

# **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

## **DOWNERS GROVE-WOODRIDGE-LISLE**

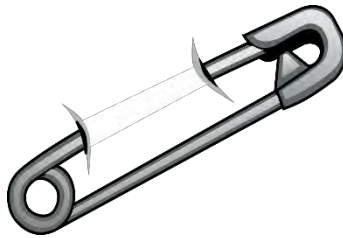
### **WOULD A 708 MENTAL HEALTH BOARD IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN OUR COMMUNITY?**

2022

*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages.*

This project is sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Downers Grove-Woodridge-Lisle.

Mental Health Study Committee Members: Donna Prepejchal, Marianne Hunnicutt, Drew Bolda, Nancy Svoda (Board Liaison)



A Community Mental Health Board is a little thing that can make a big difference. The highlights are prevention and planning as well as flexibility, local control, coordination, and community involvement.

In 1984 I attended a DuPage County Health Department informational series about mental illness. The presenters, Linda Richman and Ieva Pipyne, called me (behind my back of course), “the good sibling,” because everyone else was a parent looking for services for their children diagnosed with mental illnesses. **We are all good siblings, because who among us does not have a family member with substance abuse issues or a diagnosis of a mental illness or a developmental disability.**

Initially I was skeptical about the value of a 708 Mental Health Board. I found it a confusing concept. The League of Women Voters has taught me to first understand an issue by reading and talking to others and then to take action to advance my convictions. My purpose in initiating this local study is to help others understand the mechanics of a 708 Board and give others a reason to support the establishment of 708 Boards in all 9 DuPage County Townships.

Donna Prepejchal, Chairperson of the Mental Health Study Committee

#### **LWVIL position**

**Local Leagues can take action under the state position which supports the establishment of mental health authorities (337, 533, 708 and the recent EMHSP’s in the City of Chicago). All these boards are established by referenda. With shrinking state dollars and possible Block grants on the Federal Level, local tax money for mental health services will be increasingly important.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	3
<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	3
<b>DEFINITIONS</b> .....	4
<b>WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF MENTAL HEALTH BOARDS?</b> .....	5
<b>HOW DO MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY?</b> .....	5
<b>WHAT IS THE COST OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE TO OUR COMMUNITY?</b> .....	7
<b>WHAT IS A COMMUNITY 708 MENTAL HEALTH BOARD AUTHORIZED TO DO?</b> .....	7
<b>HOW IS A MENTAL HEALTH BOARD SELECTED?</b> .....	8
<b>HOW IS IT DETERMINED WHAT TO FUND? (405 ILCS 20/3a)</b> .....	8
<b>HOW IS A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD FUNDED?</b> .....	9
<b>WHAT WOULD BE THE COST TO TAXPAYERS?</b> .....	10
<b>WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO SET UP A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD?</b> .....	10
<b>WHY SHOULD A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD BE A TOWNSHIP RESPONSIBILITY?</b> .....	11
<b>WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD MAKE?</b> .....	12
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	14
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	16

## **SUMMARY**

The League of Women Voters Downers Grove-Woodridge-Lisle undertook a study to determine if establishing a mental health board by referendum could aid in the prevention of and care for the developmentally disabled, mentally ill, and those with addiction problems in our community.

Data was obtained by gathering demographic and financial information from government agencies and other leading professional organizations, books, and pertinent newspaper and web articles.

The goal of a community mental health board is to develop a comprehensive local mental health plan in collaboration with local providers to ensure that preventive and therapeutic programs are accessible for all residents in the community.

