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**NORTH COUNTRY  
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH  
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**Access to Services & Customer  
Service: 877-470-7130  
24 Hour Crisis Help Line:  
877-470-4668 TTY: 711**

North Country CMH receives its principal funding from the Michigan Department of Human and Health Services (MDHHS)

Serving Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Kalkaska, and Otsego Counties...



**Welcome to NCCMH Nicole Spires!**

*Written by*

*Nicole Spires, Contract Manager ([nspires@norcocmh.org](mailto:nspires@norcocmh.org))*



I would like to introduce myself. My name is Nicole Spires, I am the new Contract Manager here at North Country. I replaced Lani LaPorte who recently retired this past January. I am very excited to be working here at North Country.

A little background, I grew up in the Metro Detroit area and moved up-north about 23 years ago. But my absolute favorite place is the UP!

Do not hesitate to reach out and say hi 🙋 or if you have any questions. My email address is [nspires@norcocmh.org](mailto:nspires@norcocmh.org), that is the best way to reach me, or by phone: 231-439-1297.

**Reminders for Documentation**

*Kim Rappleyea, Chief Operating Officer ([krappleyea@norcocmh.org](mailto:krappleyea@norcocmh.org))*

1. **All Records are Legal Documents:** intentionally writing false information in a client record is a felony.
2. **Detail:** When you provide services to a recipient, you need to keep detailed records. These records should be thorough enough so that anyone reading them can understand exactly what happened and how it went during that service.
3. **Sign and Date:** After providing a service, make sure to sign and date the records. This shows that you were the one who did it and when it happened.
4. **Time Matters:** Some services have specific start and end times. If a service you provide is time-specific, you must note down the exact time you began and finished that service.

Keep clear, accurate, and complete records, sign them, and include the start and end times for specific services. It helps ensure accurate billing and quality care! And remember, *“If it wasn’t documented, it didn’t happen!”*



# Autism Acceptance Walk

## Sunday, April 28 @10AM

Veterans Memorial Park  
207 N Lake Street • Boyne City, MI



The **Autism Acceptance Walk** will be about a half mile in length. All individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, family, friends, and the community are invited to join together to walk in support of Autism Acceptance.

**DRAWING!** All participants will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of many great prizes. Must be present to win.



**\$10**  
Register by April 1, 2024 to receive a t-shirt  
On-site Registration @9AM

*Individuals who would like to participate but not receive a t-shirt may do so by donation*

Use the QR Code to register or contact Christine Dillon 231-347-9605 Ext 3606 or [cdillon@norcocmh.org](mailto:cdillon@norcocmh.org) for more information.



**NORTH COUNTRY**  
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

# PROVIDER QUARTERLY UPDATE - OFFICE OF RECIPIENT RIGHTS, HEALTH & SAFETY

## Severe Weather Awareness

*Linda Kleiber, Safety Specialist (lkleiber@norco cmh.org)*

Michigan's Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 17-23, 2024, with the Statewide Tornado Drill being conducted on March 20, 2024, at 1 p.m. We hope that communities and individuals across the state will use this as an opportunity to discuss severe weather threats and what to do when severe weather hits.

On average Michigan has 15 tornadoes per year. Tornadoes are known to develop rapidly, with little advanced warning. The average lead time for a tornado warning is 10 to 15 minutes and winds can reach over 200 mph, which is why Michigan residents are encouraged to prepare and make a plan before a tornado strikes.

### Terms:

**Tornado Watch:** Tornadoes are possible. When there is a Watch, move near enough to a shelter or sturdy building to be able to get inside quickly if there is a Warning or if you see signs of a tornado approaching. Remain alert for approaching storms. Watch the sky and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.

**Tornado Warning:** A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately.

**Supercell:** A system producing severe thunderstorms, featuring rotating winds sustained by a prolonged updraft that may result in hail or tornadoes.

### Before a Tornado:

- Identify safe areas.
- For buildings with long-span roofs or open space plans, or many occupants, such as schools, malls, ask the building manager to identify the best available refuge.
- Build an emergency kit and make a communications plan.
- Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts. If your community has sirens, become familiar with the warning tone.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information. Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado. In any emergency, always listen to the instructions given by local emergency management officials.

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## Severe Weather Awareness

Linda Kleiber, Safety Specialist ([lkleiber@norcoemh.org](mailto:lkleiber@norcoemh.org))

- Be alert to changing weather conditions. Look for approaching storms. Look for the following danger signs:
  - Dark, often greenish sky
  - Large hail
  - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
  - Loud roar, similar to a freight train.
  - If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

### During a Tornado:

- If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately! Most injuries associated with high winds are from flying debris, so remember to protect your head.
- If you are in school, nursing home, hospital, factory, shopping center, high-rise building then:
  - Go to a pre-designated area such as a safe room/designated location, basement, storm shelter or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of a smaller interior room, such as a closet or hallway, that is away from corners, windows, doors and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and cover your head and neck with your arms and cover your body as best you can e.g., with a heavy coat or blankets, pillows.
  - Do not open windows.

