

BROOME COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Annual Report 2020

Nancy J. Williams, LCSW-R
Commissioner

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County Executive

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A Message from the Commissioner

Along with the rest of the world, Broome County experienced the impact of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The world changed overnight. Businesses closed, children were pulled from school, and people became infected. As the County Mental Health Department, we were responsible to ensure that vital services remained available to those in need and that our System of Care continued despite the challenges of COVID-19. Working closely with our local and state partners, we continuously monitored the impact on services and developed strategies to address any gaps in care. Early on in the pandemic, we developed a website so that members of our community had access to available resources to help them deal with the stress caused by the pandemic; <https://www.gobroomecounty.com/mh/coronavirus/resources>.

The financial impact of the pandemic was felt strongly at the local level. Midway through the pandemic, Broome County Mental Health was notified that there was to be a 20% withhold on all state aid provided to our County for programs funded by the NYS Office of Mental Health, NYS Office of Addiction Services and Support and NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. We were charged with evaluating and collaborating with those agencies impacted by this withhold. Broome County Mental Health staff worked diligently to identify ways to keep critical programs funded despite the withhold. Another challenge faced by the department, was how to manage the proposed permanent 5% cut across all NYS funded programs that was included in the Governor's original proposed budget. Once again, Broome County Mental Health staff evaluated current programming and worked collaboratively with local agencies to develop strategies to keep mission critical services in place despite the proposed 5% budget cut.

The Department utilized the Zoom meeting platform to ensure that local services planning, Single Point of Access, and other crucial community initiatives continued as scheduled. Once again, this ensured continuity of services for both consumers and local agencies.

Just prior to the pandemic, Broome County Mental Health moved to a new location, 501 Reynolds Road, Johnson City, NY. This new location created more office space and a larger conference room with improved technology for virtual meetings.

2020 was a time of unprecedented challenges for the Department. As you will see from this Annual Report, the Department successfully met the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic while remaining true to its mission to *“plan, organize, and oversee a comprehensive continuum of care for consumers of public mental hygiene services in Broome County.”*

Nancy J. Williams, LCSW-R

BROOME COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Broome County Mental Health Department works with service providers at the Local and State level to develop community preventive, rehabilitative, and treatment services offering a continuum of care. The Department provides oversight to improve and expand existing services, and plan for the integration and coordination of care for consumers. The total community need is considered, reflecting the full range of individual need and circumstance, to ensure adequate access to service for the community, and specifically for those who otherwise would not have access to such services.

Mission

The mission of the Broome County Mental Health Department is to plan, organize and oversee a comprehensive continuum of care for consumers of public mental hygiene services in Broome County. The continuum of care will provide for the health and safety of Broome County citizens.

Vision

The vision of the Broome County Mental Health Department includes the following aspects:

Planning: The Department will engage in a participatory planning process to develop mental hygiene services in Broome County that includes government officials, providers, community representatives, and recipients or their families.

Accountability: The Department will ensure that state and/or local oversight mechanisms are in place and that services are delivered in a responsible, efficient manner.

Coordination: The Department will ensure that all mental hygiene service providers in Broome County will coordinate and collaborate for the delivery of services that are responsive to the needs of recipients, including culturally diverse populations.

County Operations: The Department's primary role is to facilitate and oversee the continuum of care for consumers of mental hygiene services in Broome County. The Department will only provide direct services as the provider of last resort.

Partnership with Coordinated Care Services, Inc. (CCSI)

The Broome County Department of Mental Health contracts with Coordinated Care Services, Inc. ([CCSI](#)) for a range of services and supports including [Project and Program](#)



[Management](#), [Service Contracts](#), [Financial and Contract Management](#), and technical assistance to support contract agencies with ongoing quality improvement, ensure the delivery of quality services, and facilitate performance improvement activities. As a trusted leader in the areas above, CCSI holds contracts with many county and state government entities in New York State.