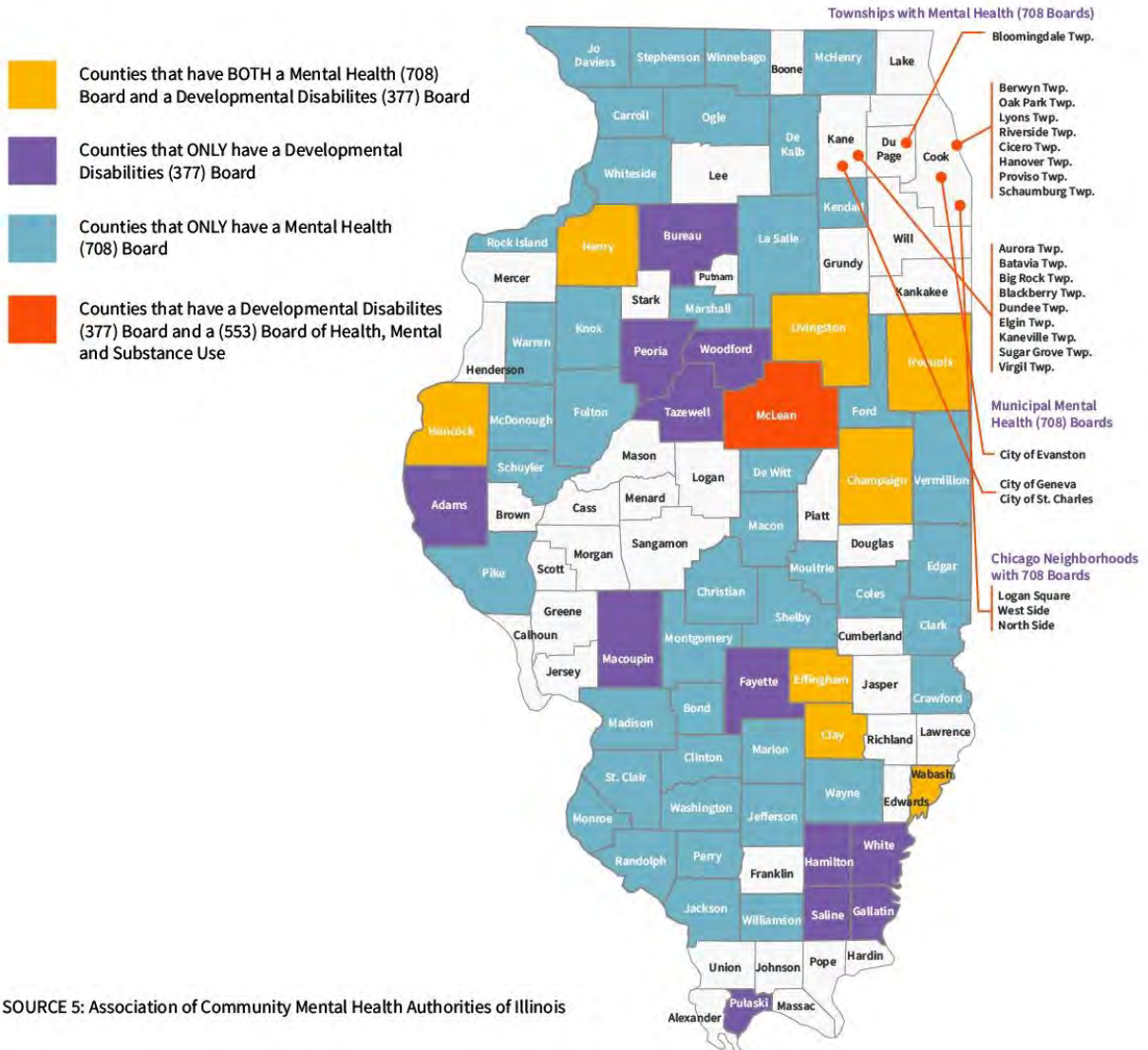
Our research demonstrates that mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance abuse affect a significant number of people in our community. A key role of 708 Community Mental Health Boards is to contribute holistic planning and strategies that support the improvement of mental health services in our community.

## **METHODOLOGY**

All committee members read LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEMS OVERVIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS, Lisle Township 2021 and WOULD A 708 MENTAL HEALTH BOARD IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP?, LWV Roselle-Bloomingtondale May 2015. We used the LWV Roselle-Bloomingtondale report as a guide for our report. The goal was to make it shorter so that more people would read it, update statistics, and concentrate on the townships in which we live. Due to the Pandemic we limited face-to-face meetings. Donna Prepejchal mailed a questionnaire to 14 service providers. Six questionnaires were returned via USPS or email.

## DEFINITIONS

From the Association of Community Mental Health Authorities of Illinois



SOURCE 5: Association of Community Mental Health Authorities of Illinois

“708 Board” or Community Mental Health Board is established by a community, municipality, or township for the purposes of planning and funding mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services.

“377 Board” or Board for the Care and Treatment of Persons with Developmental Disabilities is established on a county-wide basis to provide services to the developmentally disabled and their families.

“553 Boards” or Public Health Departments, in some areas, manage mental health care.

## WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF MENTAL HEALTH BOARDS?

In 1963 Congress passed the Community Mental Health Act (CMHA, Public Law 88-164, 1963). One of the goals of this act was to allow those receiving treatment for mental illness to be treated in their homes and communities rather than in large institutions. While Congress initiated this change, complete funding to accomplish the establishment of local mental health programs was not included in the act.

In response to this funding problem, Illinois legislators enacted Illinois House Rule 708 (ILHR708), which allows communities to seek funding for local mental health programs via referendum in their communities. If the referendum is passed authorizing the levy, then per ILHR 708 each community must establish a mental health board comprised of community members to administer the funds received.

The laws governing the administration and scope of ILHR 708 mental health boards are outlined in the Illinois Compiled Statutes (405 ILCS 20/) Community Mental Health Act (ILLINOIS COMPILED STATUTES, 1967). These statutes cover all aspects of setting up, funding and organizing a local 708 board.

## HOW DO MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY?

**According to the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH), 20.6% or one in five U.S. Adults live with a mental illness** The NIMH defines mental illness as a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder that can vary in impact, ranging from no impairment to mild, moderate, and even severe impairment. Serious mental illness, a subset of mental illness characterized as a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder resulting in serious functional impairment, substantially interfering with one or more major life activities, was experienced by 5.2% of the adult population in 2019.

(<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>, September 2021) Mental illnesses are, according to NAMI, “brain disorders that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.”

(<https://namidupage.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions/> accessed November 2021)

Mental health boards address substance abuse. In 2020, there were more than 92,000 overdose deaths in the United States, including 70,000 opioid overdoses. These numbers are both all-time highs since tracking began. Also, that total is greater than the number of traffic fatalities (~38,000) and suicide deaths (~50,000) combined.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm> accessed September 2021)

Similarly, the DuPage County Coroner reported that 112 DuPage residents died of a drug overdose in 2020, the highest number on record.

([https://www.dupageco.org/Coroner/Coroner\\_News/2020/63300/](https://www.dupageco.org/Coroner/Coroner_News/2020/63300/) accessed September 2021)

"Over the past two decades, there have been significant improvements in the field of substance use disorder treatment. However, addiction remains a major public health problem that we have to confront by supporting our communities and providers who work on the front lines." (personal communication, September 23, 2021 Jason Florin, Human Services Program Chair, College of DuPage)

Mental health boards also target developmental disability. According to the CDC, developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. About one in six children in the U.S. (study period 2009-2017) have one or more developmental disabilities or other developmental delays. Examples of developmental disabilities include: ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, intellectual disability, learning disability, vision impairment, and other developmental delays. (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/facts.html> accessed September 2021)

After age 21, persons with autism and other developmentally disabled requiring additional services are eligible for state programs. Unfortunately, there is a significant wait for these programs. The waiting list is called the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) list. As of May 10, 2021 DuPage County had 4,286 residents eligible for PUNS and only 1,696 active. Lisle Township had 533 eligible with 222 actively served. ([https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27897/documents/DD%20Reports/PUNS/PUNS\\_SummarybyCountyandTownship.pdf](https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27897/documents/DD%20Reports/PUNS/PUNS_SummarybyCountyandTownship.pdf) accessed September 2021)

In a December 4, 2020 letter to the supervisor of Milton Township, Kimberly R. Zoeller, President and CEO of Ray Graham Associates, Lisle, Illinois, pointed out,

"A recent class action lawsuit against the state for failure to meet the needs of persons with I/DD resulted in what is commonly referred to as the Ligas Consent Decree. The judge that oversees the case has found the state of Illinois to be out of compliance for multiple consecutive years. A rate study conducted at the request of the court has found that \$1.3 billion needs to be invested in the state's developmental disability system by the year 2024 to simply ensure adequacy and to restructure some of the most archaic services components. This investment increases to \$2.7 billion by 2026." (personal communication, September, 2021)

## WHAT IS THE COST OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE TO OUR COMMUNITY?

Thomas Insel, Director of the National Institute of Mental Health 2002-2015, is quoted in USA Today, May 12, 2014,

“The bulk of the cost to society stems from disability payments and lost productivity. That total doesn't include caregivers' lost earnings or the tax dollars spent to build prisons. These losses are especially tragic because of growing evidence that early intervention can prevent mentally ill people from deteriorating; halting what once seemed like an inevitable decline. The way we pay for mental health today is the most expensive way possible. We don't provide support early, so we end up paying for lifelong support.”

## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY 708 MENTAL HEALTH BOARD AUTHORIZED TO DO?

Illinois statute, 405 ILLINOIS COMPILED STATUTES for Mental Health Authorities May, 2006, (405 ILCS) sets forth the rules for addressing mental health support in Illinois including the establishment of community mental health boards. Under the statute, community mental health boards are not service providers. Their key role is strategy and planning, allocation of funds and coordinators and evaluators who provide information referrals and bring together agencies and social workers to work on projects for the whole community.

In order to meet the needs of those eligible to receive mental health services, the 708 board has broad authority to act. Some of those powers are as follows:

“.....in consultation with and being advised by the Department of Human Services, shall have the power to contract repair, operate, maintain and regulate community mental health facilities to **provide mental health services as defined by the local mental health board**, including services for persons with a developmental disability or substance use disorder, for residents thereof and/or to contract therefore **with any private or public entity which provides such services.” (405ILCS20-2)**

In addition, once the mental health board is formed it must prepare a three year plan. The statute requires the board should “hold meeting at least quarterly, review and evaluation of community mental health, services and facilities and a yearly written plan for a program of community mental health services, publishing, the annual budget and report within 120 days of the fiscal year end” (405/ILC20/3e). **In short, the board is to be both responsive to the**



**community and involve the community to take action by providing information.** The Statutes allow Community Mental Health boards to use the funds in the ways deemed most effective by Board Members with review by the State and local governing authority.

This flexibility allows Community Mental health boards to offset in a variety of ways the declining revenues from Federal and State sources. Besides partially supplementing some of the cuts in revenue, involvement by local community members can focus efforts on the areas of greatest local concern and stabilize nonprofit providers with predictable support. Since the members of the board live in the community, they understand firsthand local needs and the organizations working to ameliorate those needs.

### **HOW IS A MENTAL HEALTH BOARD SELECTED?**

Board members are appointed by the chairperson who is the head of the governing body. To be a member of the board, you must be a resident of the area covered. Board members are to be representative of “interested groups of the community such as local health planning agencies, hospital boards, lay associations concerned with mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse, as well as the general public.” However, “no member” can be an “employee or any other individual receiving compensation from any facility or service operating under contract to the board.”

As outlined in the statutes, 708 board members have significant responsibilities and latitude. By statute (405 ILCS 20/3a) boards consist of 7 members with the option of appointing 2 additional members. “If a successful referendum is held...., all members shall be appointed within 60 days of the referendum.”

### **HOW IS IT DETERMINED WHAT TO FUND? (405 ILCS 20/3a)**

After an annual plan is completed, it is expected the board will consult with appropriate private and public health agencies in the development of local plans for the most efficient delivery of mental health, developmental disabilities and substance use disorder services. Using the annual plan, consultations, review of the governing body and public meetings, the board has the authority to review and respond to all comments and applications for funds and ultimately, determines what is to be funded.

The Berwyn Township 708 Community Mental Health Board website (Berwyn Township Mental Health Board Funding Criteria, Nov 2021) succinctly lists the requirements for funding in their district. Following is a list of the criteria from their website:

“Threshold criteria to Qualify for Funding by the Berwyn Township Community Mental Health Board

1. Your agency must be a direct service provider.
2. Your agency shall serve Berwyn and Berwyn Township residents without limitation. Funding by the Berwyn Township 708 Community Mental Health Board shall be used to support services provided for Berwyn Residents.
3. All Berwyn residents must have equal access to your services including services associated with emergency situations.
4. The board shall not duplicate funding provided by other taxing bodies for services. Co-funding of services is permitted to supplement programs which are not fully funded by funding from other taxing bodies or other revenue sources.
5. Your staff must include trained and credentialed professionals possessing the skill and the tools to be able to assess and determine the needs of individuals .....
6. You must be a bona fide 501 (c) 3 organization or other not for profit organization defined and qualified under the United States Tax Code and provide copies of related Internal Revenue Service documentation establishing such status.”

In addition, the board’s decisions are reviewed by the governing body who appoints them as well as other state agencies. Since the mental health plan, budget and meetings are public the community can comment and participate in all decisions. Other Mental Health Boards, including Oak Park and Hanover Park, have similar criteria.