### After a Tornado:

- If you are trapped, do not move about or kick up dust. If possible, cover your mouth with a cloth or mask to avoid breathing dust. Try to send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting.
- Keep listening to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, and local authorities for updated information.
- Save your phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messaging or social media if possible.
- Watch out for debris and downed power lines.
- Stay out of damaged buildings and homes until local authorities indicate it is safe.
- Photograph the damage to your property in order to assist in filing an insurance claim.

### More Information/Additional Resources:

- FEMA Tornadoes: <https://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>
- FEMA Accessible: [Lifesaving Safety Tips PSA](#) (ASL Video)
- FEMA CDC Accessible: [Shelters and Evacuations During a Disaster](#) (ASL Video)

# Questions and Answers with ORR

Amanda Cordova ([acordova@norco cmh.org](mailto:acordova@norco cmh.org)) AND Brandy Marvin ([bmarvin@norco cmh.org](mailto:bmarvin@norco cmh.org))

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH THE ORR, BY AMANDA CORDOVA AND BRANDY MARVIN

**Q. The residents I work with swear with each other and in conversation with me. Can I use swear words in conversation with or in front of them?**

A. No, using swear words/foul language with or in front of a resident is considered a violation of the recipient's right to be treated with dignity and respect. As staff it is our responsibility to uphold Dignity and Respect, a right guaranteed to recipients under the Mental Health Code (MHC). Even if a recipient is using language that you might use outside of work, it does not open the door for you to use that same language.

**Q. Can residents trade their personal property with other clients and staff?**

A. Clients can trade their personal property with other clients, but not with staff! Clients often trade their personal property (cigarettes, pop, clothes) with other clients and as staff we can encourage them to keep their personal property, remind them of the natural process of trading ("If you trade this, it won't be yours anymore", etc.), but ultimately it is the resident's choice to trade their own belongings with other recipients.

Recipients trading with staff is NOT allowed! Even taking a cigarette or pop that a recipient offers you is disallowed; it can lead to a substantiation under the MHC as Abuse Class II- Exploitation. In AFC settings, it is also prohibited by licensing rules, which state that staff and members of their families are not allowed to accept or borrow money or valuables from a client, even with their consent.

**Q. I reported a recipient rights issue to my supervisor. Is that good enough?**

A. No! While reporting a recipient rights issue to your supervisor can be a good idea, it is not required. However, it is required it be reported to the ORR! Further, can you guarantee your supervisor reported the issue to the ORR? By only reporting to your supervisor, you risk the report not making it to the ORR and can face a violation of 'failure to report.' Further, if what you reported only to your supervisor is abuse or neglect, you could face an abuse or neglect substantiation as well.... Failing to properly report abuse and neglect is abuse/neglect.

**Q. Can staff take a recipient's personal cell phone away if the recipient's guardian asks them to do so?**

A. No, staff cannot follow a guardian's directive if it violates the law. The MHC states that a recipient's use of their personal property may not be limited or restricted unless otherwise approved by the Behavior Treatment Committee and specified within a Behavior Treatment Plan.

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## Questions and Answers with ORR

Amanda Cordova ([acordova@norcocmh.org](mailto:acordova@norcocmh.org)) AND Brandy Marvin ([bmarvin@norcocmh.org](mailto:bmarvin@norcocmh.org))

**Q. Is it okay for staff to talk to and update a former employee about recipients?**

A. No, this would be considered a violation of a recipient’s right to confidentiality under the MHC and HIPAA. Under no circumstance are employees allowed to share private information about recipients with unauthorized individuals.

**Q. A recipient’s Plan of Service (POS) indicates, “Home staff will assist for all personal care including toileting, bathing/showering and grooming daily” due to mobility and incontinence issues. Documentation shows staff did not assist the recipient with a shower for two consecutive days. Is this a rights violation?**

A. A recipient’s Plan of Service specifies who/how/manner services will be provided. A failure to follow the POS and other associated written plans (i.e. care plans, BTP, etc.) will result in a violation of a recipient’s right to receive Services Suited to their Condition or Neglect if the situation causes or contributes to “serious or nonserious harm” (pain, infection, rash, disfigurement/impairment of bodily functions).

**Q. Can a staff member search a recipient’s bedroom and seize property at any time?**

A. A recipient’s property or living area may not be searched by a provider unless authorized by a recipient’s POS or unless there is reasonable cause to believe that the recipient is in possession of contraband (dangerous items).

The following conditions apply to all searches:

1. The search must occur in the presence of a witness.
2. The recipient must be given the choice to be present during the search.
3. The circumstances surrounding the search, names of individuals performing/witnessing the search, the result of the search, and a description of property seized must be clearly documented.

Residential or Service Sites subject to site reviews are requested to please create a signature sheet (example below) to record that staff have read and will comply with the material presented in the Quarterly Recipient Rights and Safety pages of this bulletin. This bulletin replaces annual updates of Environmental Emergencies and Recipient Rights. Sign off sheets will be monitored during annual site visits. We suggest printing & posting the Quarterly Recipient Rights and Safety pages of this bulletin on site, as well as reviewing them during staff meetings.

**March 2024**

NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
Mary Smith	<i>Mary Smith</i>	3/11/2024
Ben Hur	<i>Ben Hur</i>	3/11/2024

*Environmental Emergencies & Recipient Rights*

RECIPIENT RIGHTS AND SAFETY QUARTERLY UPDATE – PLEASE PRINT AND POST