



harmonia
COLLABORATIVE CARE

life. with balance.



Decidedly Different

A photograph of a stone path leading across a river. The path is made of large, flat, grey stones arranged in a line, leading from the foreground towards the background. The water is clear and reflects the surrounding greenery and sky. The background shows lush green grass and trees along the riverbank.

What Makes Us Different

Harmonia is unlike any other behavioral health provider in Western New York. We're not bigger — we're better. **We're empowering** — allowing our counselors and staff to think independently and play to their strengths. **We're integrated** — allowing clients to enroll in multiple services at once as they work to manage any number of issues affecting their success. **We're substantial** — but still small enough so that we can really know our clients, who form relationships with our staff and embrace our unique settings. **And we're connected** — not only internally with the strong, interdisciplinary team we've assembled, but with the strategic partnerships we have established throughout our communities.

Our Why:

We all strive to find harmony in our lives — the synchronicity between our family, passions, work and home. There are many challenges to a harmonious existence: sickness, addiction, the realities of aging and the burdens of life. Harmonia helps to harmonize our clients' lives, so they can move to a melody that supports healthy balance. Harmonia is the Latin word for harmony. It can also mean melody, consonance and concordance. It speaks to disparate pieces working together to create something whole.

What We Do:

Harmonia Collaborative Care offers behavioral health and senior care services, along with Health Home case management from our two beautiful facilities in Derby and Hamburg, and via telehealth services to clients all across Western New York. Our counselors and staff pride themselves in providing empathic care to bring balance to the lives of those who entrust us with their care. We help people attain their highest level of well-being and maintain their independence through our integrated Mental Health, Senior Care and Health Home services, while reducing the cost of care for clients and funders.

Vision:

Harmonia Collaborative Care empowers individuals to be healthy and fulfilled.

Mission:

Harmonia Collaborative Care delivers best-practice behavioral health, senior care and Health Home services to foster an individual's independence and improve their quality of life.

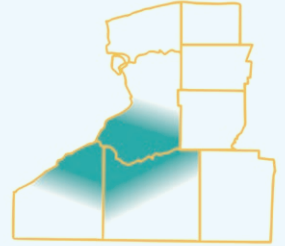
Harmonia at a Glance — Services Offered

Harmonia services are designed to improve and enhance mental health, personal growth and independence.

- **Counseling Services** — Professionally trained and licensed clinicians provide treatment for mental health conditions. Our holistic, empathic approach enables clients to take advantage of quality therapeutic services which include:
 - Individual therapy
 - Marital/Couples therapy
 - Family therapy
 - Group therapy
 - Crisis intervention
 - Medication treatment
 - Case management
 - Links to vocational and social programs
- **Health Home** — Our specialists help Medicaid recipients with mental health concerns and chronic conditions to stay healthy and out of the hospital/emergency room. Harmonia managers coordinate and provide access to care available in the community.
- **Senior Care** — Harmonia's specialists offer compassionate care to seniors facing the challenges of lifestyle change. Our Senior Care Managers provide a free assessment to link clients with:
 - Health and pharmaceutical insurance
 - Referrals to home care options
 - Assistance with housing options
 - Assistance with benefits and entitlements (HEAP, SNAP, Medicaid, etc.)
 - Links to caregiver support groups
 - Unbiased service provider information and referrals
 - Unbiased nursing home information
 - Transportation options
- **CarePanion** — nonmedical in-home care providers who assist seniors and other house-bound clients with tasks such as housekeeping, errands, and safety reviews, while providing much-needed companionship to help them battle loneliness, remain independent and age in place with dignity.

Behavioral Health:

Southern Erie, Northern Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties.



We can serve anyone in WNY. Our service area is expanding with new telehealth capabilities.

Health Home:

All of Erie, Southern Niagara, Northern Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties



Senior Care:

Brant, Collins, Eden, Evans, Gowanda, Hamburg, North Collins and Springville.



CarePanion:

Southern Erie County

Expanding to meet the needs of Erie County and its surrounding areas.



