

COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

Virtual CHA Zoom Meeting

July 28, 2021 @ 2:00 PM

Attendance: Kristen Bertucci, Val Rode, Nolan Steffen, Leslie Ten Broeck, Jessica Teel Sadler, Ronnie Nase, John Lees, Carl Kist, Barb Vaupel, Suzanne Makary, Katie Detweiler, Tisbine Moussa, Tom Walker, Corinna Labish, Drew Lazo, Deborah Hess, Marissa Turner, Mike Ditty, Bill Leiner, Sue Acklen, Rochelle Reimert, Mirka Picone, Christine Higgins, Tamra McGee, Jodi Matthews, Jana Morris, Janet Romero, Lisa Duarte, Carlos Estevez, Mitch Fash, Paul Berlet, Matt Bauder, Kristy Bernard, Meg Soring, Val Rode, Drew Lazo, Paul Innacone, Paulette Hunter, Dominique Gray, Chris Ferry

I. **Review of July 28, 2021 meeting minutes.** Matt Bauder opened the meeting with a review of the meeting minutes. Minutes are approved.

II. Provider Forum

- **Bill Leiner, New Vitae** – Discussed the COVID Delta variant and precautions New Vitae is taking for safety and to prevent any possible breakthrough infections. Bill also strongly encouraged all to get vaccinated for safety and adhere to masking and related safety protocols.
- **Janet Romero, Step by Step** –ASAM alignment continues to be a source of concern for drug and alcohol providers. Additionally, new SCA rates for drug and alcohol services are below the needs for some providers to meet the staffing requirement and to remain solvent. Matt indicated the HealthChoices programs are assessing rates and structure for providers.
- **Leslie Ten Broeck, Pinebrook Family Answers** – Shared Pinebrook’s police liaison program and reentry services designed to support the needs of the individuals to prevent crises and/or promote successful reentry back into the community. Community Intervention Specialists are civilians who arranges services, including mental health services for those whose issues may result in police being summoned. Services are expanding in Allentown and surrounding regional police depts. This is a co-responder model.
- **Suzanne Makary, St. Luke’s Innovations Partial Program** - The Innovations Program moved to 451 Chew St., Allentown adjacent to St. Luke’s at Sacred Heart Campus in the professional building. The new phone number is 484-838-6380.
- **Tamra McGee, Pyramid Healthcare** – Pyramid expanded services at the Allentown Outpatient Clinic with the addition of the Opioid Center of Excellence. The Care Management Team will help facilitate access to care for individuals who are on Medicaid and have an Opioid Use Disorder, utilizing the hub and spoke model. These services will prevent premature departures from treatment by helping individuals make appropriate and effective decisions about their paths to recovery. Please call 844-444-0023 to speak with a Center of Excellence team member 24/7.
- **Christine Higgins, Merakey Wellness Recovery Teams** – Are open to referrals, but also experiencing some staffing issues in covering team members going on leave. There is a need to fill staff vacancies.
- **Avery Wasmanski, Malvern Community Health Services, Bill Leiner, Jr. of New Vitae and Chris Ferry of KidsPeace.** Providers shared that staff recruitment and retention are areas of ongoing work needed at this time. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge the provider community to recruit and retain qualified staff. Bill shared a successful approach has been to raise wages across the board by \$2 per hour, and this initiative successfully brought back 4 or 5 staff that had left the agency during the pandemic. Chris discussed the KidsPeace approach includes sign on bonuses for new staff and increased pay rates for licensed staff to retain them; additionally the agency is looking at the starting wages for mental health workers that are not licensed, and work as line staff for programs. The agency also offer sign-on bonuses for already certified peer supporters. Please contact Ronnie for more information
- **Lisa Duarte, Bet El Counseling Services** – Opened a new MH outpatient location in Allentown located at 512 Hamilton St, Ste 200, Allentown, PA 18101. This location replaces the location located formerly two blocks away on Turner St. in Allentown.
- **Ronnie Nase, PeerStar** – Now offering older adult peer support services (Empowered Aging Peer Support Program) for Lehigh and Northampton county members. Older adults have the right to have a voice in their own recovery, and to be empowered to live vital, active and productive lives. Peer support for older adults provides a source of support and hope and can work with peers living in assisted living facilities and nursing homes or community settings. The program is open to referrals and the agency is seeking CPS staff, ideally ages >55 years to be matched with an older adult peer. Contact: Ronald Nase rnase@peerstarllc.com
- **Debra Hess, Children’s Home of Easton** – Announced that the CHOE campus is slowing ramping up operations at their licensed mental health outpatient treatment program on the campus grounds. The program is treating some members and is in early stages of a wider community offering. Debbie will keep members of the CHA posted.

