

Matthew J. Samocki, Ed.D.

Director | Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Partnership

Dr. Matthew Samocki is director of the Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Partnership. The mission of the partnership is to collaborate with stakeholders to proactively tackle the mental health crisis as a community to help people obtain the best possible care. The vision of the partnership is to ensure that everyone in the Great Lakes Bay Region:

- Seeks mental health help without fear of stigma;
- Knows where to turn for help when struggling with a mental health issue;
- Receives prompt access to excellent mental health care.

Matt was formerly an administrator with the Central Michigan Science, Mathematics, Technology Center at Central Michigan University. Prior to that, he served as an assistant principal at H.H. Dow High School and was a teacher at Freeland High School.

Matt earned a bachelor's degree with a major in interdisciplinary social sciences and a minor in psychology, plus a master's degree in curriculum and teaching from Michigan State University. He earned his doctoral degree in educational leadership from Central Michigan University.

With a strong commitment to help people of all ages struggling with mental illness, Matt has been involved in a number of efforts related to addressing today's growing mental health crisis. He embraces the concept of collaborating with all stakeholders in order to make a positive impact on mental health in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Matt and his wife, Juliet, reside in Midland with their two daughters.



Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Partnership

Background

With unanimous support from the Board of Directors for the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance, the Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Partnership began in 2018 when it was agreed upon that there is a mental health crisis in our region. A key driver and funder of this initiative is the family and friends of Chad William Dunn who, as a result of mental illness, died by suicide on July 29, 2013. The initiatives' key supporters also include the Central Michigan University College of Medicine, University of Michigan Depression Center and The Dow Chemical Company Foundation.

Mission

Collaborate with stakeholders to proactively tackle the mental health crisis as a community to help people obtain the best possible care.

Vision

Ensure that everyone in the Great Lakes Bay Region:

- Knows where to turn for help when struggling with a mental health issue;
- Seeks help without fear of stigma;
- Receives prompt access to excellent care.

Key Messages

- The Great Lakes Bay Region is experiencing a mental health crisis
 - Mental health issues are escalating in our communities; we have neighbors, coworkers and families who are hurting and need our help
 - The impact is both broad and deep – affecting education, employment, overall health, social contributions, family members and friends
- There are deep-rooted stigmas associated with mental health
 - As a society, we often avoid conversations about mental health, which is an important aspect of overall health
 - Patients and family members sometimes avoid getting help because of misconceptions about mental health care
- Many people do not know where to turn for support when dealing with mental health issues
 - Cost and availability of care are deterrents to getting needed help
 - There is a serious lack of access to quality care and treatment
 - There is a disconnect related to mental health services and treatment among health care providers
- We are better together, tackling the mental health crisis as a community to help people obtain the best possible care
 - We have never tackled mental health at a regional level; it has been managed provider by provider
 - Gaps in care result in lost opportunities for patients to get needed help
 - We need unprecedented collaboration among stakeholders to make a real difference

Cascading Problems

- Individuals are hesitant to seek mental health services;
- If individuals seek services, they do not know where to find services;
- If individuals find services, they cannot always access those services;
- If individuals access services, they are not always receiving high quality care.

