

CBHACON26
December 3-4, 2026

Chicago Hilton / Oak Brook Resort,
3500 Midwest Rd, Oak Brook, IL 60523
(630) 850-5555



Day 1

7:00 am - 4:00 pm

Registration in East Foyer & Exhibit Hall in Ballrooms G-J / South Foyer

9:00 am

Welcome - Ballroom F

9:15 am – 10:15 am

Session Title: Preserving Mission In A Time Of Turbulence: A Behavioral Health Leader's Roadmap

Location: Ballroom F

Session Description: In the opening to CBHA's annual conference, *OEPN MINDS* chief executive officer Monica E. Oss will present a roadmap to sustainability, success, and growth in this chaotic landscape. In her keynote, she will provide an executive update on the key forces shaping strategy of behavioral health organizations – and their likely impact on community provider organizations. And Ms. Oss will present a framework for assuring continued service for consumers and the community – while preserving organizational financial stability. The session will also discuss the new opportunities emerging in a changing market – and how to prepare for growth in the midst of this change.

Speaker: Monica Oss, Chief Executive Officer, OPEN MINDS

10:15 am - 10:45 am

Break with Exhibitors in Ballrooms G-J / South Foyer

10:45 am - 11:45 am

Session Title: Responsible AI in CMHC's: A Practical Blueprint for Strategy, Ethics, and Implementation

Location: Mallard

Session Description: Join leaders from Thresholds as they share practical lessons from developing and implementing an enterprise AI strategy within a community mental health center (CMHC). This session will provide a roadmap for responsibly adopting AI in behavioral health organizations to address workforce shortages, administrative burden, and increasing demand for care while upholding the ethical responsibilities of serving individuals with mental health and substance use disorders. Participants will learn the foundational elements of an organizational AI strategy, explore an ethical framework for evaluating AI tools that emphasize client safety, privacy, equity, transparency, human oversight, and accountability, and apply a practical prioritization model to assess feasibility, organizational impact, and implementation risk.

Speakers: Sherin Khan, LCSW, Chief Strategy Officer & Tim Turner, MBA, VP, Business Intelligence & Data Analytics, Thresholds

10:45 am - 11:45 am	Session Title: Blueprint for Transformation: Update on Illinois' Vision for Improved Behavioral Healthcare for Illinois Children Location: Ballroom F Session Description: Illinois has been engaged in significant change since March 2022 when Governor Pritzker announced the creation of the Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative, which aims to improve the delivery of behavioral health services to children and adolescents with significant and complex challenges. The Blueprint for Transformation, released in February 2023, guides the state in improving the children's behavioral health service system in Illinois. For the last four years, CBHA conference attendees have had the opportunity to hear directly from the Blueprint for Transformation team. This year, Dr. Dana Weiner will present an update and hear your feedback as the Blueprint is further implemented. Speaker: Dana Weiner, Ph.D, Senior Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall
10:45 am - 11:45 am	Session Title: Sobering Care 101: A CCBHC-Era Innovation for Illinois Location: Conference Dining Session Description: Join subject matter experts from Wellbeing in Action and Good Samaritan Shelter for a discussion of the emerging national model of sobering centers. This new model has been formally recognized by SAMHSA and the nation's first accreditation standards for the model have been established by CARF. It is the right time for Illinois providers to gain an understanding of this low-barrier, reimbursable service that completes the crisis continuum and creates a real bridge between the behavioral health, SUD, and homelessness systems that. Attendees will learn what sobering care is and isn't, how the model strengthens the CCBHC crisis continuum, what the workforce model looks like, and how braided funding strategies can sustain services. Speakers: Jesse Sieger Walls, Owner & Managing Principal, Wellbeing in Action and Sylvia Barnard, Executive Director, Good Samaritan Shelter
11:45 pm - 12:15 pm	Break with Exhibitors in Ballrooms G-J / South Foyer
12:15 pm - 2:00 pm	Awards Lunch in Ballrooms A-E
2:15 pm - 3:15 pm	Session Title: Neurofeedback in Action: Proven Results for Healing Trauma Location: Conference Dining Session Description: Discover how Infra-Low Frequency Neurofeedback, an innovative approach to brain training, is helping transform mental health care, particularly for individuals affected by trauma. This presentation will explain what neurofeedback is, how it works, and the scientific evidence supporting its effectiveness. Attendees will also hear compelling real-world outcomes from its use with underserved populations. Speakers: Colette Melancon, LCSW, Executive Director & Christy Johnson, QMHP, Advocacy Project Director of Membership, Neurofeedback Advocacy Project