III. **Member Forum** Ronnie continues to experience some difficulty in getting connected to Zoom calls; Matt connected with Ronnie ahead of the meeting, and there are no concerns to report at this time - things in general are going well and Ronnie expressed

hopefulness. Kristen Bertucci of the Northampton County Drop-in Center operated by Recovery Partnership described the virtual and hybrid model of drop in center work. This flexibility in how members engage in the program has proven to be helpful in getting over the COVID hump. Kristen stressed the importance of providing accurate and reliable information about vaccines, safety and steps to take to remain safe. The drop-in center has been holding educational forums for individuals.

IV. Provider Advisory Committee – Cathy Murphy was not available to present. Matt reported for Cathy these topics:

1. RCPA members were invited to attend a member update webinar and get the latest updates on COVID developments and protocol, legislation affecting providers, and other industry-related news.
2. Want to know what is happening across the U.S., the [COVID States Project](#) has been probing American behavior (and attitudes) during the pandemic since March 2020. In 12 survey waves, an array of researchers — from Northeastern, Northwestern, Harvard and Rutgers — have polled some 185,200 Americans about subjects ranging from social distancing practices to attitudes toward vaccines and judgments about state politicians’ leadership.
3. According to a national study poll conducted by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, nearly half of all Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American and LGBTQ+ individuals say they have personally experienced increased mental health challenges over the past 12 months, but few received treatment.

Providers might consider attending a webinar to learn more about ways to address health equity and racial justice.

- Addressing Diversity, Equity and Engagement in Organizational Structure – View our [recording](#) and [presentation](#).
- Addressing Trauma, Racism and Bias in Behavioral Health Service Delivery, part 2 – View our [recording](#).
- Addressing Trauma, Racism and Bias in Behavioral Health Service Delivery, part 1 – View our [recording](#).
- Resilience-oriented Strategies to Promote Healing around Historical and Contemporary Racial Inequities – View our [recording](#) and [presentation](#).
- Looking to promote diversity, equity and inclusion that can be further amplified to your clients? View our [recording](#) and [presentation](#) on addressing racial equity within your organization.
- Promoting Organizational and Self-care Strategies for African Americans – View our [recording](#) and [presentation](#).
- Health Equity and COVID-19 – Addressing the Disproportionate Impact – View our [recording](#) and [presentation](#).

Members of the CHA may contact CATHLEEN.MURPHY@hhinc.org to discuss involvement in the Provider Advisory Committee work.

V. Children’s Advisory Committee – Pat McGarry retired from Valley Youth House. There is an opening for a lead of our Children’s Advisory committee. Any interested providers that can serve to represent the children’s behavioral delivery system should contact Matt and Kristy with your interest.

VI. Magellan

(Tom Walker- Reporting for Magellan’s Compliance)

Email Blasts:

May 2021

Effective July 1, 2021, Magellan will expect contracted providers to be compliant with specific provisions within *The ASAM Criteria, 2013*, related to Setting, Support Systems, Staffing, Therapies, Assessment/ Treatment Plan Review and Documentation.

Please note that on June 29, 2021, DDAP issued an important Memorandum outlining the procedure for drug and alcohol treatment providers to request an extension beyond July 1, 2021 in reaching “substantial alignment with the service delivery conditions under *The ASAM Criteria, 2013*”.

To request an extension, drug and alcohol providers will need to submit a brief, 1-page letter to RA-DAASAM@pa.gov by **July 9, 2021**. DDAP will approve satisfactory requests for an extension to December 31, 2021 in substantially aligning with service delivery conditions for ASAM criteria related to 1) training, 2) credentialing, and 3) daily clinical services in LOC 3.5 and 3.7 (i.e. 6 to 8 hours of clinical services). All other requests for extension will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The full Memorandum can be viewed here including the information that must be included in the waiver requests. **Magellan is requesting that providers submit a copy of any exception request and approval to Anita Kelly (alkelly@magellanhealth.com).**

June 2021

Providers must follow all applicable PA Medicaid requirements for which they are licensed, enrolled and/or contracted. Per Chapter 55 Chapter 1101 of the PA Code §1101.51, “a proper record shall be maintained for each patient. Treatments as well as the treatment plan should be entered into the record.” Per Magellan’s Provider Handbook Supplement, “the documentation of treatment or progress notes for all services, must include the relationship of the services to the treatment plan—specifically, any goals, objectives and interventions.”