Dear Clients, Colleagues, Donors and Supporters,

It's a fascinating time for our profession. The need for our services has never been higher, evidenced by the record levels of care we provided in 2019 across the board. Much of this has been driven by changes in how society now views mental health and senior care. Elected officials, health insurers and others see the fiscal benefits of our work as well — saving families, businesses and taxpayers millions in the long run.

On a personal level, it's an exciting time for all of us at Harmonia. After navigating leadership, brand and strategic changes in 2019, we've emerged as a stronger, more confident organization poised for performance and growth. New partnerships, strategic plans and geographic expansion are just some of the initiatives our team has underway — even though we've had to substantially reimagine how we deliver our services recently.

Major Accomplishments in 2019

Our new name, logo and tagline were implemented, leading us to new introductions and partnerships while eliminating confusion. Our new website, coupled with a stronger social media presence and modest advertising in early 2020, have generated many new followers. Together, these tools have increased the reach and frequency with which we deliver our messages, the consistency of those messages, and our ability to gather feedback and provide solutions. Also, we began the first steps to creating a formal development program.

Operationally, we generated growth in all of our programs. Our Behavioral Health team provided more than 14,000 treatment sessions, representing 90 different zip codes, a 5% rise over 2018 — and a record level of service. We also hired a new therapist for our Hamburg office — a strategic point of delivery in a more populated part of Erie County.

Our Senior Care team also exceeded its 2018 metrics, with a 7% increase in clients served. They now care for nearly 300 individuals. We added a new Senior Care Manager to our Hamburg office as well. Hamburg has truly welcomed us. The Village of Hamburg recently provided a new funding commitment, along with the following words of support from Town Supervisor Jim Shaw:

"We value the worth of our seniors and the maintenance of their independence. Assisting them is a manifestation of communal kindness, which enriches their lives and adds meaning to our own."

Valuable partnerships like this allow us to make the biggest differences in our communities, providing relief and hope to those in need.

Our CarePanion program, a nonmedical, in-home housekeeping and companionship initiative for seniors, also performed well. This team served 91 clients by the end of 2019, exceeding our targets by 21%. In all, they provided 3,277 county-funded and private-pay hours to home-bound seniors, sparking us to move our CarePanion Coordinator to a full-time role in early 2020.

Our Health Home Care program also had a robust year, with 107 clients enrolled — up 57% from 2018. We conducted 950 visits and managed 79 referrals, a 27% increase by this team which connects clients to critical health and social services as they manage chronic conditions or transition back to society following an incarceration or in-patient stay at a treatment facility. These services are vital for their recipients — and they take a burden off our judicial and healthcare service systems (and thus, taxpayers), as they reduce the likelihood of repeat incidents.

Adjusting to "The New World"

Of course, nothing could have prepared us for the pandemic. Suddenly, we had to determine how to provide the important — at times, life-saving — services we provide, remotely. I've never been prouder of my colleagues as I watched us handle these challenges head-on, with grace. Following the governor's "pause" orders, we assembled the technology and a work-from-home strategy that allowed us to be up and running in three days, with minimal disruption for our clients.

We also added a new prescriber to help manage caseloads, received state approval to permanently deliver TeleMental Health services under our operating license, and updated our electronic clinical record capabilities — new functionality that will allow us to enhance our service delivery, provide greater efficiencies, compliance and patient satisfaction, and improve overall results.

As we've all seen, the pandemic is producing a disruptive "domino effect," and funding sources have not been spared. The state's financial woes led to changes in the way our Health Home program is compensated. We are no longer reimbursed for outreach or provided Medicaid referral lists, which means we have to work harder to identify those in need. This means new public and private relationships, new marketing, and a new reliance on private donors. We especially need



2019 Performance Highlights

We generated substantial year-over-year improvements, including:

your support now to maintain services to our neighbors, and I humbly ask for your support. To learn how to do so, please see page 8.