Community Services Board

Broome County Community Services Board (CSB), a function of NYS Mental Hygiene Law, is comprised of individuals invested in the continuum of care for behavioral health services in Broome County. The Board makes recommendations and suggestions, relative to the operation of services and facilities in all community mental health programs within the purview of the Local Government Unit (LGU), to the Commissioner of Mental Health, County Executive, and/or the County Legislature.

The Board maintains three Subcommittees: Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and People with Developmental Disabilities, each tasked with the same function for the field of services for the individuals represented by the Subcommittee.

The Board and Subcommittees participate in planning for the provision and funding of all community mental health programs and services within the County within the purview of the LGU.

Community Services Board Members *

Donald Bergin, *Chair*
 Cara Fraser
 Michael Hatch
 Steve Houser
 William Knecht
 Rena Kovac
 Karen Lawrence
 Susan Metzgar
 William Parsons
 Abbey Pelot
 April Ramsay
 Jason Shaw
 Amanda Welch
 Susan Wheeler
 Jennifer Yaun

Subcommittee Members *

Alcohol & Substance Abuse

Jill Alford-Hammitt
 Donald Bergin
 John Barry
 Steve Houser, *Chair*
 Rebekah Jamison
 Elizabeth Jennings
 Sarah King
 Colleen O'Neil
 Pearl Reed-Klein
 Susan Wheeler
 Jennifer Yaun, *Chair*

Mental Health

Emily Burns
 Cara Fraser, *Chair*
 Renee Gotthardt
 Carol Lanois
 William Parsons, *Chair*
 Abbey Pelot
 Lisa Schuhle
 Katy Shefler

People with Developmental Disabilities

Nicole Cashman
 Kimberly Corbett
 Nicki French
 Esther Frustino
 Rena Kovac
 Karen Lawrence, *Chair*
 Nancy Ranger
 Meggan Taylor
 Amanda Welch

(*) Individuals served on the Community Services Board or Subcommittee for at least a portion of 2020.

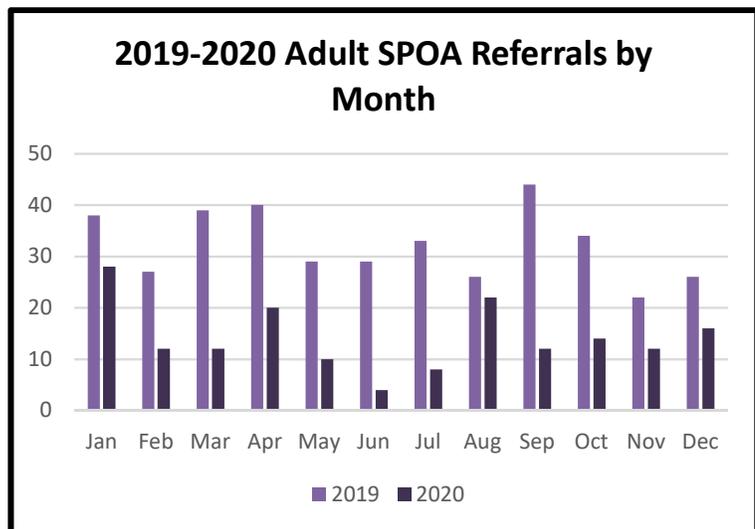
LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT (LGU) FUNCTIONS

Broome County Mental Health Department, as a Local Government Unit (LGU), is legally required to carry out specific functions pursuant to NYS Mental Hygiene Law. The following section covers those programs and services.

Adult Single Point of Access (A-SPOA)

The A-SPOA program connects adults with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) to the most appropriate care management, treatment, and residential services available in Broome County. The program affords a streamlined, uniform process to match consumer needs with community resources, thereby reducing duplication of services. The A-SPOA Team is responsible for triaging new referrals, tracking enrollment, and meeting the immediate needs of clients.

A-SPOA accepted referrals throughout 2020, yet the impacts of COVID-19 resulted in significantly fewer referrals compared to 2019. Reports submitted by providers demonstrated less access to services, county-wide, due to the impacts of quarantine, transitions to telehealth, and other COVID-19 related impacts. Residential referrals and placements decreased from 2019 in part due to the NYS Governor's [COVID-19 Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2020](#). Efforts to obtain housing placements were more difficult due to the eviction moratorium, however fewer service requests for housing were received. Though referrals were down, A-SPOA saw an uptick in case conferences related to complicated, multi-faceted cases as access to care, or lack of access to technology to obtain the tele-care, exasperated symptoms of serious mental illness, substance use disorder, and medical diagnoses.



