

- ▶ Guilford County Health Department lobby, 1100 E. Wendover Ave., Greensboro.
- ▶ City of High Point Public Library, 901 N. Main St., High Point.
- ▶ Harnett County Department of Social Services, 311 W. Cornelius Harnett Blvd., Lillington.
- ▶ Harnett County Library, 601 S. Main St., Lillington.

Access2Care provides immediate feedback and access to important referral information. Results can be printed, or information can be sent via email. A link to Sandhills Center's directory of network providers is available for treatment and support resources. It takes about four minutes to complete a screening. For people seeking help, those few minutes can make a significant difference in charting a path to recovery.

Sandhills Center is in the process of evaluating access to and use of the kiosks to inform future plans for the project.

Access2Care affirms Sandhills Center's commitment to improving access to behavioral health information and treatment to the citizens of Anson, Guilford, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph and Richmond counties.



Access2Care provides anonymous, confidential online screenings, as well as educational resources and referral information.



Making a strong commitment to crisis services through CIT

Sandhills Center reached new milestones in expanding its Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training program throughout the nine-county region.

In total for 2016, Sandhills Center sponsored eight CIT classes, with more than 200 graduates. That brings the total number of Sandhills Center sessions to 41, with more than 900 police officers, telecommunicators and other first responders who have graduated from the program since its 2008 inception.

CIT participants learn skills to de-escalate situations, and how to recognize people in crisis so they can get appropriate help.

CIT is made possible by a joint effort between Sandhills Center, law enforcement, local chapters of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the provider network, and local community colleges.

CIT is important because it trains first responders to understand people who experience behavioral health crises. First responders learn skills to de-escalate situations, and how to recognize people in crisis so they can get appropriate help.

Each year, approximately 25,000 individuals with severe mental illness are incarcerated. Encounters between these individuals and law enforcement sometimes can end tragically. CIT plays an important role in educating officers to respond appropriately in such situations. First responders and mental health professionals have joined forces throughout the country to establish CIT programs, teaching the knowledge and skills needed to intervene and de-escalate crisis situations, with an emphasis on treatment rather than jail time.

CIT training for law enforcement is a rigorous 40-hour curriculum that involves classroom sessions, site visits, role playing and other valuable learning techniques. The certification class designed for emergency medical service (EMS) personnel is 32 hours. CIT training is shown to reduce injury rates among officers and individuals with mental illness. Other benefits include:

- ▶ Reduced criminal justice system and crisis resource costs.
- ▶ Improved confidence in and knowledge of community resources.
- ▶ A reduction in myths and stigmas which improves collaboration between law enforcement agencies and behavioral healthcare providers.

October 2016 was a banner month for Sandhills Center's CIT program, as we cosponsored three consecutive sessions of training. A highlight was that we helped coordinate a CIT class as part of EMToday, the North Carolina Office of EMS Conference that is held each year in Guilford County. Twelve EMS professionals (pictured on the previous page) from across the state participated in the CIT program.

That same month, Sandhills Center also hosted a course for Guilford County EMS personnel. CIT training is very appropriate for EMS personnel, who often serve our members in crisis situations.

Although CIT programs traditionally are designed to improve outcomes for police interactions, we also recognize that EMS providers can help divert individuals to proper care before situations escalate. It also is important for EMS personnel to be trained in the event that they are called to assist law enforcement officials with mental health crisis situations in the absence of CIT-trained officers.

Sandhills Center is especially pleased to have expanded CIT opportunities for EMS personnel who work locally and throughout the state. We look forward to offering these quality programs in 2017 and beyond.

An investment in facility-based crisis services

Sandhills Center soon will offer facility-based crisis services. It was announced in August that Sandhills Center will contract with Daymark Recovery Services to open a new mental health crisis center in a central location within the catchment area.

Facility-based crisis services provide an alternative to hospitalization for adults who experience behavioral health crises. These around-the-clock services (provided in a non-medical facility) often include four to seven days of stabilization, assessment and evaluation, medication management, and engagement of family members or others to appropriately support individuals. To continue treatment beyond crisis services, referrals and connections to community providers are made.

The selection of Daymark was made after a formal and competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process that began in the spring. Selection emphasis was placed on going above and beyond service definitions, assessing and caring for medical needs, and providing peer support, counseling, discharge planning and medication education. Daymark was selected, in part, due to its history of offering crisis services. It also has established strong relationships with other providers in the Sandhills Center network, as well as hospitals and law enforcement agencies.

An announcement will be made in 2017 as to the exact location of the crisis facility. Sandhills Center recognizes the positive impact the service will have for our members. We look forward to furthering our working relationship with Daymark to make this service a success.





