

# HIA-LI CEO BRIEF

FEATURING MICHAEL STOLTZ, CEO OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

## Tell us about how your company started.

The Association for Mental Health and Wellness (MHAW) was formed in 2014 with the merger of three successful organizations: Mental Health Association in Suffolk County, Clubhouse of Suffolk, and Suffolk County United Veterans

As an organization with State and National affiliation, MHAW is the County's key information resource for residents and professionals to respond to adults, children, and families who face mental health challenges. MHAW offers direct services to those with psychiatric disabilities as well as those who face mental health challenges for the first time. Two Centers for Recovery and Wellness offer state-of-the-art rehabilitation and clinical care, a range of peer and mutual support groups and services, and care managers who ensure that adults and children with physical and behavioral health challenges get the help they need. MHAW has been recognized at the regional and national levels for innovative programs that engage and empower its clients. Suffolk County United Veterans helps homeless and at-risk veterans of all eras who are in need of housing, face mental health challenges, or need to obtain employment, food, or healthcare assistance.

## What was a turning point for you/your company?

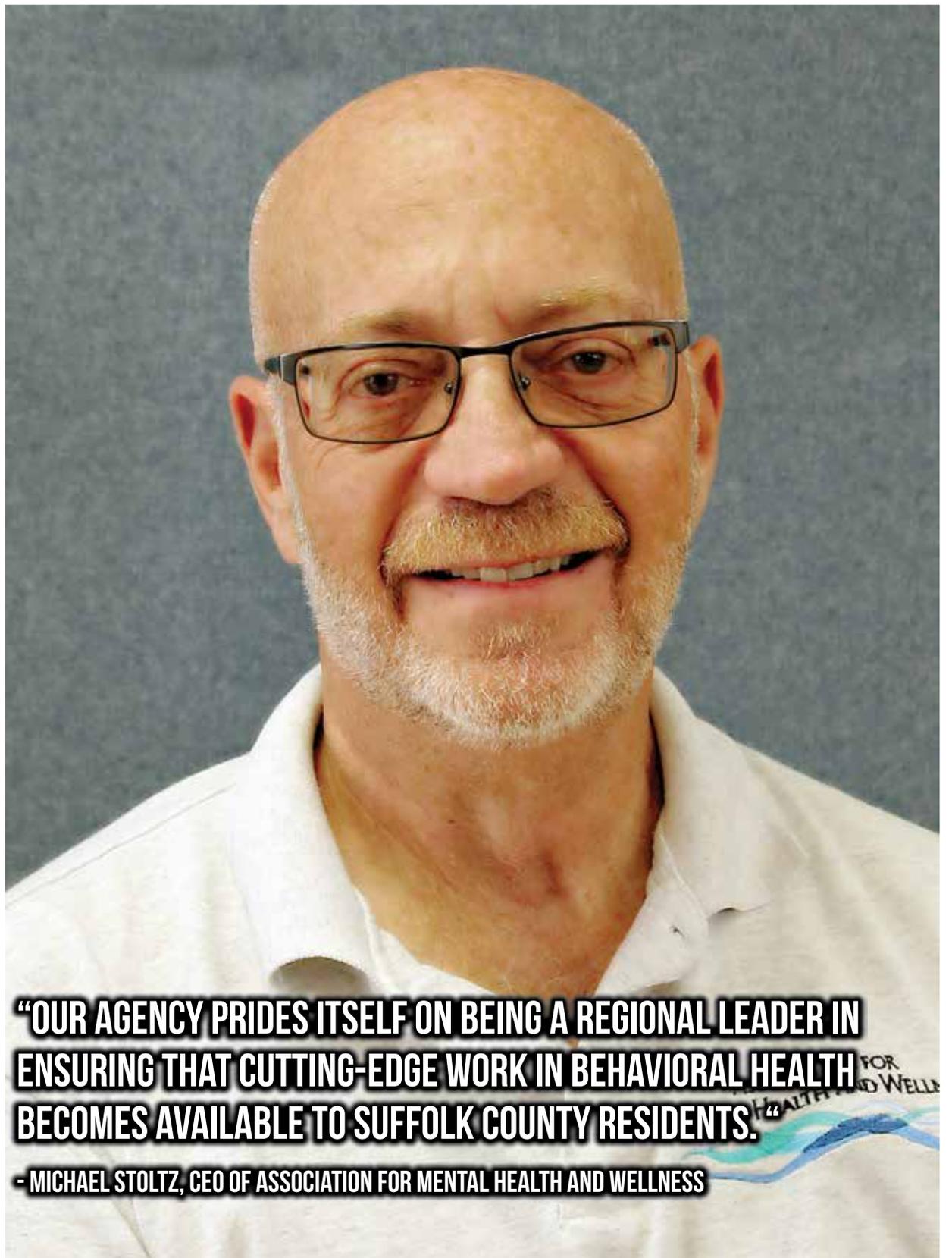
The merger of these three legacy organizations led directly to a strategic plan process that enabled us to re-brand under a new name and to set a course toward increasing our local and regional visibility, improve access to our services, build our organizational capacities in peer and professional workforce development, and build our organization's diversity and workforce competence at all levels so that we can effectively serve all Suffolk communities.

## What is your philosophy at the Association for Mental Health and Wellness?

Our organization's mission is: "To empower people and communities to pursue and sustain enriched, healthy, and self-directed lives." Our Core Values Are: Engendering Hope; Striving toward Excellence; Communicating Respect; Being Responsive to people in need; and building Collaboration among partners in helping our citizens in need.

## Tell us about your company's profile today.

MHAW has an annual budget of over \$11 million and employs more than 150 people engaged in providing and supporting professional and peer services to Suffolk County residents. In addition to our direct services to nearly 3,000 people each year, we provide professional and peer practice development for the mental health workforce, speakers for commu-



nity events, as well as a robust schedule of educational and public awareness programs for the community-at-large, touching thousands more County residents. Our commitment to the unique needs of Veterans and their families holds a high standing in our agency's mission to find, engage, and respond to those who have served our country.

## What opportunities do you see in the future?

Behavioral healthcare is in the midst of rapid and dynamic change inspired by governmental transformation, technology advances, and academic/research innovation. Our agency prides itself on being a regional leader in ensuring that cutting-edge work in behavioral health becomes available to Suffolk County residents.

This includes: 1) Integrated care – where all behavioral healthcare is easily accessed and coordinated in primary care settings, and vice versa; 2) Workforce development – ensuring peer and providers possess the most current competencies; 3) Specialty care to people with psychiatric disabilities, including those with co-occurring substance abuse, intellectual and physical disabilities, and trauma histories; and 4) Social determinants of health – capacities to ensure that variables such as housing, forensic histories, food insecurities, transportation, etc. do not impact health improvement for citizens. Whether contemporary political debate increases or reduces its investment or regulation, these areas will continue to present opportunities for behavioral health providers and advocates like MHAW.