FY13, services for adults over the age of 18 were provided through a variety of interrelated programs within the Adult Services (AS) Department. Adult individuals served by these programs included those who meet Bureau of Behavioral Health (BBH) clinical eligibility requirements for long-term care as well as those who did not meet this criteria, but required medically necessary treatment.

Emergency Services
Providing phone and face-to-face assessment, crisis intervention, stabilization and referral services 24 hours/7 days a week, these programs included those who meet Bureau of Behavioral Health (BBH) clinical eligibility requirements for long-term care as well as those who did not meet this criteria, but required medically necessary treatment.

FY13, ES took 2,115 crisis calls and saw 1,246 people, including 1,002 people at the Exeter Hospital Emergency Room.

FY13, SMHC hosted two large-scale community events. At the 13th Erik Cogswell Memorial Dinner and Auction held in June, more than 100 people attended the Second Annual Art of Recovery (AOR) Auction presented in partnership with the New Hampshire Art Association (NHAA), netting more than $13,000 to support services for people with severe mental illness and serious emotional disorders.

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“Getting back into life”

Life transitions for people at any age are difficult, but especially for elders, which Dick Chamberlain discovered most abruptly after the passing of his wife Ann in 2011.

“We had been Ann and Dick for fifty-six years and then ‘we’ was just me,” said Dick. “Suddenly, I was living by myself, and that was a big change for me. I needed someone to talk to—more than that, though, I needed to talk to a professional person with specific knowledge, empathy, and understanding.”

He found support at Seacoast Mental Health Center. “My wife had depression and Alzheimer’s, so we had used the services there since 2007,” he said. “Ann primarily worked with Lucille [Karatzas], but it gave me the opportunity to bounce ideas off of her, too. I always appreciated Lucille’s directness and how she treated us.”

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According to Lucille, Dick’s experience highlights just one reason why elders need REAP. “He was so committed and focused with professional artists in teams to create original artwork. Net proceeds from the event totaled $13,000 to support services for people with severe mental illness and serious emotional disorders.

The services Dick and Ann used were available through the statewide Referral Education Assistance & Prevention (REAP) program, which is managed by SMHC and offered at NH’s ten community mental health centers. Founded in 1992, REAP is the only program of its kind working towards helping elders with alcohol, drug, and mental health problems, or who may be experiencing difficulty with other life changes.

“I have a pretty busy life, but there is a big difference between understanding something intellectually and emotionally,” said Dick. “I credit REAP and Lucille for helping me move through one phase toward the end of Ann’s life into a new one after. She helped me go from being reclusive back into life again.”

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According to Lucille, Dick’s experience highlights just one reason why elders need REAP. “He was so committed and focused on her that he had little energy for tending to his own needs, and so his physical and emotional health began to suffer,” she said. “Through the REAP Program, he was able to understand the importance of taking care of himself before and after his wife’s passing.”

Citing his current involvement in co-leading two separate community support groups, Dick said he is “more than back to where [he] was before.”

“In some respects, I’m beyond where I was before, and that I believe is because of the caregiving, help and understanding I received from Lucille in relation to the caregiving,” he said. “I had been experiencing the loss of Ann for several years before the end of her life—Lucille helped me understand that and make sense of my feelings.”

FY 2013 Annual Report
In January 2013, Seacoast Mental Health Center turned fifty! During our fifty decades of service to our community, we have never wavered in our dedication to provide comprehensive and accessible mental health services.

To address our goal, our staff continue to train in the latest evidence-based and evidence-informed services. In FY 2013, we received funding from the Portsmouth Turkey Trot that enabled staff from our child, adolescent, and family services department to be trained in Disordered Behavior Therapy. Specialized training was also provided to staff in the areas of Evidence Based Supported Employment and Recovery. Two evidence-based practices that have been offered at our center for several years, such training further expands our capacity to meet the needs of those we serve.

Fiscal Year 2013 brought with it both challenges and successes. Our system of care was, and continues to be, plagued by a waiting list for beds at New Hampshire Hospital that has impeded client, family members, and provider outcomes. In response to this and other critical needs, we continued our longstanding efforts to advocate for adequate funding to meet the needs of those that require community mental health services. As a result of these efforts, additional funding was added to the FY 2014-2015 State Budget to begin the process of implementing the State’s Ten Year Plan to restore our community-based system of care.

The road to a fully normal system will be long, but we will worth the benefits provided to those in need of services. We thank you of those who have provided support to the work we do through your time, your donations and your advocacy. We thank our staff for their professionalism and dedication to their work. And we thank our clients for allowing us to be part of their recovery journey.

In FY 2013, Seacoast Mental Health Center provided clinical and prevention services to 5,602 Seacoast residents. We would like to acknowledge and thank these and our many other contributors for their generous support of Seacoast Mental Health Center during FY 2013. Financial support in the form of grants, state contracts, and corporate and individual donations filled critical gaps, so we can continue to address the mental health needs of those we serve.

Our Mission is to provide comprehensive and accessible mental health services to residents of the eastern half of Rockingham County.