2020 by the Numbers:

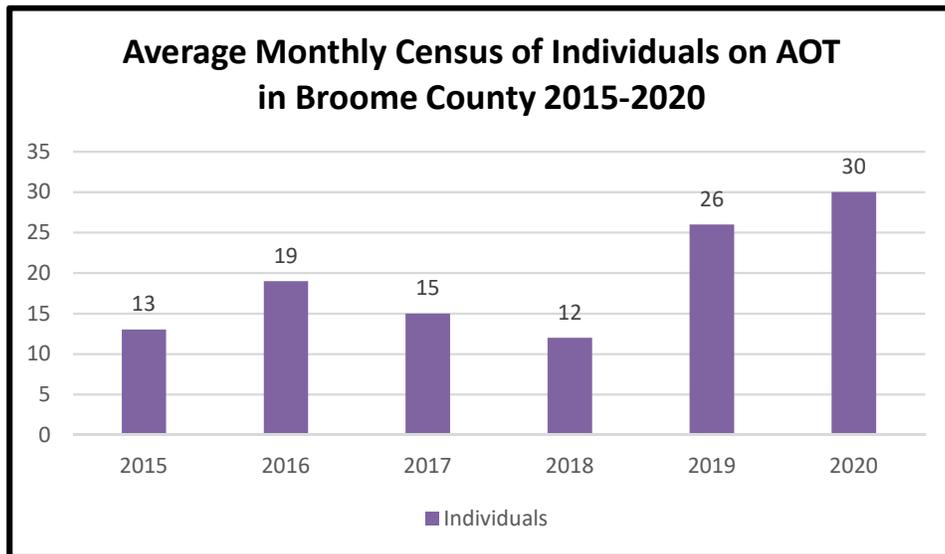
A-SPOA: 170 referrals were received and processed by the A-SPOA Team, which represents a 56% decrease from 2019. Eighty percent (80%) of individuals had Medicaid insurance, 14% had both Medicare and Medicaid, and 4% had Medicare only.

Medication Grant Program (MGP): 201 individuals discharged from the jail, state prisons, or inpatient hospitals received immediate temporary Medicaid assistance for psychotropic medication during 2020. Less than half (72, 35%) of those individuals were newly enrolled in the program in 2020; this total represents a high number of individuals carried over from previous years.

Forensic Outreach Program: 32 individuals with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) released from NYS Prison to Broome County were assisted to obtain mental health and substance treatment services, which represents a nearly 50% reduction over 2019.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)

Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), or Kendra’s Law, is a statutory framework to ensure individuals, with mental illness and a history of hospitalizations or violence, participate in community-based services appropriate to their needs. Kendra’s Law established a mechanism for identifying individuals who, in view of their treatment history and circumstances, are likely to have difficulty living safely in the community without close monitoring and mandatory participation in treatment. An individual may be placed on an AOT only if, after a hearing, the court finds the individual has met specific eligibility criteria and the proposed treatment is the least restrictive alternative which will allow the individual to live safely in the community. Additional information can be found on the New York State Office of Mental Health ([OMH website](#)).



2020 by the Numbers:

The graph above depicts the fluctuation of individuals served in Broome County from 2015-2020. Since 2015, when the average monthly census was thirteen (13) individuals on an active AOT Order in Broome County, the number has more than doubled to thirty (30) individuals in 2020. Likely reasons for the increase in executed orders include: (1) greater awareness and familiarity of the statute; (2) mandate from OMH to state-operated psychiatric and forensic hospitals to screen all individuals for eligibility; and (3) the cumulative success for many individuals in the twenty-years since its inception that encourages the continued, and now increased, use of this Mental Hygiene Law statute.