Regulations and Medical Assistance Bulletins for each provider type and specialty typically include level of care specific requirements regarding when treatment/ service/ recovery plans must be initiated; how frequently they must be reviewed and updated; and who is required to sign the document*. Please consult all applicable program requirements for specific details. As all services must be provided according to the individual treatment, service, recovery or rehabilitation plan, any Medicaid service that is provided in the absence of an active plan is non-billable.

Bulletins:

1. [Information Bulletin 01-21](#) - This Information Bulletin provides clarification from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) on special conditions for federal funding related to medical marijuana.
2. The Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Program (DDAP) has issued three temporary regulatory suspensions under authority granted by the Governor’s declaration of a disaster emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic. Based on flexibilities granted by SAMHSA, our goal with these suspensions was to respond to the extraordinary circumstances of the last year by allowing entities regulated by DDAP to continue operating throughout the uncertainty of the pandemic.

Statute/Regulation	Statute/Regulation Purpose	Waiver benefit/explanation
28 Pa. Code § 715.16(e)	Prohibits narcotic treatment programs (NTPs –methadone clinics) from permitting a patient to receive more than a 2-week take-home supply of medication	In response to COVID-19, SAMHSA is allowing up to 28 days of take-home medications for patients on stable dosages, if the physician deems appropriate.
28 Pa. Code § 715.9(a)(4)	Requires NTPs to make a face-to-face determination before admission to treatment, for those clients who will receive buprenorphine treatment.	In response to COVID-19, SAMHSA is allowing initial evaluations for a patient who will be treated with buprenorphine to be completed via telehealth.
28 Pa. Code § 715.6(d)	Requires NTPs to have narcotic treatment physician services onsite.	In response to COVID-19, SAMHSA is allowing initial evaluations for a patient who will be treated with buprenorphine to be completed via telehealth

3. This [ASAM Alignment Memorandum](#) establishes a procedure for drug and alcohol treatment providers to request from the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs additional time beyond July 1, 2021 in reaching substantial alignment with service delivery conditions under *The ASAM Criteria, 2013*.

4. The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs is looking for your feedback to create a more user-friendly experience on our website ddap.pa.gov.

(Mitch Fash Reporting for Magellan’s Network Dept) - COVID-19 Alternative Payment Arrangement Update

- Magellan issued new fee schedules in June.
- It is important for providers to cross-reference and build your systems to align with these changes prior to submitting for claims payment
- It is also important to reach out to Magellan right away if something does not look correct, or there are concerns. Providers can submit claims as often as they would like to and is a best practice when there is a change to submit a smaller batch of claims to test the system. Providers asked Mitch questions about time changes for member treatment encounters and

group codes, fee rates, etc. that are different from what was offered previously. Mitch addressed questions and would like to hear from providers when there are issues, such as these, to trouble-shoot.

(Carl Kist – Reporting for Magellan’s Clinical Dept.) – Focus on ASAM Realignment and IBHS

- ASAM Alignment: Magellan created a dedicated Substance Use Disorder page of resources for providers, including a recorded training on ASAM alignment <https://www.magellanofta.com/for-providers/community/sud-resources/>
- Anita Kelly (alkelly@magellanhealth.com) can be contacted for additional support in meeting the state expectations for ASAM realignment.
- Magellan continues to grow IBHS services and add providers. We continue to meet with potential new providers who express interest in joining our network.
- Magellan moved to Quarterly provider meetings starting Q2 2021. <https://www.magellanofta.com/for-providers/services-programs/ibhs/>
- Magellan continues to offer IBHS providers TA call options 2x/wk as needed.
- Magellan continues to answer questions via the IBHS email box. For additional questions related to IBHS, please send an email to IBHS@MagellanHealth.com.

(Tom Walker – Reporting for Magellan’s Member and Family Advocate)

- Magellan is in early planning stages to return to our practice of Member Advisory Workgroup meetings. These are meetings that gain valuable feedback into the program and program quality, member information, and needs and successes. Magellan is looking for a place to hold a quarterly meeting in the third or fourth quarter of 2021. Please contact Tom or John Lees if your agency is available and it safe to hold an in-person meeting. Paulette suggested that Zoom would be ideal for these sorts of meetings. Getting information is important but doing so safely more so.

