

COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

MAY 22 2024 @ 2:00 PM

Minutes

- I. Welcome and Introductions. Kristy Cole, the Northampton County HealthChoices Administrator, opened the meeting, which was held in a hybrid format. Online attendance was recorded in the Zoom chat, and in-person attendees were announced. For more details, please contact Tom Walker.
- II. Review of 3/27/24 Meeting Minutes - Approved
- III. Presentation: Strategies for aiding individuals in applying for state benefits, presented by Dino Mincin from Lehigh County Assistance Office and Jennifer Werkheiser from Northampton County Assistance Office.

Dino Mincin from the Lehigh County Department of Human Services and Jennifer Werkheiser from the Northampton County Department of Human Services introduced themselves and explained their roles. They discussed the medical assistance application process, recommending the online Compass system and the customer service center as the most efficient methods. They also highlighted in-person and mail options, though they noted potential delays. Applications are reviewed by case workers, who may request additional verification. They emphasized the importance of providing necessary documentation upfront to expedite the process.

Key documents include proof of income, disability, immigration status, and third-party liability insurance. They also mentioned the necessity of signatures on applications and the potential for referrals to other programs like CHIP for ineligible applicants. They detailed the process for children with disabilities, noting the need for clear and current medical documentation.

For adults with disabilities, acceptable forms of documentation include recent physical exams, psychological evaluations, and school assessments. They described the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) program, which allows individuals with disabilities to work while maintaining full medical coverage. Eligibility criteria include age, employment status, disability meeting Social Security standards, and income limits. They discussed the Workers With Job Success program, aimed at helping former MAWD recipients who exceed the income limit but still need assistance.

They also provided information on other programs offered by the Department of Human Services, including TANF, SNAP, long-term care, and LIHEAP. A Q&A session followed, addressing various questions about the MAWD program, job training services, and assistance for older individuals. They acknowledged gaps in support for those over 65 and recommended resources like [PA Medi](#) for further assistance.

Coordination and Guidance for Recovery Homes and Assistance

Guidance for Recovery Home Situations:

Personal Reach Out: Dino has offered to be a point of contact for complex cases where other resources have been exhausted. Limitations: Due to workload, Dino emphasizes the need for selective outreach to manage time effectively.

County SCA Role: Acknowledge the limited budgets of County Single County Authorities (SCAs) and their position as the payer of last resort

Application Process for Assistance:

General Advice: If there's doubt about eligibility, submit the application. Reviewers can identify potential eligibility through thorough examination of the application and supporting documents.

Complex Cases: SCAs often contact Dino for individuals who are ineligible or face complicated issues.

Dual Diagnosis and Eligibility:

Comprehensive Diagnosis: Ensure all diagnoses are listed in the application to explore all possible avenues for eligibility.

Doctor's Documentation: Obtain necessary documentation from doctors to support dual diagnosis or other complicating factors.

Procedural Steps:

Application Submission: Start with the Medical Assistance (MA) application, preferably through COMPASS.

Handling Rejections: If rejected, contact the SCA, who can liaise directly with management for further action.

Single Points of Contact: For the minutes, list the single points of contact for Lehigh and Northampton County SCAs.

Specific Cases: Address loophole cases for children through the Children's System and adults through the respective County Assistance Office (CAA).

Children's Dental Cases and Disability:

Special Cases: For children covered by private insurance but needing extensive dental work, explore additional disabilities that meet Social Security standards.

School Support: Check for special education needs that might qualify them for further assistance.

Local Resources: Utilize dental clinics at local hospitals where available.

Final Q&A and Follow-Up:

Diagnosis Review: Ensure every diagnosis is considered during approval processes.

Children's Dental Needs: For cases of dental neglect, explore further disabilities and available local resources.

(Editor's Note: Critical information updates from the County Assistance Office presentation was provided as a follow up to discussion. Please reach out to Tom if you did not receive this education to healthcare providers in steps needed to support individuals access benefits and best practice support to those with disabilities, economic hardship, and poverty.)

