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# PRESS RELEASE

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## GAAMHA ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT & CEO

*GARDNER BASED NONPROFIT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE WITH NEW LEADERSHIP.*

The Board of Directors at GAAMHA recently announced that Shawn Hayden would be named the new President and CEO after long time CEO, Tracy Hutchinson resigned from the position.

Shawn has been with GAAMHA for 13 years, most recently as their Vice President. Hayden is responsible for GAAMHA's Substance Use Disorder division's startup and growth over the years. GAAMHA has quickly become a leader in the battle against substance use disorders by developing innovative treatment and recovery options, continuously redefining what community support looks like.

Currently GAAMHA, formerly known as Gardner Athol Area Mental Health Association, has three areas of priority to include services and programs for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, substance use disorder programs and services and a fully operational transportation service, providing safe and reliable options for clients to get to programs. GAAMHA's mission is to create a world where people can get help when they ask for it, no matter who they are.

When asked about the change in title and plans for GAAMHA's future, Hayden had this to say, "The opportunity to lead this organization, which I credit with helping to save my life when I was struggling to find my own path to recovery from substance use disorder, is incredibly humbling and an honor far beyond what I would have dared to wish for when I entered GAAMHA's Pathway House program on June 4, 2009. Going through that program, and the assistance I received from people in this organization who had been with GAAMHA for decades, is what made me want to change careers and enter the nonprofit human services world. I think my experience as both a consumer, and a provider, of GAAMHA's services has given me an invaluable perspective that I've been able to integrate into our programs and service portfolio."

### GAAMHA

**Jim Hunt - Director of Communications & Development**

**[jhunt@gaamha.org](mailto:jhunt@gaamha.org)**

**978.632.0934 ext. 332**

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GAAMHA operates 15 locations over a fifty-mile span in the North Central Mass area. Current programs span from Leominster to Greenfield. The nonprofit opened two new recovery locations this past March and April in Athol, a traditionally underserved community. GAAMHA's Outpatient Services provide anyone looking for counseling sessions lower to no wait times for appointments.

Hayden will be taking the helm of GAAMHA after an official appointment from the Board of Directors this past week. "I'm extremely proud to have been part of GAAMHA's growth in the last decade, and I owe a debt of gratitude to our Board of Directors, my predecessor Tracy Hutchinson, and a remarkable group of dedicated people throughout our organization for their faith and confidence in me to lead a great deal of that expansion." continued Hayden.

Joe Potvin, GAAMHA's Board of Directors Chairperson, had this to say when asked about the change in leadership and future of GAAMHA. "Shawn's dedication to GAAMHA is unparalleled. His ability to grow our organization responsibly, advocate for GAAMHA within the community and with elected officials as well as his ability to lead and motivate our employee's makes him the perfect choice as GAAMHA's next President & CEO."

Hayden is excited to lead GAAMHA into the future. He is motivating his team to meet the ever-changing needs of the communities GAAMHA serves. "I'm equally as excited as I look forward. GAAMHA has built a reputation as an agency that is willing to try new approaches and fill in the gaps in our local support system, and I see us continuing to do both of those things. We have a goal around here to strive to bring the absolute highest quality of care and deliver it to people who typically struggle to gain access to that kind of quality and experience. I'm eager to continue that trend in our Substance Use Disorder Services programs and bring that same energy into the work we do for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities as well. I'm confident that we will be successful in doing that because we have built what I believe to be the absolute best team of passionate and talented people that exists in our field. As President and CEO of this historic agency, my job will be to support that team and provide them with the resources and opportunities they need to succeed at what they do best all while we continue to redefine what community support looks like."

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Hayden, while preparing for his transition to CEO, has officially named Michelle Dunn as GAAMHA's new Vice President. Dunn was most recently the Assistant Vice President of the Substance Use Disorders division of GAAMHA. Dunn, who has been with GAAMHA for 7 years, is also the President and Founder of the A.E.D. Foundation, a local nonprofit here in Gardner. The A.E.D. Foundation provides assistance to people in an effort to remove barriers to long-term recovery. "I am grateful and humbled to have been appointed to Vice President, giving me the opportunity to continue developing and expanding GAAMHA's programs alongside a devoted team of like-minded individuals. My approach will be to continue leading with humility, integrity, a team focus, and recognizing that in order to be the best we remember that everyone needs community, and our community needs everyone." said Dunn.

For more information on GAAMHA and their services you can visit them at [GAAMHA.org](http://GAAMHA.org), call the main office at 978-632-0934 or follow their many programs on Facebook!

**GAAMHA**

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