

Broome County Mental Health Department

Understanding Our Role as the Local Governmental Unit

Health and Human Services Committee Overview

8/11/2026

Elizabeth Warneck, LCSW-R

Commissioner of Community Mental Health Services

Director of Community Services

Broome County Mental Health Department as Local Governmental Unit (LGU)

Under Article 41 of New York State Mental Hygiene Law, Broome County is responsible for establishing a Local Governmental Unit to plan for and oversee local services across three disability areas:

Mental Health
OMH

Substance Use
Disorder
OASAS

Intellectual and
Developmental
Disabilities
OPWDD

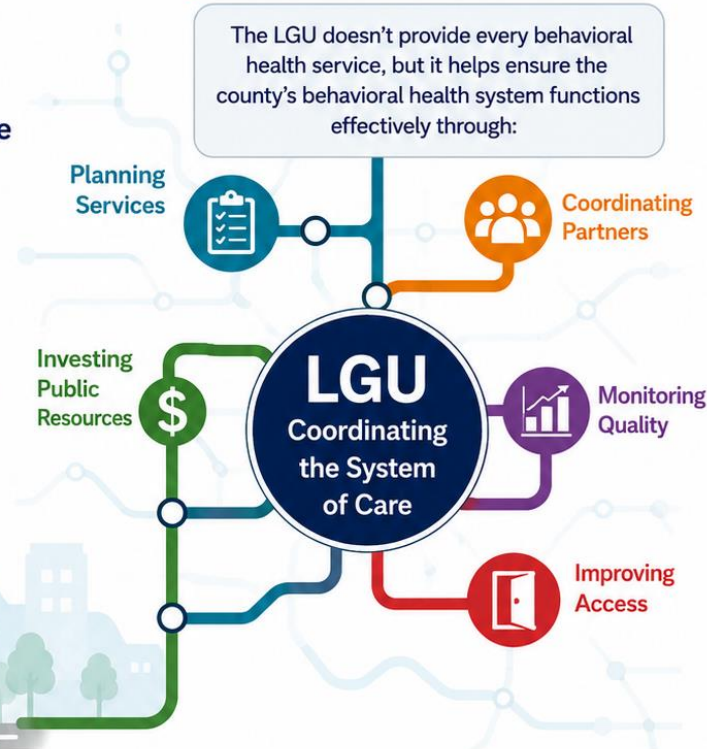
- ▶ One LGU- three disability systems
- ▶ The Director of Community Services (DCS) serves as the chief executive officer of the LGU
- ▶ In Broome County, the Commissioner of Mental Health serves in this role

Broome County's Local Governmental Unit (LGU)

The County's Behavioral Health Authority

The LGU is established under Article 41 of the New York State Mental Hygiene Law.

Think of the LGU like a public transportation authority. The LGU doesn't drive every bus, but it plans routes, coordinates providers, invests public resources, monitors performance, and helps ensure the entire transportation system works for the community.



The LGU provides leadership across three behavioral health disability systems:



Mental Health (OMH)

Services and supports for individuals experiencing mental illness.



Substance Use Disorder (OASAS)

Prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction services.



