

COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

May 6, 2020 at 1:00 PM

Minutes

Attendance:

Matt Bauder, Kristy Bernard, Chelsea Jones, Tim Custer, Barb Vaupel, Patty Marth, Topm Walker, Marissa Turner, Jaleh Mohallatee, Christine Higgins, Debbie Hess, Janet Romero, Don Panto, Mary Zimmerman, Mairead Desmond, Robyn Barbosa, Nikki Baker, Sun Moon, Bob Slawinski, Cathy Kromer

I. Welcome and Introductions –

Tom Walker opened the meeting with review of agenda, meeting purpose and welcomed our members and stakeholders. The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss strengths, needs, and issues during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Topics discussed included telehealth, preparation for the economic reopening of PA, and what things look like as Pennsylvania starts to move from red zone to yellow and ultimately green, with protections in play based on Governor and Health Secretary mandate and safety recommendations.

II. Review of April 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes - Approved

III. Focused discussion on strengths, needs and issues during COVID-19.

Telehealth – Tom reviewed the provider feedback based on a data collection effort conducted by Magellan on initial learning and experience of provider waivers to deliver services widely through telehealth across community based levels of care. This document was submitted by Magellan to PA DHS. A survey of Member Experience is planned.

- One of the things that was clear is that Telehealth has proven to be very effective. But that said, this is not a one size fits all solution. Magellan has been advocating that telehealth options continue to be in play until all counties are in this sustainable green phase as part of the economic recovery and platform of safety as led by CDC and PA DHS.
- Removing barriers to care, such as physical limitations, transportation, work schedules and childcare are all positive aspects of telehealth.
- Telehealth has been more challenging for new patient intakes.
- Not all technologies being used were designed to be used for healthcare delivery and creates risk. Furthermore, getting members access to technology is mission critical. The CHA discussed SAMHSA grant sources for technology to provide to members, such as tablets, smartphones, and wireless internet service. St. Luke's and Elwyn reported applying for tech grants.
- The CHA discussed patient education on topics such as confidentiality during remote treatment sessions. It was noted that parents have been participatory in sessions.
- Providers also shared that in-person services are continuing where necessary to meet treatment needs.
- Janet Romero shared there has been marketing to providers by out of state virtual psychiatry services. Janet reminded caution that PA requires enrollment in PA's Medical Assistance program for all providers, including out of state providers. Janet further advocated that any virtual practice have local ties to the community for best patient care, safety and cohesion. Janet also advocated that provider agencies track outcomes data and member experience at the agency level, and use observational and outcomes information to make effective decisions.
- The CHA was reminded that telehealth expansion is authorized by the governor's emergency declaration and CMS waiver. It is important for all providers to sign up to receive notices directly from DHS. The Department of Human Services has created several email listservs for providers, partners, and other interested parties. These notification channels enable the department to relay important information to subscribers in a fast, efficient manner. Please sign up for this information here [.https://www.dhs.pa.gov/about/Pages/Listservs.aspx](https://www.dhs.pa.gov/about/Pages/Listservs.aspx)

Policy crafting at the agency level – agencies of the CHA described being purposeful in crafting safety policies and plans based on the phases and zones of the spread of the virus. This applies to community-based programs. Hardest impacted would be residential services which operate on 24-hours and must be staffed. The challenge for all is on managing a workforce that could be exposed and quarantined for two weeks, essentially stalling and overextending the staff.

Kristy described the best practices Northampton County will employ with their reopening, including social distancing, temperature checks, environmental hygiene, movement through the building, and use of PPE. Providers shared that physical space is the limiting factor when considering social distancing, and considerations for staff management.

Agencies are closely monitoring administrative savings, and efficiencies of outpatient telehealth services – particularly administrative load reductions and less travel/transportation; but between providing clients with technology, and staffing overtime, hazard pay etc. paid, any efficiencies are washed out, and nonprofits are struggling to remain solvent. Tom reminded that APA payments can be applied for, and these will continue as they are authorized by County and DHS approved plans. Magellan’s website is a good source for current information/inquiries. <https://www.magellanofpa.com/providers/communications/provider-announcements/>

Jody stressed the importance of testing and testing strategies utilized in inpatient and outpatient clinics. St. Luke’s outpatient program is testing, and they are treating members which are COVID positive. It is important to communicate to your clients that testing is not used to screen out new patients, but rather to assure that appropriate care can be delivered either inpatient and medically monitored or outpatient.

IV. County Updates:

- a. Lehigh County: Dick shared there was an overall reduction in suicides comparing last year to this year. Drug overdoses continue at the same level as last year. 55% of COVID related deaths in Lehigh County are from long-term care facilities. About 50% of individuals testing positive for novel coronavirus in Lehigh County are Hispanic. 60% of the deaths are Caucasian or White. Lehigh County is working with the Clubhouse and Daybreak on social and vocational opportunities and futures planning. Places where members typically are getting jobs are in food service or retail, severely impacted by the shutdown.
- b. Northampton County: Cathy shared quarterly and continuing quality improvement meetings with all providers continue. There is less hospitalization. Cathy looks forward to the County reopening.

c. Meeting Schedule

Date	Chair	Minutes
January 22, 2020	Kristy Bernard	Magellan
March 25, 2020 – postponed April 8, 2020 April 15, 2020 April 22, 2020 May 6, 2020	Meeting on March 25 postponed. We are proposing a weekly remote/Zoom meeting for planning and support during the pandemic. Calls will be focused on 24-hour care for ½ hour and ambulatory care for ½ hour. Meetings are 1-2 p.m.	
May 27, 2020	Kristy Bernard	Magellan
July 22, 2020	Matt Bauder	Magellan
September 16, 2020*	Kristy Bernard	Magellan
November 18, 2020*	Matt Bauder	Magellan

* Third Wednesday

d. Contact Information

Committee / Organization	Contact Name	Email Address
Member/Family Advisory Committee	Ronnie Colbert	burail1980@yahoo.com
Provider Advisory Committee	Vacant	
Children’s Advisory Committee	Pat McGarry	pmcgarry@valleyyouthhouse.org
Lehigh County HealthChoices	Matt Bauder	mattbauder@lehighcounty.org
Northampton County HealthChoices	Kristy Bernard	KBernard@northamptoncounty.org
Magellan Behavioral Health of PA, Inc.	Tom Walker	twalker@magellanhealth.com