We continue to invest in our team as well, from support staff to program directors to senior administrators. Our clinicians routinely earn new certifications and add specializations. We've provided trauma-informed training for nonclinical staff. We've hired new front office and clinical staff to make sure our employees maintain the work-life balance we profess in our counseling. We've given program directors more ownership, entrusting them to do what's best for our clients and teams. And, the John R. Oishei Foundation has supported our Board of Directors with a governance workshop, so that they're confident they are operating with industry best practices.

I, too, am part of our education efforts. I'm honored to be part of this year's Leadership Buffalo class. Mirroring society, we've spent time developing our awareness of community issues like diversity and inclusion, and innovative solutions to continue operating during the pandemic. Beyond the skills, strategies and best practices, Leadership Buffalo is expanding Harmonia's network, providing us with new ideas and partners. Not every leader gets to experience something like this, and certainly not during a societal evolution. There's a lot of power in stepping back to see what we've accomplished across the organization and put it in the proper perspective. I look forward to sharing our future successes with you.

Sincerely,

Valerie Nowak LMHC, MPA
Chief Executive Officer



A record **14,027** mental health treatment sessions, up 5% from 2018

Nearly 1,500 mental health clients progressed on their journey of wellness and independence, representing a **62%** increase over the last three years

Our **Senior Care** team supported the independence of 7% more seniors than in 2018

Supported **57%** more Health Home individuals toward positive health and wellness

Generated **27%** more Health Home referrals than we did a year ago

Our **CarePanion** team helped 91 clients stay in their homes, exceeding our 2019 growth targets by 21%

Behavioral Health Overview

Behavioral Health is our largest area, caring for patients experiencing social, emotional or mental health problems. Our team, led by Licensed Mental Health Counselors Megan Brautlacht and Debra Henderson, helps people manage a spectrum of issues and disorders. It has grown steadily, including a 5% increase in treatment sessions last year, more than double our capacity just five years earlier. We now manage over 1,000 active clients.

“We’ve been expanding and offering more clinicians who possess a broad array of specializations,” says Henderson. “We’re starting to see the benefits of those new options, both in terms of the added volume of sessions we can provide and the larger range of conditions we can address.”

For example, one of our clinicians recently earned her Ph.D. in Psychology. Another specializes in Dialectic Behavioral Therapy, an approach to treating suicidal and other self-destructive behaviors. Yet another is certified in Eye Movement, Desensitization and Reprocessing, a newer therapy effective in treating post-traumatic stress disorder. Geriatric Counseling has been a specialization on our team for decades, led by a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Ph.D. certified in Medical Psychology and Psychopharmacology. And, we just recruited a new psychologist who holds a doctorate (Psy.D.).

“We have a strong, connected, multi-disciplinary team with many therapeutic options,” Brautlacht says. “Our staff is well rounded, and it’s nice to offer clients such variety; but we’re also not too big, so we communicate well and maintain a patient-centered culture.”

Another point of difference is our willingness to help patients with multiple issues, simultaneously. For instance, we’ll assist people with substance issues while improving their mental health. We can do this, in part, because we place great trust in our counselors, giving them autonomy based on their experience and credentials. This results in employees who feel respected and valued — and

that leads to stability, and patient success, because patients find comfort in long-term relationships.

Continuity is extremely important to mental health patients. When the COVID shutdown began, our team was forced to pivot quickly to remote service delivery, knowing the high stresses which some patients had. Time was essential, and we were proud to be up and running with video and phone therapy sessions within 72 hours.

“We were becoming more advanced, technologically, before the pandemic, so it just accelerated things,” explains Brautlacht. “Patients saw they could have a great experience without leaving home. The warm faces on our front lines were still here, and that was comforting during the early stages when so much else was unknown.”

Our telehealth capabilities offer other benefits too, especially in the winter, alleviating barriers like transportation and weather. In fact, even in the spring following our shift to remote sessions, we saw a clear reduction in patient “no-shows,” dropping 5% in just a few weeks.

“We’re helping the community navigate this new world and adjust to new norms,” adds Henderson, “and we’re open about how it’s a struggle for all of us, so patients know they’re not alone.”