**HOW IS A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD FUNDED?**

Once a referendum has been approved by the voters of the governing body, a levy for the community mental health board is included in the property tax assessment. The maximum amount of money the board can levy per the statute is 0.15%. Typically, this levy is the primary funding mechanism, however, in addition to the levy, several other options are available for funding. They include gifts and grants from private sources and other federal, state and local funds consistent with the board’s mission. In addition the board may organize a “not for profit corporation for the purpose of raising money to be distributed by the board” (405 ILCS20/3e) for providing services.

## WHAT WOULD BE THE COST TO TAXPAYERS?

The maximum amount that could be levied is 0.15% of the assessed value of your property. Assessed Value is generally 1/3 the amount of the fair market value of a home. You can find the Net Taxable Value of your home on your tax bill.

The amount that is levied is not the maximum. Bloomingdale Township in 2020 was 0.0214%.

### Sample Cost for Homeowner at rate of 0.0214%

HOME VALUE	\$148,000	\$300,000
ASSESSED VALUE	\$49,333.33	\$100,000.00
ADDITIONAL TAX	\$10.56	\$21.40

### Sample Cost for Homeowner at rate of 0.05%

HOME VALUE	\$148,000	\$300,000
ASSESSED VALUE	\$49,333.33	\$100,000.00
ADDITIONAL TAX	\$24.67	\$50.00

### Sample Cost for Homeowner at rate of 0.15%

HOME VALUE	\$148,000	\$300,000
ASSESSED VALUE	\$49,333.33	\$100,000.00
ADDITIONAL TAX	\$74.00	\$150.00

**TO AVOID CONFUSION, 100%=1, 1%=0.01, 0.15%=0.0015.**

The appraised value of your house is a public record. [DuPage County IL - Property Lookup Page](#)

## WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO SET UP A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD?

To set up a community mental health board, you need the approval of the community. This approval is given by registered voters. The process begins by getting signatures representing "at least 10% of the total votes cast for the office which received the greatest total number of votes at the last preceding general governmental unit election requesting the establishment and maintenance of such community mental health facilities and services." (405ILCS 20/6 (from Ch. 01 ½, par. 306)

In Lisle Township, the April election of 2021 determines the number of signatures required. Fourteen thousand, sixty (14,060) ballots were counted in the 2021 election for Lisle

Township so a minimum of one thousand four hundred six (1,406) signatures are needed to put a referendum on the ballot. In Downers Grove Township, the April 2021 election determines the number of signatures required. Fifteen thousand, seven hundred twenty eight (15,728) ballots were counted in the 2021 election for Downers Grove Township so a minimum of one thousand five hundred seventy three (1,573) signatures are needed to put a referendum on the ballot.

“When the petition provided for in Section 6 is presented to the clerk of the governmental unit requesting the establishment and maintenance of such mental health facilities” a referendum is put on the ballots and the voters decide. The proposition shall be in substantially the following form.

Shall (Lisle Township / Downers Grove Township) establish and maintain community mental health facilities and services including facilities and services for the person with a developmental disability or a substance use disorder and levy therefore an annual tax of not to exceed .15%.

Yes No. (405/ILCS 20/7 (from Ch. 9 ½, par. 307) “If the measure receives a majority of votes in that election, a community mental health board is established.”

### **WHY SHOULD A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD BE A TOWNSHIP RESPONSIBILITY?**

The Illinois Constitution outlines what services a Township Government can provide. It states a Community Mental Health Board is an option “If a township is not included in a mental health district organized under the Community Mental Health Act, the electors may authorize the

board of trustees to provide mental health services, including services for the alcoholic, the drug addicted, and the intellectually disabled, for residents of the township.” (Illinois General Assembly TOWNSHIPS (60 ILCS 1/ Sec. 30-145)

Legal authority is granted to Townships to set up a mental health board and other programs to enrich community life. Among the findings of those studying our communities is, “Resilient communities have robust social networks and health systems that support recovery after adversity. They are prepared to take deliberate, collective action in the face of an incident and have developed material, physical, social, and psychological resources that function as buffers to the negative effects of these incidents and help protect people’s health. Social connectedness is integral to a resilient community’s ability to marshal resources, communicate with residents, and plan for infrastructure and human recovery.”

(Community Resilience, pdf at [www.phe.gov/abc](http://www.phe.gov/abc) accessed on 11-12-21). Community mental health programs seek to build that resiliency in the communities they serve.