Priority: Integrated Care

Sandhills Center is committed to the philosophy of Integrated Care. This term covers a complex and comprehensive field. There are many different definitions of, and approaches to, the concept.

It is largely believed that solutions can be found in Integrated Care because it is the coordination of physical and behavioral healthcare. Integrating these services produces the best outcomes and proves the most effective approach to caring for people with multiple healthcare needs. Simply stated, Integrated Care focuses on the health of the whole person.

In 2016, Sandhills Center requested that our provider network participate in Integrated Care. In order to be successful, Sandhills Center offered a number of resources to the network. A set of “scripts,” or specific questions, are now asked of our providers so that we can integrate physical health information with behavioral health decisions.

Sandhills Center also is using data technology to make Integrated Care a reality. This helps us set expectations to drive provider performance. Through this use of data, providers can track identified measures; take action around care needs and improvement opportunities; and incorporate quality measures, evidence-based practices and clinical practice guidelines.

In addition, Sandhills Center launched a periodical entitled *Integrated Care News* that is sent out to our entire provider network. Newsletter topics focus on links between physical and behavioral conditions, and have varied from opioid use in pregnancy to metabolic disorders. Previous issues can be found in the ‘For Providers’ section of the *SandhillsCenter.org* website.

Sandhills Center has made it a priority to include specific Integrated Care curricula into the regular training schedule and quarterly Provider Forum sessions we offer. Providers can expect to see more educational opportunities in the coming year.

Integrating physical and behavioral healthcare produces the best outcomes for people with multiple healthcare needs.



Statewide recognition earned

To round out a very successful year, Sandhills Center was recognized with a Program of Excellence Award for Public Awareness and Advocacy during an annual conference held in Pinehurst. The award was presented Dec. 8 by the conference host, the North Carolina Council of Community Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Programs (NC Council). In presenting the honor, the NC Council noted that Sandhills Center encourages collaborative relationships with community agencies, advocacy groups and individuals. Sandhills Center is instrumental in the planning process for public awareness and advocacy initiatives.

The relationship between the National Alliance on Mental Illness Moore County (NAMI-MC) and Sandhills Center produced “The Sandhills Partnerships,” a community effort that derived from the partner organizations that support Crisis Intervention Team training (CIT) in Moore County. CIT is well-known throughout the state for providing mental health awareness training for police officers and other first responders. These distinct partnerships were formed under the collaborative’s umbrella:

- ▶ The Sandhills Schools Partnership -- includes NAMI-MC, Sandhills Center, Moore County Schools and FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital Behavioral Services to develop and implement a comprehensive program to train all school personnel about mental illness, bullying, and suicide awareness and prevention.
- ▶ The Sandhills Special Events Partnership -- is made up of NAMI-MC, Sandhills Center, Moore County Schools, and FirstHealth of the Carolinas. This group focuses on public awareness and draws on expertise from a wide range of community supporters beyond the core group.
- ▶ The Sandhills Public Safety Partnership -- consists of NAMI-MC, Sandhills Center, Moore County Public Safety and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Through this group, a two-day training program was developed to provide CIT-like training to public safety first responders, including telecommunications professionals, and emergency medical service and fire department personnel.

Present to accept the award were: Victoria Whitt, CEO of Sandhills Center; Sheriff Neil Godfrey, Moore County; Linda Evans, Moore County Schools; Mary Silverman, FirstHealth; and George Reynolds, NAMI-MC. In her acceptance remarks, Ms. Whitt stressed that the partnership has reached far beyond what anyone could have done alone, and expressed her gratitude to the other partners.

The NC Council is an association that represents local management entities-managed care organizations (LME-MCOs) in North Carolina. The organization provides a strong, cohesive, statewide voice through policy analysis, communications, technical assistance, conferences and training programs. The NC Council’s goal is to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to improve care and services system-wide.

Each year, the NC Council seeks to identify innovative and effective community programs that have been instrumental in serving persons with disabilities in North Carolina. Winners were selected by a committee which includes directors and board members of LME-MCOs.





SANDHILLS CENTER

1120 Seven Lakes Drive
West End, NC 27376

24-Hour Call Center -- 1-800-256-2452
Administrative Offices -- 910-673-9111
TTY -- 1-866-518-6778

SandhillsCenter.org

SandhillsCenterAccess2Care.org

Sandhills Center manages mental health, intellectual/developmental disabilities and substance use services in the central North Carolina counties of Anson, Guilford, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph and Richmond.



ACCREDITED
Health Call Center
Expires 05/01/2016



ACCREDITED
Health Utilization
Management
Expires 05/01/2016



ACCREDITED
Health Network
Expires 05/01/2016