

HealthChoices Advisory Board

Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania, Inc.
1 W. Broad Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018
(Remote meeting due to COVID restrictions)
August 19, 2021 2pm

I. Introductions: Those in attendance were: Tom Walker, Tisbine Moussa, Donna Thorman, Matt Bauder, Cathy Murphy, Liz Fox

II. Review of May 20, 2021 minutes – No issues and accepted.

III. Community Healthcare Alliance Report:

Member/Family Advisory Committee

- Ronnie was not present, but Matt spoke with him and provided an update
- Haven House welcoming members as they can
- Members have expressed various concerns about the virus
- Members may not be as willing to go in to the office because of the resurgence

Provider Advisory Committee – Cathy Murphy

- Providers are concerned about the possibility of COVID-19 waivers ending on 9/30/2021
- Everyone seems to be taking a wait and see approach since there remains much up in the air about the waivers that have been allowed through the Public Health Emergency

Children's Advisory Committee – Vacant

- Pat McGarry retired June 18, 2021
- Matt has not had anyone reach out with interest in joining the Advisory Board to fill this vacancy
- Plan to reach out at September CHA meeting and other meetings such as the MBH Provider Town Hall
- Tom related that Jay Deppler has been appointed as Pat McGarry's replacement and may be a possibility

IV. NAMI/OMHSAS/Provider/Peer/News

- NAMI walk is in-person on September 29, 2021 at Walter Grube Park

- Peer to Peer program and Family to Family program will be starting September 8, 2021. The program can be done in-person or virtually

V. Magellan Behavioral Health Report

- Tom related the many if not all regulation waivers will be ending on 9/30/2021, but OMHSAS plans to have a Telehealth Bulletin out by then. OMHSAS is advising providers to plan to go back to full service on 10/1/2021. MBH will be sending out a Provider Communication outlining all the regulations that have been waived during the pandemic and the original OMHSAS communication from May 2020. Providers should confirm their submission of the Telehealth attestations to OMHSAS. Discussion of all areas that may be impacted including member signatures, licensure requirements, etc. surrounding the regulations. The need for consistency across all providers was discussed.
- There was a robust discussion of the critical staffing shortages that have impacted all Providers during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Steps to help mitigate the staffing issues were discussed.
- Tom talked about the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (E-RAP). There have been barriers to members accessing rental support. Provider has been difficult to connect with. Provider indicated there is not enough staff. Also, barriers related to negotiations with landlords have been identified. E-RAP can be used on utilities

VI. Lehigh County HealthChoices Report

- Matt provided updates on Reinvestment Plans including Respite, High-Fidelity Wraparound, 2:1 Program, and Clearinghouse. All reinvestment plans are approved through December 2022 with further extensions to be requested.
- Providers of the respective reinvestment plans remain Valley Youth House for Respite, Pinebrook-Family Answers for High-Fidelity Wraparound, ABA Support Services for the 2:1 program, and Conference of Churches for the Housing Clearinghouse.
- Lehigh is exploring adding monies to the Project Based Operating Assistance Program run through PHFA as part of the Comprehensive Housing plan. Lehigh MH Base continues to note how beneficial the program has been in stabilizing housing for members but that the funding is beginning to decrease such that new members are not being referred to the program.

- Lehigh has implemented a First Episode Psychosis program operated by Child and Family Focus. Initial referrals have been very slow and strategies to increase referrals continue to be discussed.
- Lehigh County is in the process of developing a Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) Reinvestment plan to address issues such as transportation, food insecurity, education, clothing, and child-care.
- Community Based Care Management Program is being implemented with the Conference of Churches and Magellan assisting in the referral and reporting process. The program only recently launched on July 5, 2021.

VII. Northampton County HealthChoices Report

- Northampton County continues funding for the Conference of Churches Housing Program. This reinvestment plan is approved through 2022. Northampton is exploring whether to continue with the current plan or develop a new one to implement as of 2023.
- Northampton County's Respite programs continues to operate but COVID has greatly impacted referrals.
- A new Reinvestment Plan was developed by Chelsea to address SDOHs. It was officially approved by the state. The selected provider will be Easton Area Neighborhood Center and the contract is in development.
- Northampton's Request for Proposal process for a BH-MCO continues. Northampton is looking for consumers to participate in the process.
- Community Based Care Management Program-Partnering with Conference of Churches. Program launched July 5, 2021.
- Northampton County received a State Grant to implement the First Episode Psychosis Program. They will be partnering with Child and Family Focus, Inc. to implement the program.

VIII. Adjournment

Next meeting will be held on **November 18th at 2:00pm** at the Magellan Bethlehem office or via Zoom depending on COVID circumstances.