DuPage County does not have a Mental Health Board. The DuPage County Health Department has never coordinated all mental health services in the county. It provides some services with a focus on residents with Medicaid and Medicare.

### **WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD MAKE?**

“As the Oak Park and Hanover Mental Health boards demonstrate, the best outcomes are outgrowths of citizens working together seeking solutions to common problems. A mental health board cannot work without dedicated mental health professionals, effective nonprofit organizations or county, state and federal programs, but it can focus and coordinate those professionals and programs for the best outcomes for the community. As stated by many of the experts we interviewed, community based treatment is the most ethical and cost effective because it increases productivity and helps people get jobs...

With limited funding, the Oak Park and Hanover Township mental health boards profoundly affect the lives of numerous citizens by encouraging and making available treatment to all in the community and sponsoring preventive care to ward off future problems. Fortunately,

DuPage County ... has access to those professionals and organizations.” LWV Roselle Bloomingdale 2015.

Beyond making treatment available, a community based approach can have unexpected positive consequences. Social activist Ben Lowe observes, “As we build relationships with folks, we’ll probably be surprised by how much we can relate to or affirm in each other”. (Lowe B, 2014 p.52). In this interaction, the community grows stronger.

Of course, the drawback of a community mental health board is that it asks people to “pay more” on a property tax already deemed too high by many in the community. It is easy in prosperous communities to overlook those in need and put personal goals and obligations above community. “Healthy communities are able to strike a complementary balance between freedom and responsibility. It’s about more than the right to exercise our freedom as long as it doesn’t impinge on the rights of others. It’s also about the responsibility to value the common good.”(Lowe, B 2014 p.182) Social action is not just for a select few with some sort of formal training, it’s for all of us. A key question to ask about taking an action is...”And then what happens?”

Dan Dahlke, CEO of Day One Pact, wrote, “DayOne PACT does receive funding from other 708 boards in Kane and Kendall Counties for our programs that operate in those areas. The funding is extremely helpful in meeting service gaps, underfunded program areas, and for identifying and reaching the most difficult to serve populations of clients with disabilities or mental health concerns.

I believe DuPage County and the many high-quality non-profit organizations in this area would benefit from additional funding to serve children and adults in need of services through a 708 board.”

Diane Hewitt, Lisle Township Supervisor and LWV member, is optimistic about the benefits of a 708 Mental Health Board as well.

She wrote, “I think it could literally save lives and human potential. I think it could create as large and thick of a mental health net as our community needs.”

We know what the problems are. It is time to take action and work on the remedies. We have an opportunity to do so in supporting a 708 Board referendum.

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DuPage County IL - County Clerk - Property Tax Rate and Extension Reports



## APPENDICES

We thank the following agencies for responding to the questionnaire listed below: Day One PACT; Lisle Police Department; Lisle Township Supervisor, Little Friends, Inc.; Woodridge Police Department; Ray Graham Association.



Please return by Wednesday, October 6, 2021 to:

Donna Prepejchal  
3004 Scenicwood Lane  
Woodridge, IL 60517  
630 985-7492

Questionnaire

Respondent Name

Organization Name

What is your organization's mission?

What services does your organization provide?

How many persons received these services in each year from 1995 to 2020? Please list by year.

How many persons in DuPage County received these services from 1995 to 2020? Please list by year.

A 708 Board is a community mental health board established by a community, municipality, or township for the purposes of planning and funding mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services. At this time there is a movement to establish 708 Boards by referendum in all 9 DuPage County Townships. These 7-9 member boards are appointed by Township Supervisors, governed by the Illinois Community Mental Health Act and are accountable to the citizens of their community. Members serve 4 year terms. There are more than eighty 708 Boards in Illinois.

The goal of a 708 Board is to evaluate needs, allocate funds, and coordinate a comprehensive system of mental health, intellectual/developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services to benefit the citizens of a township.

708 Board funding is used to fill in service gaps and is only utilized by township residents.

How would you envision a 708 Board being beneficial?

What additional comments/observations would you like to share with us?

Thank you!

January 2022

Letter of Support for Establishing a 708 Board

Dear Friends,

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) DuPage provides support, education, and advocacy to more than 20,000 DuPage residents every year.