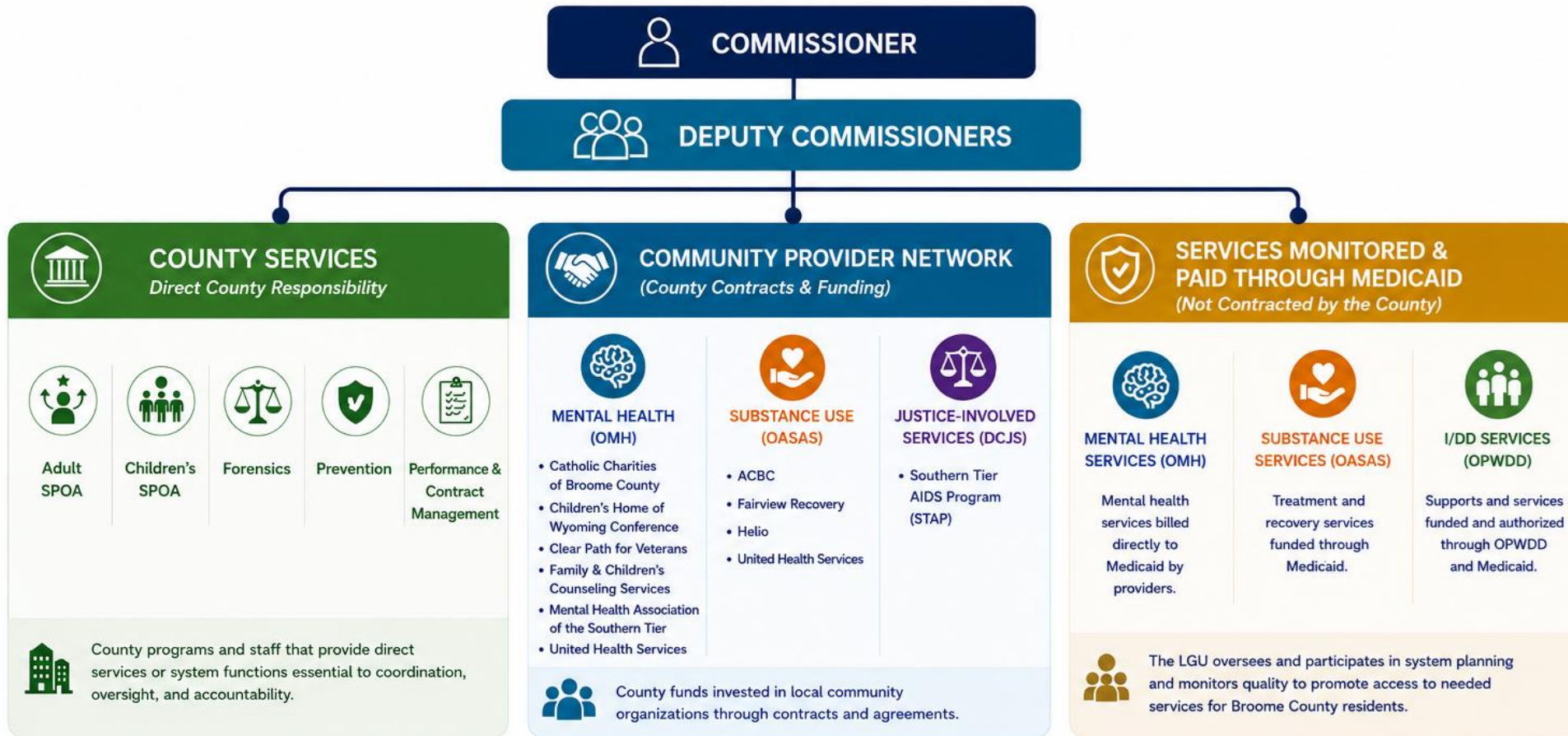
Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

Supports and services for people with developmental disabilities across the lifespan.

Through planning, partnership, and oversight, the LGU helps ensure that **the right services are available, accessible, and effective** for every resident.

The LGU Oversees Broome County's Behavioral Health System of Care

— One system. Many partners. Stronger outcomes for our community. —



~\$45 MILLION

TOTAL BEHAVIORAL
SYSTEM OF CARE



Federal, State, County, and Medicaid dollars working together to build a strong, connected system that supports individuals and families across Broome County.

County Services (Direct County Responsibility)

County programs that coordinate, oversee, and deliver essential behavioral health functions.



These programs are direct county responsibilities. The staff who perform this work are contractual employees embedded within the Department. They represent Broome County and carry out the Department's mission, policies, and statutory responsibilities on behalf of the LGU.



Adult SPOA

Coordinates access to and oversight of intensive adult behavioral health services and supports.



Children's SPOA

Coordinates access to and oversight of intensive children's behavioral health services and supports.



Forensics

Supports individuals involved with the behavioral health and justice systems.



Prevention

Strengthens community wellness and reduces risk through suicide prevention and substance use prevention, education, outreach, and early intervention.