We also continue to strengthen relationships we have with potential providers and partners, such as the Lake Shore School District, Compeer, Inc., and Brooks Memorial Hospital/TLC Health Network. We work with several graduate schools as well, including Canisius College, Medaille College, Niagara University and the University at Buffalo. We routinely attend career fairs, serve as guest speakers, assist with practicums and provide internships and immersive, independent student experiences. We’ve even helped schools establish policies and best practices, to ensure that the next generation of counselors serves our neighbors effectively.

We are pleased to be members of the Value Network Independent Practice Association (IPA), which is comprised of a multitude of area behavioral health organizations working collectively to improve integration of care between mental and physical health while improving outcomes.

Mental Health Treatment Sessions

Diagnosis and treatment translate to more productive and engaged individuals who have improved and more robust relationships with their families and community. Our Behavioral Health team provided 5% more sessions in 2019 than in 2018 and 119% more than five years ago.

2014	6,420
2015	6,996
2016	7,315
2017	8,891
2018	13,412
2019	14,029



Megan Brautlacht, LMHC
Clinic Coordinator



Debra Henderson, LMHC
Clinic Coordinator

Health Home Care Overview

For low-income individuals who have been hospitalized, homeless, incarcerated, or referred by physicians, our Health Home team can be the difference between recovery or recurrence. Our case managers assist mental health clients and those recovering from substance abuse or managing chronic health conditions to connect with critical health and social services such as counseling, Medicaid and housing assistance. We help them transition back into society and/or manage their conditions while decreasing the likelihood of repeat occurrences. Our support during recovery lessens emergency room and hospital visits, which improves health outcomes and reduces expenses. In fact, our ultimate goal is for them to no longer need us.

"I tell my clients, 'We're not forever,'" says Program Manager Kristy Gasiewicz. "Eventually we want them to learn the skills they need to exist on their own, and to move on to lead healthy, productive lives."

This team, which had a record year in 2019 with 57% more cases managed and 27% more referrals generated, teaches clients to apply for jobs, receive public assistance, sign up for utilities, schedule appointments and access transportation. It's been one of our fastest-growing programs, evidenced by our recent addition of a new staff member and our expansion into Niagara County through several new relationships.

However, this team has been uniquely impacted by the pandemic too. New York's financial crisis caused the state to stop providing Medicaid referrals or compensating us for them as of July 1, 2020. As a result, we have to work harder now to identify and pre-qualify potential clients to determine their interest, eligibility, commitment and fit, which takes more time and effort by our trio of case managers.



*Kristy Gasiewicz, MS
Program Manager*

Another societal change which has impacted this program is bail reform. While these changes have resulted in fewer people being jailed for minor offenses, it also means that we've lost a valuable point of contact for those in need of our services.

"Sometimes being incarcerated leads people to decide to finally get the services and guidance that they need," adds Gasiewicz, who has worked hard to establish relationships with key Erie County employees, including parole and probation officers. "We also worry that we may see an increase in domestic violence incidents due to these new regulations."

The good news is, we were already implementing more individual contact methods in our outreach before these changes. We saw positive results by going beyond simple phone calls and mass mailings, so we're equipped for this added effort and personal touch. We're very confident in this team and excited to see its members' continued growth and progress.





Senior Care Overview

Our Senior Care program also had a strong 2019, with a 7% increase to end the year at more than 270 clients served. This team helps seniors stay in their homes longer by helping them obtain home health care, specialized medical services, financial management and more. They're especially vital to those who have limited incomes, who are widowed or have no family nearby, and who have rural residences where weather can present challenges.

Our providers conduct assessments to ensure that client needs are met. They guard against things like fire hazards, potential falls and medicinal errors. Yet, simple companionship is the service we provide that is appreciated most often, combatting the loneliness that so many feel as they age.

We are growing this team as well, with new strategies and tactics launched in recent months. The pandemic has meant most of our client "visits" are done over the phone, per state guidelines, as many clients don't have computers for video conferencing. We're also working more with family members and neighbors, to ensure certain services continue, such as Meals on Wheels deliveries.