We provide a wide variety of mental health programs and services for all ages. Our services are unique, free, or low-cost, and help not only those with mental illness but also their families. Most of our programs are facilitated by “peers,” who are people living in recovery of mental illness and have been specially trained for their roles. The “lived experience” has a unique role in healthcare and has been proven to be especially successful during the pandemic where peers serve as role models as they support others in their journey to recovery.

NAMI DuPage services include mental health programs in schools (over 14,000 students served last year), support groups and classes for individuals living with mental illness, support groups and classes for families/caretakers/friends of someone with mental illness, supported employment program, mental health first aid training, a Living Room (alternative to the Emergency Room) Program for those in crisis, mental health programs and services in area hospitals, social recreation programs, and more. In the last year, we have also begun to work with PADS, and with people who have a dual diagnosis (living with mental illness and substance use disorder, which is the case for an estimated 10 million Americans.)

Before the pandemic, one of five adults and one of seven children experienced mental illness each year, and those numbers have increased dramatically over the past two years. But unless you have been on this journey yourself or know someone who has, you probably don't realize that more than half of the people with mental illness are untreated or undertreated. Even when people have good insurance or the means to pay “out of pocket,” they may wait months for an appointment with a psychiatrist or therapist.

This is why a 708 Board is so valuable to the quality of life in our communities. They are in the unique position of knowing the needs of the township, the gaps in services, and actually having resources to devote to

**ADDRESS**

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the inequities, resources which will immeasurably improve the lives of those receiving them.

As a grantee of the Bloomingdale Township 708 Board, we have been able to provide mental health programs to thousands of students in middle and high schools in that township, that would not have been possible otherwise. We have also offered our employment class at a local library, thereby eliminating transportation as a barrier to support. Transportation is so often a problem for those with mental or physical disabilities but having programs within the township lessens the challenge.

A 708 Board offers a transparent system to address community needs. The grant process is public and so are the decisions. Community members have a right to public comment. And ALL of the funds are used in the township.

Knowing that my \$30, \$50, or \$80 or similar amount of tax increase is directly helping those who need it most is compelling, particularly when I know that the college boy who received help for his substance use, or the high school girl who tried to end her life, could be my neighbors, or maybe my own children. This funding will undoubtedly improve lives, and in some cases, it will even save them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,



Geri Kerger  
Executive Director

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Ray Graham  
Association®

Empowering people with disabilities  
to reach, grow, and achieve.™

September 29, 2021

RE: Ray Graham Association – Letter of Support

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you to express my support for taking the necessary steps to create a 708 board in Lisle Township. For seventy years, Ray Graham Association has been providing supports and services to children and adults with intellectual and other types of developmental disabilities, such as Down syndrome, autism, and cerebral palsy. Today, we serve at least 2,000 people each year in a variety of programs that center on residential and housing, life skills development, recreation, employment, and family support.

As of 9/8/21, Illinois has a waiting list of 16,076 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in need of services. Nearly, 3,500 of these individuals are in our service area, which includes Lisle Township. Unfortunately, Illinois has a long history of failing to provide adequate funding for critical services for children and adults with I/DD. Based on the latest studies, Illinois is ranked 47<sup>th</sup> in terms of the fiscal effort provided for community-based services, like those provided by our organization.

A recent class action lawsuit against the state for failure to meet the needs of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities resulted in what is commonly referred to as the Ligas Consent Decree. The judge that oversees the case has found the state of Illinois to be out of compliance for multiple consecutive years. A rate study conducted at the request of the court has found that \$1.08B dollars is needed to be invested in the state's developmental disability system by the year 2022 to simply ensure adequacy and to restructure some of the most archaic services components.

I provide you with this background because I believe it is important that we all understand that the Lisle Township residents with I/DD are not likely to get the services they need and deserve from the state. However, giving your citizens the choice to create a 708 board to solve local problems and meet critical needs is a positive solution. As a recipient of 708 funds from Bloomingdale Township, we have created new employment readiness programs for the township's unemployed or underemployed population and partnered with school districts to prepare students for the world of work upon graduation. The local collaboration has allowed us to target our efforts where it is most needed in those communities.

We are all witnessing the effects of COVID-19. For people with disabilities, the social isolation, loss of important life skills, and strain on families has been devastating. As we come out on the other side of this pandemic the state's financial situation will be unimaginable. Now is the time to be proactive and create a local safety net of funding to address your ever-growing needs in Lisle Township.

Best regards,

Kim Zoeller, President & CEO

**Kimberly R. Zoeller**, President and CEO

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