

HealthChoices Advisory Board

Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania, Inc.
1 W. Broad Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018
(Remote meeting due to COVID restrictions)
November 18, 2021 2pm

- I. Introductions: Those in attendance were: Kristy Bernard, Chelsea Jones, Tom Walker, Tisbine Moussa, Matt Bauder, Andrew Lazo, Ronnie Colbert, Donna Thorman
- II. Review of August 19, 2021 minutes – No issues and accepted.
- III. Community Healthcare Alliance Report:

Member/Family Advisory Committee – Ronnie Colbert updates

- Ronnie updated that Haven House is getting a lot of new clients in the program.
- They are offering different classes—Kitchen prep. They are serving hot breakfast and help prepare meals.
- They will be having a Thanksgiving dinner
- Groups-Class for LGBTQIA Fridays at 10am. Ran by Alex.
- LANTA van services continue to be an issue. Giving them the complaint phone number. Some are using it, but some will not call.
- Ronnie had to leave early to attend a different meeting.

Provider Advisory Committee – Cathy Murphy

- Cathy was not able to attend, but submitted info to Tom
- Topics that came out from the Provider Association
 - Staffing recruitment, retention and program viability
 - Thanksgiving-OMHSAS supporting activity
 - OMHSAS is recognizing that MCO/PC will be doing more with VBP efforts in regards to maintain and help providers.
 - No one else really had extra info on this and can discuss at future meetings and will ask Cathy for more info.

Children’s Advisory Committee – Vacant

- Continued outreach at CHA and no one has shown interest. Targeted outreach may be beneficial. Present one more time in January to CHA and then target some individuals to outreach and see if there is any interest.

- IV. NAMI/OMHSAS/Provider/Peer/News

- Donna reported that they graduated 18 people from the family program. Peer to peer will start back up in January.
- Family Basics education portal online. 16 hour course. Free. Can take at any time and stop and start. Used to be in person, but now online and it seems to be working well.

V. Magellan Behavioral Health Report

- Tom wanted to discuss what Cathy brought up regarding recruitment/retention of the workforce. He is getting increasingly worried about the health of our program due to the mass exodus of human service professionals. Magellan will continue to do targeted investments. Throughout COVID alternative payment arrangements were provided to essential programs. These were issued to ensure program viability once the pandemic ends. Most of these APAs were terminated in August and flipped back to fee for service. We are now looking at these providers and seeing how they are matching up to their pre-pandemic numbers. For the ones that aren't at the 2019 level, we are providing adjunct payments to make them whole. We are around 80-90 percent of the 2019 level and will continue to get the catch up payments. This will continue through first quarter of 2022.
- Tom reported there is surplus dollars across all levels and are looking to invest another 12 million between both counties in additional payments. They will be initiating in December. Providers who want to participate will submit an attestation that states these funds will be used for recruitment retention and program viability. When the attestation is back, we will send the funds. Money alone won't solve the problem, but can help. People who could retire did retire and left vacancy in key roles and they took their historical knowledge with them. With these upper level openings we are losing talent on the ground floor then. Should we engage universities? Who are educational facilities we can reach out to? Can Tom reach out to those he knows at Marywood and ask what can be done? Also, realizing this will take years for the industry to recover. Once the surplus payments are wrapped up, we can bring up this topic at CHA to continue the conversation.
 - Kristy added other departments within the counties are also experiencing this. Should we get providers involved in this since they are being provided extra funds to do this? We don't want to duplicate what they are doing? Could there be a CHA subcommittee?
 - Tisbine suggested PQAC.
 - Matt appreciates Tom concerns but what degree can Magellan or Primary Contractors can overcome these issues. The financial investments we are providing is something tangible we can do. Providers are strong and may be able to band together.

- Donna asked if these are degree positions. She remembers a program where agencies set up scholarships to pay for training/books and then the student would have to work for a certain period of time.
- Tisbine stated that Lehigh University is affiliated with a provider to fill vacancies.
- Chelsea noticed the volume of kids going to school in this field doesn't seem to be there for the amount of debt they get into for a field that doesn't pay well.
- Drew agreed with Chelsea's point and hears that people are going into different fields that may have gone into Human Services because the return on investment isn't there. Engaging people early is the key.

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 and updates of the respective reinvestment plans remain Valley Youth House for Respite-6 in home and community and 4 in family driven, Pinebrook-Family Answers for High-Fidelity Wraparound-13 active case and 5 referrals, ABA Support Services for the 2:1 program-no current but 2 pending referrals, and Conference of Churches for the Housing Clearinghouse serviced 80 unique members.
- HFW team lost some staff and are struggling to fill them. Matt has been providing some rate increases to help providers.
- Lehigh submitted a Social Determinant of Health Reinvestment plan similar to Northampton's plan. Waiting on the state.
- Lehigh submitted a continuation plan for HFW to add some money and to keep sustainable for 3 years until 2024.
- Lehigh asked for additional money for the Housing plan. They are asking to add monies to the Project Based Operating Assistance Program run through PHFA as part of the Comprehensive Housing plan. Could not add new members to the program due to low funds. Asked for 1 million to be added to the plan.

VII. Northampton County HealthChoices Report

- Chelsea updated as Kristy had to jump off.

- Northampton County submitted a continuation plan for the Conference of Churches Housing Program. This requested to increase the contingency amount due to rent and deposits going up. This will assist members with furniture or needed items.
- Northampton County's Respite programs continues to operate but COVID has greatly impacted referrals. We are looking to change the plan. Our plan is slightly different than Lehigh and is in home only. We are looking to offer more options and will be submitting changes to the State once developed.
- The Social Determinants of Health Plan was officially approved by the state. The selected provider will be Easton Area Neighborhood Center and the contract has been complete and is awaiting final signatures from the County executive.

VIII. Adjournment

Next meeting will be held on **February 17th at 2:00pm** at the Magellan Bethlehem office or via Zoom depending on COVID circumstances.