Court Ordered Evaluations

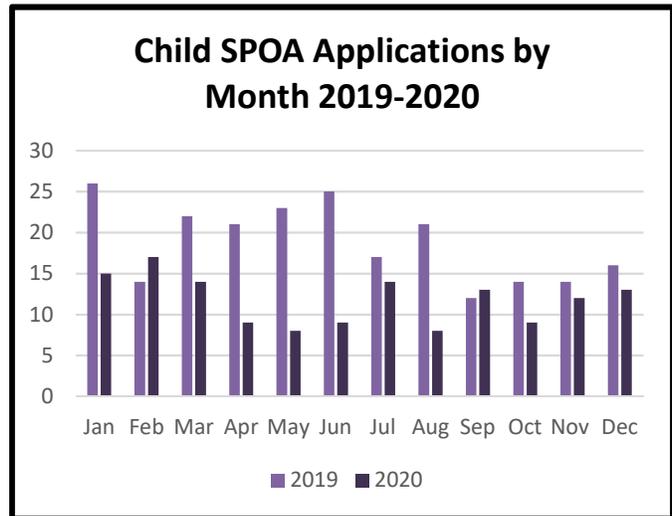
The Department provides court-ordered diagnostic evaluations, prior to case disposition, for individuals involved with the Justice system designated by Family, Civil and Criminal courts.

2020 by the Numbers:

- **Criminal Procedure Law (CPL) §730** – *Fitness to Proceed (aka: Competency Examinations)* = 27.
- **Criminal Procedure Law (CPL) §390** – *Pre-sentence Investigation* = zero.
- **Family Court Act (FCT) §251** – *Medical Examinations (aka: Mental Health Evaluation)* = 3.

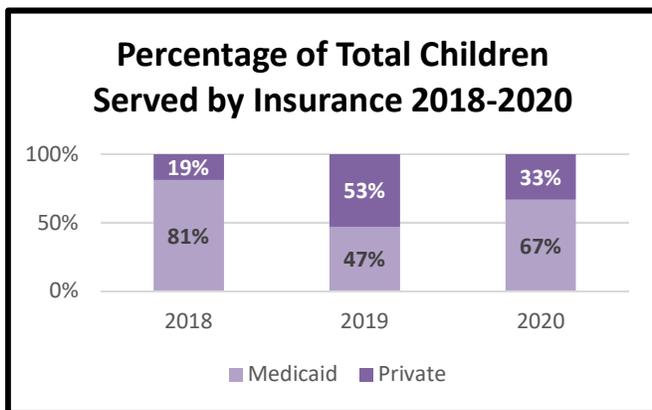
Child Single Point of Access (C-SPOA)

Child Single Point of Access (C-SPOA) is a centralized intake process to access specialized services for children aged 5-21, experiencing a Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED). C-SPOA is designed to improve access to services while monitoring and coordinating utilization of these services through a single access point.



2020 by the Numbers:

C-SPOA processed and presented 141 referrals in 2020 which includes new cases and requests for additional services or increased lengths of stay. C-SPOA saw a 37% decrease in completed referrals over 2019; however, the number of referrals for new services decreased by 29% while the requests for additional services and increased lengths of stay reduced by 53%. The graph above depicts the changes by month. By the end of 2020, referrals by month were much closer to those from the past year.



The advent of additional Medicaid reimbursable children’s services in 2019 shifted the percentage of children served by insurance type to a heavier percentage of individuals with private insurance. The trend was partially reversed in 2020, revealing a higher percentage of children served with Medicaid. However, as fewer children were served, this trend warrants further monitoring.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Broome County Suicide Awareness for Everyone (BC SAFE)

BC SAFE, a community coalition, is dedicated to the prevention of suicide and suicide attempts throughout Broome County by coordinating suicide awareness and prevention efforts. Members represent various sectors of the community. The Coalition focuses on training and education and awareness events and activities. Due to the unprecedented occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the Coalition's work was impacted. As the world shifted online, the Coalition rose to the challenge to support the community with education and awareness efforts centered on suicide prevention and hope.



