



The Digest

CCBHC State Demonstration Project

Sinnissippi continues progress as a CCBHC

On Oct. 1, 2024, Sinnissippi Centers entered a new era of providing behavioral healthcare. That day, the agency launched the Illinois Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Demonstration Project. This state demonstration project is in addition to two federal CCBHC grants Sinnissippi has received in recent years to become a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic. The state's project is limited in scope to Sinnissippi Centers' Dixon–Route 2 and Dixon–Town Square Centre locations, while the other two federal grants involve all of Sinnissippi's offices.

The state demonstration project has six program requirement areas: Staffing; availability and accessibility of services; care coordination; scope of services; quality and other reporting; and organizational authority, governance, and accreditation.

In addition to satisfying the six program requirements, a CCBHC under the demonstration project must also provide nine core services, which include crisis intervention, treatment planning, screening and assessment, targeted case management, community-based mental health care for veterans, and peer services.

"What this has meant internally is a lot of changes to our procedures, such as workflows for clinicians and other staff and documentation, which has really impacted a lot of staff who work and serve clients out of Lee County," says Sinnissippi Centers President and CEO Stacie Kemp. "It has impacted many other staff as well, because we have many clients and staff who cross county boundaries for service," adds Kemp.

"Overall, the process has gone fairly smoothly considering the short timeline we were working under between the announcement of the project participants and the implementation date," Kemp says. "Feedback from staff and clients has been positive, with many noting that it's opening up doors for additional needed services for the clients we serve," she adds. "And the great news is that we have been meeting regularly with state officials to discuss how to expand this approach to all of our sites," says Kemp.



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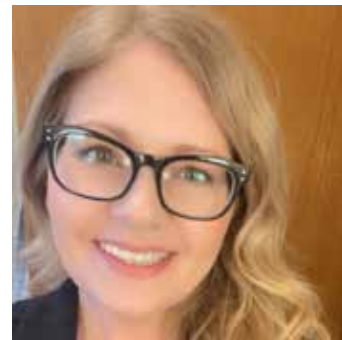
Events

- Sinnissippi Golf Open August 14, 2025
- Culver's Share Night May 13, 2025 at the Rock Falls Culver's location

Sinnissippi Centers' Primary Care Provider

Kristina Mershon, a board-certified family nurse practitioner, has joined Sinnissippi Centers and is now offering primary care services to a number of Sinnissippi clients. Mershon began her career as a nurse and spent more than 10 years working in emergency medicine before becoming a nurse practitioner. As a family nurse practitioner, she has spent nine years providing primary care services to patients in emergency departments and correctional centers.

In the summer of 2024, Sinnissippi Centers expanded its services further than ever before. As part of this expansion, Sinnissippi began offering primary care to patients who are already established at Sinnissippi Centers. The goal of adding primary care services is to provide screening and monitoring of co-occurring health conditions that may contribute to poor health outcomes.



Kristina Mershon, APRN-FPA is Sinnissippi Centers' primary care provider

What's New?

IHPA Awards

The Illinois Health Practice Alliance (IHPA) recently presented three Sinnissippi Centers staff members with the IHPA Integrated Care Innovation Award. Honored were IHPA Care Coordinator Sue Richoz (left), SUPR

Recovery Support Specialist Patrick McCue (center), and Care Navigator/IHPA Supervisor Heather Krick (right). This award recognizes

a team with exceptional success in engaging hard-to-reach populations, such as individuals experiencing substance use disorders, and connecting them to various types of care to improve their overall wellness.

Sinnissippi Staff Achievements

Several Sinnissippi Centers staff members recently earned new licensure. Freeport Office Supervisor Tiffany Chander, School-Based Clinician Abijah Castillo, and Behavioral Health Clinician Meghan Dunn received their Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) certifications. Recovery Home Supervisor Derek Kennedy and Recovery Home Specialist Holly Muntean earned their Certified Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Counselor (CADC) credentials, while Recovery Support Specialist Amber Dahler received her Certified Recovery Support Specialist credential. Finally, Behavioral Health Clinician Lucinda Carey earned her Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) credential. Congratulations to all staff members on their achievements!



Wellness & Recovery Celebration

Sinnissippi Centers held its first Wellness and Recovery Celebration since 2019 on Sept. 12, 2024, at the Dixon Elks Lodge. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic put a hold on in-person events for Sinnissippi Centers, as well as for so many other organizations.

Historically, the event has been held at Sinnissippi's Dixon-Route 2 office, with only one exception prior to 2019. However, due to expansions at the Dixon-Route 2 office since 2019, it is no longer feasible to host the celebration on-site.

The 2024 event was well attended and featured a social hour, food, prize baskets, Art of Recovery activities, and concluded with a powerful peer panel discussion.



Sinnissippi management and staff that attended and who were on the event committee.



Peer Panel members (L-R), Gabrielle Olson, Shandra Strow, Stevie Renee-Carney, Kevin Johnson

Planning for 2025 is already underway. The Wellness and Recovery Celebration is supported by donations to Sinnissippi Centers. For more information on how to donate, see the back page.

New Primary Care Provider

Continued from page 1

Mershon will provide outpatient clinic primary care, including screening and monitoring of key health indicators and risks through annual physical exams, preventive care screenings, chronic disease management, specialty care referrals, wellness counseling, and limited urgent care services.

Sinnissippi has added two examination rooms on the lower level of its Dixon-Route 2 office to accommodate primary care services.



Mershon at work in one of two exam rooms at Sinnissippi's Dixon-Route 2 office.

Sinnissippi's Newest Office

Sinnissippi Centers has signed a lease for a new office in Byron, its third Ogle County location. Funding for the new office from the Ogle County 708 Mental Health Board has been a major factor in starting this project. The building's interior is unfinished, and construction is expected to take approximately five months, with an anticipated opening in late spring.