The presentation covered a broad range of topics, including:

- Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD)

- MAWD Workers with Job Success Act – New Program
- County Assistance Office Customer Service Center hotline
- COMPASS (preferred way to apply for and renew healthcare and human services benefits)
- COMPASS Community Partnership (supporting individuals' application for benefits and tracking tools)

As a reminder, in instances where there are complexities, such as children who are underinsured due to disability and adults in need of MAT medications but are unsure how to navigate, it will be important to engage the County CASSP for Children and SCA for Adults, along with escalation to the statewide customer service center.

Northampton County SCA:

- Title: Northampton County D&A Division
- Phone number: (610) 829-4725
- Location: Northampton County Human Services Building, 2801 Emrick Boulevard - 3rd Floor, Bethlehem, PA 18020

Lehigh County SCA:

- Title: Lehigh County Drug & Alcohol Services
 - Phone number: (610) 782-3555
 - Location: Government Center, 17 South Seventh Street, Allentown, PA 18101
- For County CASSP Contacts (April 2024), please refer to the following document: [County CASSP Contacts \(April 2024\)](#)

IV. Provider Forum

Kelly from [Rogers Behavioral Health](#): Announced the opening of a mental health and addiction recovery PHP and IOP for adults at their Philadelphia location, with immediate availability and network coverage with most commercial insurance plans.

Janna from [Recovery Revolution](#): Shared information about their outpatient center in Danielsville, PA, which also offers certified recovery specialist services, case management, and a recovery center. Announced participation in the Highmark Walk on June 1st and availability for outpatient IOP services.

Kate from [Positive Recovery Solutions](#): Discussed their low-barrier medication-assisted treatment (MAT) program, including same-day intakes over Zoom and various medications offered (Suboxone, Vivitrol, etc.). Mentioned a pilot program for soft entry for people being released from prisons and upcoming behavioral health programs.

Marissa from [Holcomb Behavioral Health Systems](#): Highlighted immediate openings in outpatient therapy and IBHS programs for individual services and ABA, available from childhood through elderly at their Easton and Allentown locations.

Charlotte from [Move Forward Counseling](#): Announced the hiring of a new therapist at their Emmaus office, resulting in more availability for outpatient therapy. Mentioned their new Lancaster office and the ability to serve Lehigh Valley via online therapy. Updated on the new law allowing associate LPCs and MFTs to be covered by insurance.

V. Advisory Committee Reports

- a. Member/Family Advisory Committee – Ronnie Colbert

Transportation Issues: Ronnie discussed transportation issues, including the recent resignation of seven LantaVan bus drivers, causing delays and difficulties for clients. He praised the efforts of a particular bus driver who handled the situation well.

Client Advocacy: Ronnie is working with clients facing issues such as roommate conflicts and the need for stable housing. He is providing support and advocating for their needs.

LGBTQ Class: The LGBTQ class at Haven House is growing and is open to everyone, aiming to educate and support the community.

Overall Atmosphere: Haven House is experiencing growth and positive changes, with a focus on client support and community building.

b. Provider Advisory Committee – vacant

Kristy Cole mentioned that there is currently no representative for the provider advisory committee, which focuses on adult services. This committee is primarily about information sharing, attending health choices advisory board meetings, and community health care alliance meetings to discuss new regulations and share information with a larger group. The goal is to ensure that voices are heard. Anyone interested can reach out to Matt Bauder or Kristy Cole to discuss further.

c. Children’s Advisory Committee – Mike Ramsey

Mike Ramsey from Valley Youth House, and Chair of the Children's Advisory Committee, reported that the Department of Human Services has introduced new training requirements due to a voluntary resolution agreement. Agencies working in the child welfare or dependency system must complete a training titled "Supporting Children and Families with Disabilities" by July 30th this year, and again by June 30th, 2025. The training takes about three hours and is conducted through the University of Pittsburgh’s e-learning system. The training emphasizes working with families and children with disabilities, including those undergoing medication-assisted treatment. Ramsey suggested that organizations determine which staff levels need to complete the training. Additionally, Ramsey mentioned a recent provider connection meeting held in April, which aimed to foster connections and included discussions on planning a quarterly service project.