2:15 pm - 3:15 pm	Session Title: Staff Resilience & Retention: Strengthening Organizational Connection in Turbulent Times Location: Ballroom F Session Description: Join subject matter experts from Incite Consulting Solutions for a discussion of how staff wellness and resilience relate to workforce retention, productivity, engagement, and quality of care. Presenters will share specific interventions that have been shown to be effective in building stronger organizational connections. Attendees will leave with a personal plan for incorporating at least one specific change in management style that will encourage higher levels of staff wellness and resilience. Speakers: Kara Sweeney Guerriero, MPH, Founder & Chief Executive Officer & Tony Zipple, MBA, Senior Consultant, Talent Optimization, INCITE Consulting Solutions
2:15 pm - 3:15 pm	Session Title: Navigating the Waters: How We Sustain and Advance Equity and Social Justice in Turbulent Times Location: Mallard Session Description: Leadership perspectives and shared insights on sustaining and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion across organizations during challenging times. In this session, you will hear from nationally recognized leaders and experts from nonprofit organizations through a panel discussion and breakout groups. You will learn what you can do in your organization to further these conversations and lean upon your community to continue to rise to the moment. This session is brought to you through the efforts of CBHA's RESJ Committee members Julie Rodriguez, Ellen Ross, Mitchell Sandy, and Anne McNeils. Speakers: Tonika Davenport-Tiner, MPP, Director of Racial Equity Inclusion Justice, Mark Ishaug, MA, President & Chief Executive Officer, Thresholds, & Juan Carlos Linares, President & Chief Executive Officer, Association House of Chicago
3:15 pm - 3:45 pm	Break with Exhibitors in Ballroom G-J / South Foyer
3:45 pm - 5:00 pm	Session Title: (State Panel) Location: Ballroom F Session Description: TBD Speakers: TBD
5:00 pm – 6:30 pm	Networking Reception in Ballrooms A-E

Day 2	
7:00 am - 12:00 pm	Registration in East Foyer & Exhibit Hall in Ballrooms G-J / South Foyer
8:45 am - 9:00 am	CBHA Annual Meeting in Ballroom F
9:00 am - 10:00 am	Session Title: Embracing Innovation: Building Teams that Thrive Location: Ballroom F Session Description: Join subject matter experts from MTM Services for a discussion of how to build teams that thrive. Attendees will leave with an understanding of how-to de-silo systems of care, departments, and the internal hierarchy to promote innovation and ensure provision of efficient and effective services that lead to the best client outcomes possible. Speakers: Valerie Westhead, MD, FASAM, Medical Director & Medical Operations, Care Integration and Workforce Development Consultant & Katherine Schroeder, LMHC, MCAP, QCS, Workforce Development and Process Change Consultant, MTM Consulting Services
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Break with Exhibitors in Ballroom G-J / South Foyer
10:30 am - 11:30 am	Session Title: A Heart for the Work, A Mind for the Data: The Impact Alignment Framework in Practice Location: Ballroom F Session Description: Join founder and CEO of Mission Driven Data, Ginger Bandeen, for a discussion of the Impact Alignment Framework in practice. The Impact Alignment Framework is a practical tool for connecting your existing data to your organization's mission and using that data to expand your impact. Ginger will share concrete strategies for applying this framework and your data across three important domains: workforce, financial sustainability, and outcomes. After this presentation, attendees will have the language, confidence, and next action steps to align their organizational data with organizational impact. Speaker: Ginger Bandeen, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Mission Driven Data
10:30 am - 11:30 am	Session Title: Internships with Impact: Developing a No-Cost, Practical Guide for the Next Generation of Youth Social Workers Location: Mallard Session Description: The Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago (JPA) has been committed to building the field of social work. While graduate programs equip prospective social workers with knowledge of conceptual frameworks and best practices, most graduate students arrive at their internship placements very “green” and inexperienced. JPA received

	generous funding from a Chicago-based foundation to develop a year-long training guide for social work interns and early career professionals. The guide is interactive, modularized, and full of real-world scenarios and reflective exercises with the goal of supporting new therapists to gain confidence in the application of therapeutic skills for young children and families. The guide will be available free of charge to any MH provider working primarily in schools, although many units might be applicable elsewhere. This conference session will focus on the guide's development and content and our strategies for disseminating the guide to other agencies that could benefit from its contents. Speaker: Karen G. Foley, MBA, Chief Executive Officer & President, Juvenile Protective Association
10:30 am - 11:30 am	Session Title: The Answer in the Room: A Trauma-Informed Workforce Strategy for Illinois Community Behavioral Health Location: Conference Dining Session Description: Trauma is the engine underneath the most complex presentations agencies see, and underneath the compassion fatigue their workforce carries. Join Deborah Kennard, from the Personal Transformation Institute, for a discussion of trauma-informed principles that offer a pathway toward healing for clients and an increasing sense of belonging and support for staff. Attendees will leave with a clear picture of what agency level trauma treatment capacity looks like and how to begin building it within their own organization. Speaker: Deborah Kennard, MS, LLP, Founder of Person Transformation Institute, Developer of (SAFE) Somatic and Attachment Focused EMDR, Personal Transformation Institute
11:30 am - 12:00 pm	Break with Exhibitors in Ballroom G-J / South Foyer
12:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Speaker Lunch in Ballrooms A-E
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Session Title: Behavioral Health Policy at the Capitol: A Discussion with State Lawmakers Location: Ballroom F Session Description: Join key state lawmakers, including our '<i>Legislator of the Year</i>' award recipients, for a conversation on the behavioral health and substance use legislative advancements passed out of the Illinois General Assembly in 2026. Legislators will provide insights into the current legislative and political landscape in Springfield and reflect upon the opportunities and challenges that may shape the Illinois General Assembly's work in 2027. Speakers: TBD