"It's heartbreaking to see," says Senior Care Coordinator Jennifer Gunia, of these clients who have a higher-risk for contracting the COVID-19 virus. "We're doing all we can to help them feel connected, cared for and safe."

Interestingly, this program could be positively impacted by the pandemic. While it's too early to support with data, anecdotally, we've seen some seniors and their

adult children becoming more hesitant to enter a nursing home or assisted living facility, due to the high-concentration of viral outbreaks which have occurred. If this continues, particularly as nursing home prices rise to well over \$100,000 annually, services like ours could increase in demand.

We've also increased our number of strategic partners, such as the Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative (WNYICC), which has connected us with other area agencies and educated us on their strengths and potential opportunities. WNYICC also provides our team with valuable training, including remote learning opportunities. This group has expanded our referral options and helped us become more knowledgeable. One example is the Healthy Ideas program, which was piloted in nursing homes and assisted living residences to provide evidence-based depression management. The pilot's success has led to this program's expansion to the greater population.

We also continue to focus on key influencers in seniors' lives, such as physicians, community leaders and adults in the "sandwich generation." Farmers markets and houses of worship are also helpful, especially as they begin to resume in-person operations.

Financial challenges continue to be this team's biggest limitation. Municipal funds are at risk more than ever due to the tax revenue and other funding sources curtailed by the pandemic. If you'd like to help Western New York's seniors to age in place with dignity, please see page 8.



Jennifer Gunia
Program Coordinator

CarePanion Overview

Our CarePanion Program provides seniors and other homebound clients with housekeeping, errands, safety reviews and much-needed companionship. A perfect complement to our Senior Care and Behavioral Health services, these nonmedical homecare providers improve the chances that Harmonia's clients can remain independent, at home, with an improved quality of life.

"We work closely with families to notify them of safety concerns we see during visits, and we help ensure residents' homes are designed to minimize the risk of falls and other hazards," says CarePanion Coordinator Cami Kent.

Last year our team served 91 county-funded and private-payment clients, exceeding our year-end target by 21%. In all, we provided 3,277 service hours to seniors in a footprint that is expanding to cover all of Erie County and some of its surrounding counties. We have invested in this program steadily over the last 18 months, including making the coordinator's position full-time and adding four new part-time staffers since mid-2019, to increase our total team to nine.

The trajectory of this program had been especially strong, but like our other programs, the pandemic temporarily impacted its capacity after in-person visits were put on hold, per state mandates. As the state began reopening during the summer and those restrictions were lifted, clients have steadily become more comfortable with bringing us back into their homes, wearing appropriate protective equipment, of course. We are hopeful to return to our 2019 year-end levels by the end of 2020 and regain our previous momentum.

Like our Senior Care program, our CarePanion team is also witnessing changing attitudes toward nursing homes and assisted living facilities. "When I talk to family members, that's what they say," Kent affirms. "Mom doesn't want to go to a nursing home; she wants to stay at home."

Conversations with family members are especially helpful in achieving safe, successful living arrangements for their loved ones. It also helps us direct them to possible funding sources to allow those loved ones to take advantage of these services. One example is the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP), offered via the New York State Department of Health. This Medicaid

program provides services to chronically ill or physically disabled individuals who have a medical need for help with daily living activities, including a personal care aide (home attendant), home health aide, or nurse. Participants even have the flexibility and freedom to choose their caregivers, making this program a vehicle through which we can expand our services.

This team is also expanding its network of partners to increase its name recognition and visibility. Our CarePanion providers have participated in several community events, such as the Out of the Darkness Walk for suicide prevention, as well as farmers' markets and senior center open houses, so that more people know about the valuable services we can provide.



Cami Kent, MPA
CarePanion Coordinator



Board of Directors

Harmonia's Board of Directors provides leadership, consultation, experience and talent that helps our team grow and improve at a meaningful and manageable pace. The result is an agency that provides superior client attention, service and value for all of our clients, partners and supporters, in addition to being worthy stewards of our donor and public funding dollars. Meet our full team at harmonia-care.org.