Performance & Contract Management

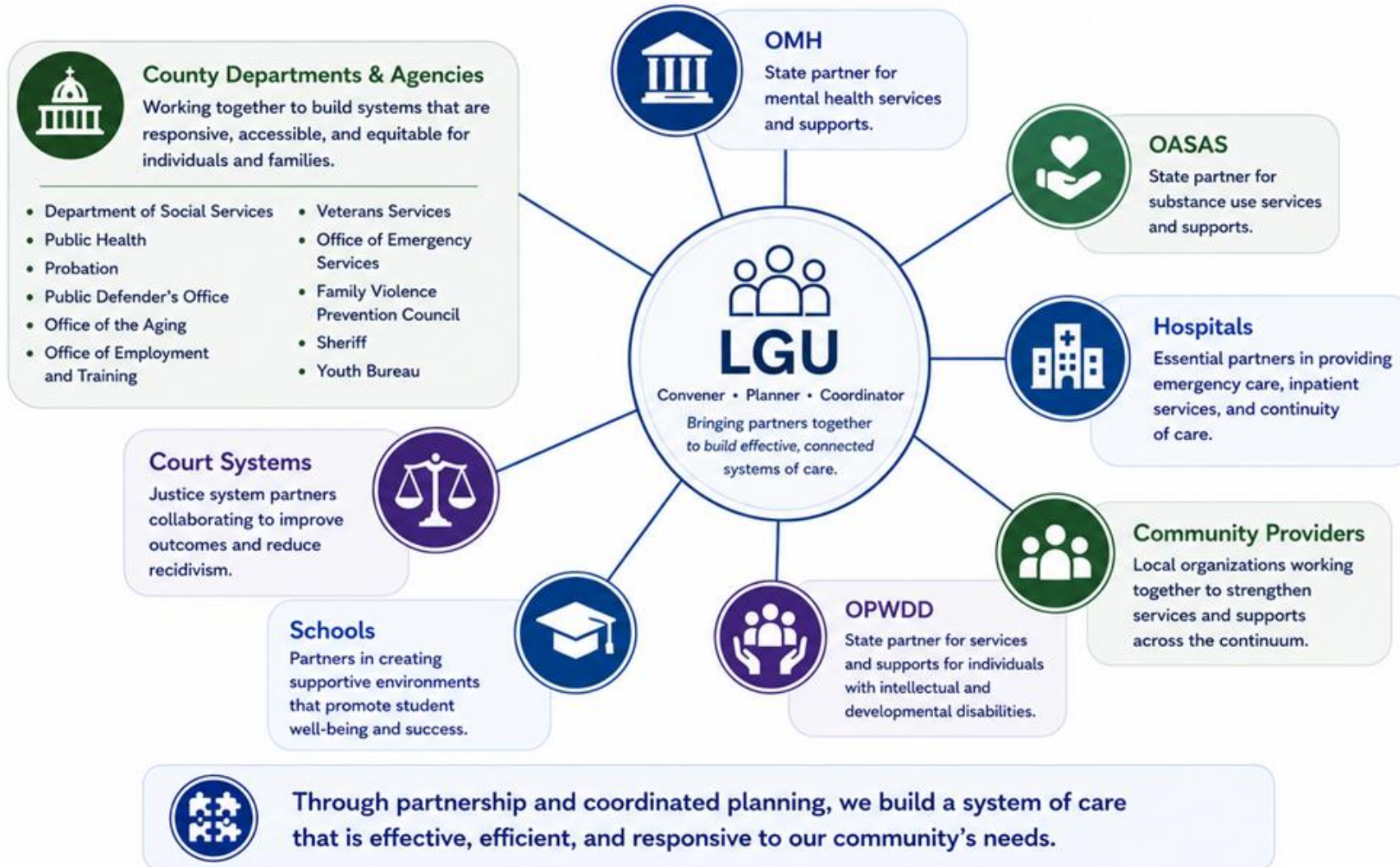
Oversees contracts, monitors performance, ensures quality, and manages data for accountability.



Together, these services ensure coordination, oversight, and accountability of the county's most critical behavioral health functions and resources.

Building a Strong, Responsive System Together

The LGU convenes partners, aligns resources, and strengthens systems to improve behavioral health outcomes across Broome County.



Community Engagement Guides Our Work

— We listen to our community and use that input to plan, prioritize, and improve our behavioral health system. —



Community involvement is essential.

We actively seek the participation of peers and community members on the Community Services Board (CSB) and its subcommittees. Their lived experience and perspective help ensure our system is responsive, inclusive, and grounded in the needs of Broome County.



Mental Health & Substance Use Subcommittee

Combined to reflect overlapping providers, high rates of co-occurring disorders, and the need for integrative, seamless treatment.

Focus areas: prevention, early intervention, treatment, recovery, and system integration.



Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee

Focuses on services and supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the lifespan, including inclusion, access, and quality of life.



The result:

A stronger, more responsive system that better meets the needs of Broome County.



Local Services Plan (Mental Hygiene Law §41.03)

A comprehensive plan required under Mental Hygiene Law. Prepared every three years with community input. It sets local priorities and strategies that guide:

- ✓ The work of the CSB and its subcommittees
- ✓ Planning and decision-making across the Department (LGU)
- ✓ How resources are invested to address identified needs



Ongoing Feedback Keeps Us Focused

We continuously seek input from peers, providers, families, and community partners to monitor progress, adapt to emerging needs, and strengthen our system of care.

By engaging the community and using their input to guide our work, we build a behavioral health system that works for everyone.

From Planning to Action

Local priorities translated into system-level action

Local Services Plan Priorities:

Housing

Crisis
Services

Workforce

Cross-
Systems
Services

Examples of Current System Initiatives:

Enhanced Mobile Crisis

Strengthening the local crisis response continuum

School Based Mental Health Services

Expanding access to treatment in schools

Mental Health Court & Navigation

Improving connections between behavioral health and justice systems

Common Grounds

Development of a community wellness and recovery center

Children Boarding in Emergency Departments

Cross-system coordination to address prolonged pediatric behavioral health boarding

Get Involved

Help shape Broome County's behavioral health system of care

Community Services
Board

Legislative Appointment
Available

We currently have an opening for a member of the Broome County Legislature to serve on the Community Services Board

Learn firsthand about local needs, services, system challenges and emerging priorities

Meetings:

Last Wednesday of
even-numbered
months

Time:

12:00-1:30pm

Location:

Broome County
Library (in-person)