

**ONTARIO COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

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**MENTAL HEALTH CENTER**

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Director of Community Services**

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**Ontario County  
Children and Youth Single Point of Access (SPOA)**

**WHAT SPOA IS:**

The Single Point of Access (SPOA) is a process initiated by the New York State Office of Mental Health. This initiative is designed to identify and assess children and youth who have significant mental health, behavioral, and related needs, and to match these needs to existing community services. Some of these children/youth may be at risk of out-of-home placement, or may be ready for discharge from a hospital or residential treatment setting. For others, there may be difficult and complex mental health needs and family problems that benefit from the intervention of more than one agency.

**WHAT SPOA DOES:**

SPOA brings together several service providers that can partner with a child's family to discuss the child's current needs. Service providers and the parents or guardians collaborate on a plan to identify appropriate services and refer the child/family to those services that can best meet their needs. By involving community providers from a range of different services, the child's and family's needs can be addressed in a comprehensive, streamlined and timely manner.

**WHO IS INVOLVED:**

A group of local professionals forms a SPOA Committee that meets regularly to discuss referrals and to develop recommendations and referrals. The parents or guardians of the particular child under consideration are also members of this Committee/Team. The core members of the SPOA Committee in Ontario County include:

Parent or Guardian of the Youth or Child  
SPOA Coordinator  
Ontario Co. Mental Health Clinic Supervising Social Worker  
Lakeview Health Services Case Managers  
Ontario Co. Dept. of Social Services Representative  
Ontario County Probation Dept. Representative  
Parent/Family Consultant from the Finger Lakes Parent Network  
Pathways Home and Community Based Program Waiver Representative  
Pathways Lake Breeze Community Residence Representative  
Ontario County Youth Bureau Representative  
Cayuga Centers Representative

Following an assessment of the child's needs, the SPOA Committee holds a meeting to discuss the child/youth. With the approval of the family, additional providers or individuals may be invited to attend the meeting. These may include school personnel, mental health therapist, probation officer or others. The parent/guardian is also welcome to invite additional professionals or personal supports as desired. As with any collaborative meeting, respect for client confidentiality will be given the utmost priority.

**SPOA MEETING:**

At the meeting, the Referral Source and/or the SPOA Coordinator will provide a five to ten

minute executive summary of the child/family needs, with input from the family members. The information presented will be as inclusive as is necessary to provide adequate information to the Committee.

The Committee members will be expected to provide input and recommendations regarding the child. These recommendations may pertain to specific services provided by one of the agencies represented, or to other services in the community.

Again, the confidentiality of the client and family is a primary consideration, and we acknowledge the need to discuss only the information pertaining to the presenting situation.

Within approximately ten days of the meeting, the family and referral source will receive a written summary, including recommendations and action items.

SPOA meetings are generally held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month, beginning at 8:45 a.m. at the Ontario County Mental Health Center. The meetings are scheduled in 45-minute intervals for each child/youth to be discussed.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE:**

Any Ontario County youth or child between the ages of 5-18 (or 21 if still in school) with significant mental health, behavioral or other related concerns would be appropriate for a SPOA referral.

**REFERRAL PROCESS:**

- Any interested professional involved with or concerned about a child may make a referral with parental or legal guardian consent. A parent/guardian may also directly refer their child. In addition to the SPOA Universal Referral Form, there are 2 Authorization/Consent Forms in the referral packet that need to be signed by the parent/guardian, *and by the youth if age 12 or older*.  
-SPOA authorization (single page)  
-SPOA Universal Referral Authorization for Release of Information (omh 270) which is a release for referral source and may be copied for authorizing information from school district, primary care physician, and other treatment providers as needed (2 pages).

The referral packet will be reviewed within five working days of receipt and the family will be promptly contacted for an initial assessment appointment. Further details about the SPOA process will be discussed with the family. The assessment will be completed within approximately three weeks of the initial interview(s), and the SPOA meeting will then be scheduled.

Questions can be directed to the SPOA Coordinator, Kris Sweeney, at 585-393-2993. Referral Packets (including consent forms) can be forwarded by fax or by mail to:

Kris Sweeney LCSW-R, ACSW  
Coordinator, Ontario County Children and Youth SPOA/CCS  
3019 County Complex Drive  
Canandaigua, NY 14424  
585-393-2993 office • 585-396-4993 fax  
[krisanne.sweeney@co.ontario.ny.us](mailto:krisanne.sweeney@co.ontario.ny.us)

**Please include any pertinent information if available (i.e. copies of psychological evaluations, mental health assessments, hospital discharge summaries, school records, etc.) This information is vital to the timely and accurate completion of the SPOA assessment.**