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Director of Finance and Administration

Megan Brautlacht, LMHC

Behavioral Health Clinic Coordinator, Derby

Debra Henderson, LMHC

Behavioral Health Clinic Coordinator, Hamburg

Kristy Gasiewicz, MS

Health Home Program Director

Jennifer Gunia, BS

Senior Services Program Director

Cami Kent, MPA

CarePanion Program Director

Support Staff

Sandra Eschberger, ABS

Front Office Manager

Monique Hebert-Bublyk, BS

Billing and Credentialing Specialist

How Can You Make a Difference?

Donors

Harmonia Collaborative Care is a not-for-profit organization that relies on donations and public funding to sustain the quality of services we provide, which directly or indirectly impact the lives of all of our neighbors. Please help us foster good mental health and independence in our community.

Your tax-deductible donation can be made at harmonia-care.org/donate, by calling 716.947.5025, or by mailing a check to:

Harmonia Collaborative Care
6722 Erie Road (Route 5)
Derby, NY 14047

Want to Join Us? We want to be the **first choice** for behavioral health and senior care professionals — and we're growing. At Harmonia, "life with balance" is more than just a tagline or even a goal for our clients. It's a concept that's every bit as important to our staff, and it's engrained in our culture. Ask us about our approach to work-life balance, and visit harmonia-care.org/careers to see what positions we're currently looking to fill. We regularly consider new board members as well.



Relationships Matter

All of us at Harmonia know that, to truly be effective, we need to be engrained within our communities. That's why we work hard to build trust, accessibility and authenticity across all of the municipalities which we serve, so that we're known by and have the confidence of their leaders and residents alike. Here are just a few recent examples worth sharing:



Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition

Harmonia Collaborative Care was featured in July 2020's newsletter of the Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition. Check out the Q&A with our CEO Valerie Nowak, and "take the pledge" against mental illness stigma. The full story is available at <https://letstalkstigma.org/spotlight-harmonia-collaborative-care/>.

Southtowns Chamber of Commerce and Restaurant Owners

The pandemic reminded us just how important having community support and strong relationships are. The anxieties it caused made it even more vital that people knew we were still open and able to help them. Our deepest thanks go out to the Southtowns Chamber of Commerce and area restaurant owners who worked with us to create additional points of information distribution throughout our communities through their blogs, sharing our social media content — even including our flyers in their to-go orders! At a time when they were dealing with unprecedented stresses and uncertainties of their own, they found a way to help us help others.

We are forever grateful to them all for their support, including:

- **American Legion Post 928** – 7353 Erie Rd., Derby
- **Cala's Kitchen** – 6888 Erie Rd., Derby
- **Coyote Café** – 36 Main St., Hamburg
- **Ilio DiPaolo's** – 3785 South Park Ave., Blasdell
- **Native Pride Diner & Convenience Store** – 11359 Southwestern Blvd., Irving
- **Spot Coffee** – 12 Main St., Hamburg
- **Steveo's Taco & Subs** – 6811 Erie Rd., Derby
- **Uncle Joe's Diner** – 4869 Southwestern Blvd., Hamburg

Please, show your thanks by supporting them!



JC Seneca brings Harmonia together with The Seneca Nation

As the pandemic began, JC Seneca, founder of the JC Seneca Foundation and owner of Tallchief's (formerly Native Pride) diner and travel plaza in Irving, was worried about Seneca Nation members who were struggling with substance abuse and mental illness. As a person in recovery, he had first-hand knowledge of the challenges of living in a rural community while battling these issues. Isolation, transportation and a lack of treatment options are all barriers to recovery.

JC joined forces with Harmonia to share his story and provide access to our telehealth services for the people of the Seneca Nation and surrounding communities. He also promoted our services on his businesses' websites and social media channels and through media coverage and public service announcements. He even provided a flyer to every convenience store and diner customer. We are very pleased to have found such a trusted advocate in JC and his family, and we thank him for all he has done to help connect us to those in need in his community.



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