Training and Education

Where appropriate, trainings moved to virtual platforms, while others required new facilitator training to make the shift online. Due to the nature of the material, some trainings were put on hold until it was deemed safe and appropriate to offer in-person opportunities.

- Trainings were offered virtually to the community – including but not limited to, community-based organizations, coalitions, teachers and higher education.
- Trainings that continued successfully online included the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's *Talk Save Lives* and component modules, *Suicide Safety for Teachers and School Staff*; and The National Council's *Youth Mental Health First Aid*.
- The *BC SAFE* Facebook page and community quarterly newsletters are delivered digitally.

Awareness

Traditionally, most awareness efforts are offered through in-person community events. The pandemic required major adaptation to these strategies. Activities and supports offered:

- More robust webpage offering information and resources to individuals seeking support and guidance for themselves, for those concerned for loved ones themselves, and those that have experienced loss.
- Created a community Campaign with *Cards of Hope and Inspiration*. These cards display inspirational quotes on one side and helpful information such as the *National Prevention Lifeline* phone/text available 24/7/365. Approximately 9500 cards were distributed to individuals and families.
- Developed a sticker campaign which encouraged individuals to have conversations with others and included much needed resources centered on coping and accessible resources.

World Suicide Prevention Event

Historically, BC SAFE hosted an annual breakfast that promoted education, increased awareness, and reduction of stigma. In response to public gathering restrictions imposed by COVID-19, BC SAFE developed *Chalk the Walk & Have the Talk*, awareness campaign. This week of action brought the community together to create sidewalk art in observance of *World Suicide Prevention Day*. The goal was to beautify sidewalks and pavement with messages and images of hope and resilience promoting suicide prevention, mental wellness, and stigma reduction. Many individuals, businesses, health care systems and community organizations participated in the week-long event. The event was a huge success offering outreach and awareness all the while recognizing that *Broome Has Hope*.



BroomeINCLUDES

BroomeINCLUDES is a county-wide initiative aimed at ensuring everyone in need of assistance receives the help they need. The goal is to promote inclusion of community members who experience behavioral health challenges with a focus on serving community members with intellectual, developmental, physical, mental health, or substance use challenges.



BROOME INCLUDES

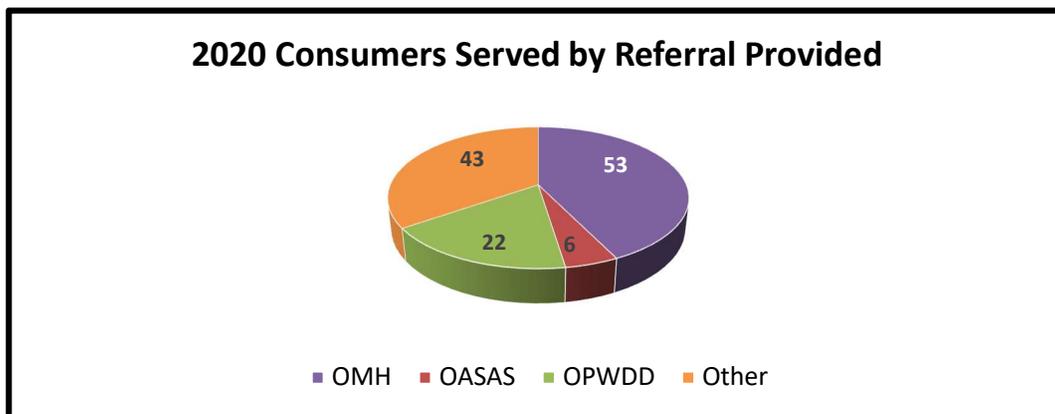
The mission of BroomeINCLUDES is to promote inclusion of all residents of all abilities; promote access to services in a timely manner; provide education and connection to our area's many resources and agencies; encourage and endorse community access and inclusion initiatives; connect opportunity to residents' needs using community resources; help individuals find their way by assisting individuals with navigating Broome County's system of care; partner with community organizations to promote understanding and acceptance; respond to connect individuals and community members with available resources that fit their needs; and encourage the support of community efforts to increase accessibility and inclusion.

