



Saranac Lake Police Department

1 Main Street
Saranac Lake, NY 12983-1795
Telephone: (518) 891-4428
Fax: (518) 891-6321

Franklin County Community Services

3 Main Street, 2nd Floor, PO Box 1337
Saranac Lake, NY 12983-7337
Telephone: (518) 891-2280
Fax: (518) 891-2080



Everyone has been affected by COVID-19 with varying degrees of emotional intensity. Many have experienced heightened anxiety and isolation, and for those living with a mental health condition and/or substance use disorder, the ability to manage symptoms and to access support was and still may be a challenge.

The Saranac Lake area has an impressive provider system which offers many different types of services to our community residents. Our agencies have continued to work through NY PAUSE, offering primary health, mental health and substance use disorder treatment through telehealth, telephone support and, when needed, traditional face-to-face services. Our agencies that support individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities have worked equally as hard in providing their service expertise.

The Saranac Lake Police Department and Franklin County Community Services Office have established a partnership to work on issues of mental health response and associated training for the Village of Saranac Lake. At any given time, law enforcement officers interact with individuals in mental health and substance use crises. Often, this is the first point of contact an individual has in pursuing supports and services. With the help of our local provider system, we will create and expand opportunities for law enforcement to offer the individual a referral to a licensed provider. The SLPD is working to replicate a very successful referral program currently in use in Essex County, and look to pilot it in the Village of Saranac Lake; this also has the possibility of being expanded further into Franklin County. The Essex County program is coordinated by Essex County Mental Health, law enforcement jurisdictions and Essex County Mental Health Association, and provides an opportunity for an individual to access needed supports and services.

The SLPD and Community Services Office have agreed to pursue law enforcement crisis intervention training through the Office of Mental Health and other similar trainings, ultimately supporting the police department and the greater community. Additionally, the joint venture will include continued partnership with our local provider system to offer creative solutions and programs to further expand services in the Saranac Lake area.

Periodically the SLPD and Community Services Office will provide updates to our collaborative work either through a similar such letter to the editor or through articles showcasing the services provided by our local provider system. Although the work of the Executive Order 203 Police Reform Committee is ongoing, both the SLPD and Franklin County Community Services Office recognize the importance of quick action to better support our community residents.

James M. Joyce
Chief of Police
Village of Saranac Lake

Suzanne G. Lavigne
Director of Community Services
Franklin County Government