The Byron location will be a full-service Sinnissippi Centers office with space for clinicians, a CST team, a group room, a break room, a supervisor's office, and a lobby with a reception area.



Rafael's Recovery Story

Rafael went to juvenile prison when he was 15 years old. He was in and out of prison four times, for a total of 23 to 24 years-about half his life. When he got out of prison, he decided that he didn't want to be in Chicago "because I created too much trouble." Rafael's grandma and some of his other family members lived in the Sauk Valley area, so he came here to start fresh. "My parole officer told me I had to get into some kind of services. Sinnissippi was in the area. I knew I needed medications to help me, so I called and got hooked up," says Rafael.

"Since I've been in Community Support Team services, I've learned a lot of skills to help with my anger and to not harm myself," says Rafael. The biggest thing he says he's learned is how to control his anger. "I'll be off of parole Dec. 20, 2024. I plan to continue with Sinnissippi even though I won't have to," he adds. Rafael hopes to see his daughter and his mom and dad. "I hope to travel to Texas to see some of my other family too," he says. Rafael also wants everyone to know that his friend, a pastor, has helped him out quite a bit as well.

50 Years of Service

Sinnissippi Centers' Director of Child and Adolescent Services Gloria Martin (pictured right) celebrated her 50th anniversary with the agency on Oct. 31, 2024. Martin said, "Little did I know that September day long ago, when interviewing at Sinnissippi Mental Health Center, that I would be so fortunate to spend my entire professional career doing work that was so deeply meaningful, challenging, and rewarding."



"I recall thinking very early in my tenure, 'This is the job I always wanted,' and I still feel that joy to this very day," says Martin. "It is a profound honor to have been part of the extraordinary growth of this remarkable organization. I am blessed by the trust of my clients and inspired daily by my gifted and dedicated colleagues. Sinnissippi has grown beyond anyone's imagination from those early days. While the science of brain health is providing greater understanding and improved treatment, much work remains ahead," says Martin.

Sinnissippi's Chief Clinical Officer Tammy Stewart said, "Gloria's passion, vision, dedication, and advocacy for enhancing the lives of children and adolescents are evident daily. We are so fortunate to have Gloria's expertise guiding us forward. We are thrilled to share this milestone and celebrate her impactful accomplishments at Sinnissippi over the past 50 years!"

It's That Time of Year Again

It's the holiday season once again and that means it is time for Sinnissippi Centers' Holiday Food Basket Project. Each year participating Sinnissippi clinicians select some of their clients to receive a food basket just before Christmas. The food basket includes nonperishable fruits, vegetables, other sides, and a meat item. Costs have risen over the years and the average cost of a food basket is now around \$30.00 to \$35.00. If you would like to donate to the Holiday Food Basket Project, you can use the donation envelope in this mailing, mail your donation to Sinnissippi Centers, 325 Illinois Route 2, Dixon, IL 61021, or donated online at www.sinnissippi.org/donate. Donations are tax deductible.



Boxes on their way to Sinnissippi offices, and then on to client families during the 2023 holiday season

More News

Running to a Good Cause

A team from Citizens State Bank ran the Ragnar Race Michigan on Sept. 20 & 21, 2024 to raise funds for mental health awareness. Donations were accepted from their supporters and the bank made



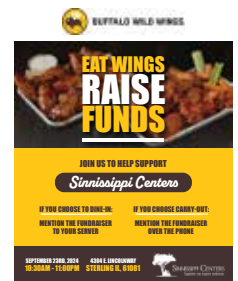
Citizens State Bank's Ragnar Race team with Sinnissippi Centers' Marketing Manager Andrew Jackson (center) at the check presentation in Stockton.

a matching donation. Over \$2,000 was raised for Sinnissippi and mental health awareness. The Ragnar Race is a long distance relay race with runners competing as a team to complete the course. The Michigan course ran from Traverse City to Muskegon Michigan. Their team ran relay legs during the day and night to help raise money for Sinnissippi Centers and Mental Health Awareness. Thank you to Citizens State Bank, their Ragnar Race team members, and everyone who donated to this event!

Eat Wings Raise Funds

Buffalo Wild Wings in Sterling, Illinois hosted an Eat Wings Raise Funds (EWRFF) event for Sinnissippi Centers on September 23, 2024.

An EWRFF event lasts one entire business day and a portion of the proceeds from dine in and carry out orders go to the designated charitable organization. Thanks to all staff and management at Buffalo Wild wings for their support!



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SINNISSIPPI CENTERS
 Together we inspire wellness

Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

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Dixon, IL 61021

24-hour Emergency Phone Number

800-242-7642

www.sinnissippi.org

Office Locations

- Dixon
 - Illinois Route 2
 - Town Square Centre
- Opening in 2025: Byron
- Freeport
- Mt. Carroll
- Oregon
- Rochelle
- Sterling

Apartment Sites

- Dixon
- Mt. Carroll
- Rochelle
- Sterling

Recovery Homes

- Dixon
- Amboy

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Together we inspire wellness

Donations

Donations can be mailed to Sinnissippi Centers, 325 Illinois Route 2, Dixon, IL 61021.

You can also donate online:

www.sinnissippi.org/donate

You can specify if you would like to give your donation in honor or in memory of a family member or loved one.

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Darryl Allen Siems
Julie Turner
Peggy Ulferts

Fonda Wells
Sarah Wheeler
Gary & Lori Wilhelm
Stephanie Wurster

In Honor of

..My nine-year-old granddaughter who was born with a genetic disorder. We are so grateful for all the support we have had.
Penny Slusser

In Memory of

...Johanna Berman
Rev. Fran Berman

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