Training and Education

- Presented to four groups including: Committees on Special Education (CSE), Resources and Advocacy for the Aging and Disabled (RAAD) via Zoom.
- Planned and organized the First Annual Integrated Behavioral Health Professional of the Year Award Breakfast (regrettably cancelled due to COVID-19).

Awareness

- Disseminated information/resources at St. Michael’s and St. Patrick’s Churches during community meals prior to COVID-19.
- Provided a financial contribution to the rebuilding of “Our Space” Park.
- In conjunction with County Executive, Jason Garnar and Jennifer O’Brien, Executive Director of the American Special Hockey Association (ASHA), facilitated a press conference at the Special Hockey Festival on January 9, 2020.



2020 by the Numbers:

BroomeINCLUDES provided navigation and linkages to 114 consumers in 2020 compared to 82 consumers in 2019, representing a 39% increase. [Demographic breakdown for 2020: 61% (70) females, 39% (44) males, and 3.5% (4) gender not specified.] The graph above depicts the breakout by type of service provider to which the consumer was referred in 2020.

To request assistance, visit the *BroomeINCLUDES* website: <https://broomeincludes.org/>.

Drug Free Communities

Drug Free Communities (DFC) is a federal grant program funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The purpose is to target youth and families with effective strategies to reduce overall substance use within the community. This is achieved through collaboration with community partners, education and awareness regarding substance use and addiction, and increasing protective factors throughout the community. Broome County's DFC coalition, the *Prevention Coalition of Broome County* (PCBC), represents twelve (12) sectors of the community comprising 46 members, each bringing a unique perspective on local prevention needs. Using the *Strategic Prevention Framework* model, informed with locally-gathered data from the biennial *Prevention Needs Assessment* (PNA) tool, the plans and implements prevention strategies and activities.



2020 Highlights:

As part of its collaboration efforts, the Prevention Coalition worked with community partners to provide prevention strategies and activities throughout the county. Pandemic restrictions changed the landscape of allowable activities as historically large gatherings with face-to-face interactions were prohibited. Some of its most notable accomplishments of 2020 including:

- The City of Binghamton implemented a *Social Host* ordinance in August 2020 to help prevent underage drinking and drug use. *Social Host* is designed to hold individual 'social hosts' responsible for hosting or allowing an event on private property where persons under age 21 possess or consume alcohol or other drugs, *regardless of who supplied the alcohol or drugs to the minors*. This initiative was a collaboration with Binghamton University's Campus and Community Coalition, Binghamton Police Department, and the Mayor's Office.
- Provided nearly 700 *Deterra Drug Deactivation Bags* and almost 300 *Lock Boxes* to community agencies to distribute to their clients. This initiative was aimed at removing or securing prescription medications at homes where there could potentially be risk of abuse. Removing unwanted and unused medications from homes is an important step in preventing medication misuse and abuse.
- The Coalition donated informative materials to accompany activities offered by local groups that supported families and provided entertainment, such as drive-in movie events during the summer and back-pack drives during the fall. The Coalition hosted its first online gaming tournament in October to increase youth engagement and provide an entertaining way for youth to see prevention messaging.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Broome County Mental Health Department (BCMHD) received funding from four New York State Agencies in 2020: Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS), Office of Mental Health (OMH), and the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Funding is distributed to not-for-profit community agencies that provide services through a contracting process. BCMHD maintains both a Performance and Contract Management and a Financial Division to facilitate this process.

The funding received by Broome County is depicted, by State Agency, in the pie chart below. Sixty percent of the funds are from OMH, 35% from OASAS, 4% from OPWDD, and approximately 1% from DCJS. In 2020, the Department contracted with 16 local agencies to provide 64 programs/services. Table 1 details the individual contract agencies and level of funding distributed by source.