(Tom Walker – Reporting for Magellan Strategy Planning)

- Pennsylvania has expanded the Opioid Centers of Excellence programming. Please visit the DHS website and we are seeking community partnership with the local COEs. There are two types, physical and behavioral. All offer Medication Assisted Treatment. <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/Centers-of-Excellence.aspx>
- Magellan launched DUOS, a new pilot program for Northampton County members that are older adults. DUOS is a community-based service Magellan has partnered with to help older adults in Northampton County with social, non-clinical needs related to transportation, finding appropriate care and more. Please see the link [here](#) for more information. Our goal is to help older adults age in place, prevent unnecessary ER visits/ readmissions and improve health outcomes. DUOS is being offered at no additional cost to eligible individuals (an individual is eligible if they are at least 60 years old, a resident of Northampton County and a Magellan member).
- Addressing Social Determinants of Health, particularly housing, is a top priority. Magellan, Lehigh and Northampton counties have identified at-risk of homelessness as a priority as part of a state plan to address SDoH. We have launched work with The Lehigh Conference of Churches, St. Luke’s Sacred Heart Campus and Lehigh Valley Health Network to identify members that are at-risk of losing housing and we are connecting members to housing and other social/health solutions.

VII. Northampton County Update – Kristy Bernard

Kristy announced Northampton County is proceeding with re-procurement for Behavioral Health Managed Care Organization for the Program with an initiation date of January 1, 2022. Magellan is the current BH-MCO for Northampton County. A competitive RFP process was announced. Kristy is seeking Members and Family Members to serve on a review panel and evaluate proposals. Please contact Kristy with any interest in serving.

Kristy shared that Northampton has been awarded a First Episode Psychosis program grant from the state. Northampton County selected Child and Family Focus On My Way program as their treatment partner. This is the same provider as Lehigh County’s FEP program.

Discussed the preliminary approval for a new Reinvestment Program focused on helping members access childcare, clothing, transportation, getting jobs, and things that are not currently covered under the state plan. The Easton Neighborhood Center has been selected to meet these SDoH needs under the reinvestment plan. Northampton still has the respite program available to Northampton County HealthChoices members.

The Outpatient Restoration Long-term Structured Residence (ORLTSR) in Easton has broken ground on March 29th and is expected to be open by Jan 2022.

Lehigh County Update – Matt Bauder

Matt provided an update on all the current HealthChoices Reinvestment Plans. These include: HIFI Wraparound through Pinebrook Family Answers, Respite Program through Valley Youth House, Clearinghouse Housing Program through The Lehigh Conference of Churches, and 2:1 Applied Behavioral Analysis through ABA Support Services. These programs are currently contracted with Lehigh County through the end of 2021 and approved through 2022. As possible, Matt will look to extend these programs.

Matt shared Lehigh County is looking to address more Social Determinants of Health through Reinvestment programs. SDoH relates to members' health outcomes. However, the state will not allow commodities such as housing, food, and transportation to be paid for through medical claims, so this only leaves Reinvestment. It has been ten years that the County has contracted with a provider to deliver housing services.

Regarding First Episode Psychosis program, these services are available across the Lehigh Valley for any member that has been recently hospitalized with their first episode of psychosis, ages 15-30 years. Child and Family Focus referrals have been very slow to come forward. The agency team is hard-working and easy to work with. They are marketing as much as they can. Please keep them in mind and please make referrals. All inquiries relating to the On My Way program and the referral process can be made to the Director, Meg Soring by phone (610) 732-8683. <https://www.childandfamilyfocus.org/services/on-my-way/>

Regards to housing, August 1st is the end of the eviction moratorium. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program may be a solution for individuals that lost work or income due to COVID and need housing assistance.

For Lehigh County,

- Catholic Charities is the designated agency. The referral form is <https://form.jotform.com/210596231926154>

For Northampton County,

- Those who reside in The City of Easton, contact: Project of Easton — Phone: 610-258-1100, Ext. 13.
- Those who reside in Bethlehem, Bethlehem Township, Hellertown, and Lower Saucon Township, contact: New Bethany Ministries — Phone: 610-691-5602, Ext. 217
- Those who reside in The City of Easton as well as Glendon, West Easton, Wilson, and Williams Township, call: Easton Area Neighborhood Center — Phone: 610-253-4253
- Those who reside in all other municipalities of Northampton County call: Third Street Alliance — Phone: 610-438-1244

Matt concluded the meeting by stating we are still in need of an in-person option for CHA meetings when the time is safe to hold meetings in-person. Please contact Matt and Kristy with any possible offering.

VIII. Next Meeting: September 15, 2021