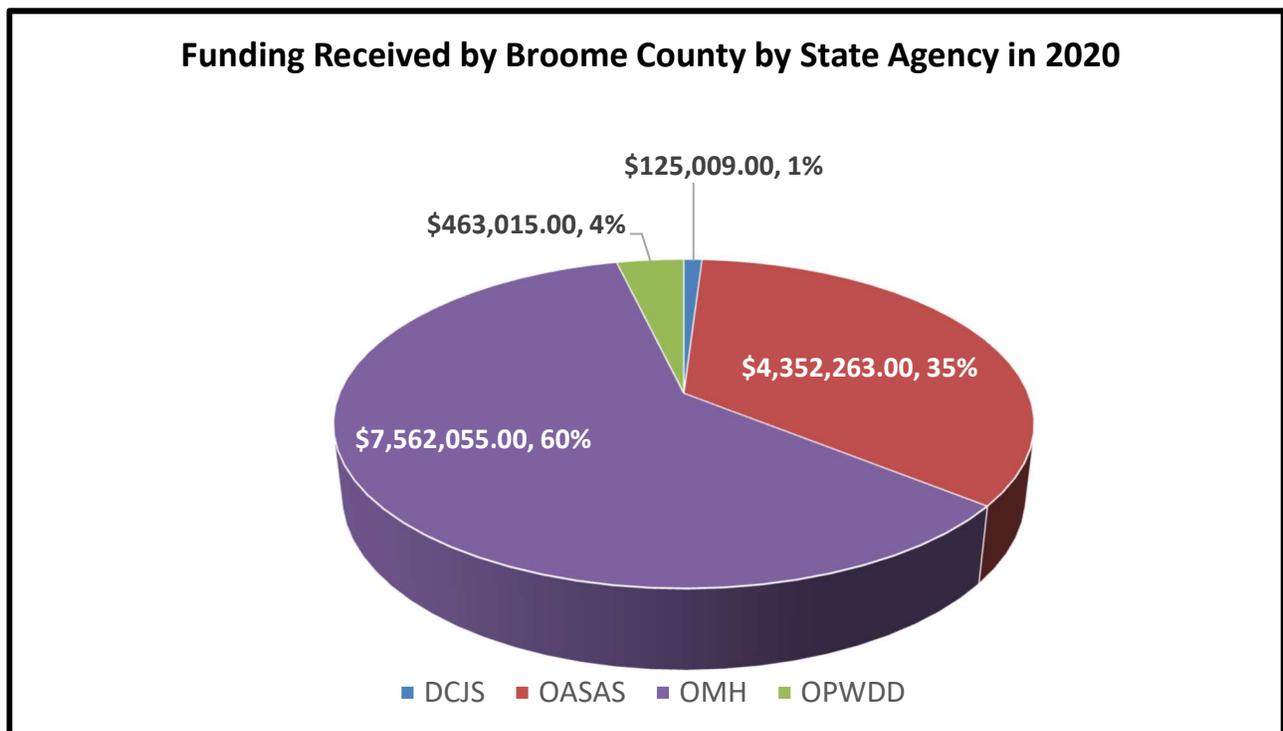


Table 1: Broome County Distribution of Funding by State Agency and Local Agency for 2020

Agency	State Aid				County Support
	DCJS	OASAS	OMH	OPWDD	
ACHIEVE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$437,641.00	\$94,198.00
Addiction Center of Broome County	\$0.00	\$356,960.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$61,847.00
Binghamton University Community Schools	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$148,986.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Broome-Tioga BOCES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$184,354.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Broome County Mental Health Department	\$0.00	\$28,445.00	\$890,708.00	\$25,374.00	\$0.00
Catholic Charities of Broome County	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,020,554.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Children's Home of Wyoming Conference	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$53,092.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Clear Path for Veterans	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$185,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Community Options	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$71,076.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fairview Recovery Services	\$0.00	\$1,776,434.00	\$72,041.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Family & Children's Counseling Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$359,435.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Helio Health	\$0.00	\$1,557,618.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Our Lady of Lourdes Memorial Hospital	\$0.00	\$382,806.00	\$47,084.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,531,741.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Southern Tier AIDS Program, Inc.	\$125,009.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
United Health Services Hospitals, Inc.	\$0.00	\$250,000.00	\$997,984.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTALS	\$125,009.00	\$4,352,263.00	\$7,562,055.00	\$463,015.00	\$156,045.00