VI. Magellan Behavioral Health Report

a. Patty Marth - Compliance

Tom Walker, reporting for Patty Marth, provided updates on several key topics:

- **March Email Blast:** Included information on provider responsibilities for interpretation and translation services. Providers are encouraged to sign up for direct email blasts from Magellan for real-time updates or monitor the compliance section of the Magellan website.
- **April Email Blast:** Featured guidance on documenting services within medical records, particularly for those using electronic health records (EHR), and related to telehealth. Providers should refresh their knowledge of Magellan’s telehealth FAQ.
- **Four Walls Telehealth Survey:** A second round of the survey was conducted due to insufficient responses from the first round. The results are being evaluated to provide meaningful feedback to OMHSAS.
- **Licensing Alert:** The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) released a licensing alert (04-2024) concerning the use and disclosure of confidential substance use disorder (SUD) information.
- **Policy Clarification:** OMHSAS issued a policy clarification on encounter signatures for emergency crisis services. Mobile mental health crisis services are now considered emergency services, and if a signature cannot be obtained, providers may use a signature exception on the encounter form.

b. Mike Ditty – Network

Mike Diddy from Magellan emphasized the importance of ensuring accurate billing practices following the rate increases provided by Magellan and the counties at the end of 2023 and into 2024. Despite these increases, many organizations are still underbilling, and Magellan cannot adjust claims on their end. Providers are encouraged to verify with their billing departments and administration to ensure they are billing appropriately and to address any issues with billing systems or amendments.

c. John Lees - Member and Family Advocate

Autism Action Committee Recruitment: They are seeking families or individuals with autism to join the committee. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday. The committee is looking for both in-person and virtual participants, and attendance is only required quarterly. For more information, visit [Magellan's Autism Action Committee page](#).

Navigation Guide: The committee's recent work includes a navigation guide for transitional age individuals with autism, developed from family feedback and experiences. You can [access the guide on the Magellan website](#).

Grievance and Complaint Reviews: They are recruiting members or parents to join panels for grievance and complaint reviews in Lehigh and Northampton. Interested individuals should contact John Lees or Tom for more details. More information can be found on the [Magellan Grievance and Complaint Review page](#).

Behavioral Health Matters Podcast: There are five episodes available, with episode six expected to be released in June. [Check out the podcast on the Magellan Behavioral Health Matters page](#).

d. Janet Verga – Recovery and Resiliency

Member Advisory Work Group Meetings: These meetings provide an opportunity for individuals receiving services to share their feedback with Magellan and county partners. The goal is to gather input on services and to allow members to contribute to shaping future work.

Suggestions and Involvement: Janet noted interest from individuals who have graduated with CPS certifications. While current CPS-certified individuals working for providers cannot serve on grievance panels, their certifications can be a starting point for involvement in other capacities, such as the member advisory work group.

For more information on the Member Advisory Work Group, you can visit the [Magellan Member Advisory Work Group page](#).

e. Tom Walker – Strategic

Tom Walker's update highlights an initiative called "Transforming Crisis Services in the Lehigh Valley," a workgroup involving various stakeholders such as hospitals, health networks, county DHS, and crisis system providers. The goal is to organize a Behavioral Health Care Symposium for Fall 2024 to address critical community needs.

Tom is actively seeking feedback on the symposium themes, which include improving the continuum flow, enhancing provider collaboration, and addressing emergency department boarding. He also emphasized the need for volunteers to help coordinate the event and ensure its success.

If you're interested in contributing or have any feedback on these themes, Tom encourages you to reach out. Your involvement would be valuable, especially given your role in coordinating similar events and managing health initiatives.

VII. Lehigh County: Updates / Reinvestment / Issues - Matt Bauder, Drew Lazo, Veronica Lefurgy, Brad Newhart

Lehigh County Reinvestment Plan updates include:

Clearing House: In April, 18 members were served. The clearing house is focusing on urgent needs related to eviction processes due to high demand and limited resources. General assistance referrals may experience delays.

High Fidelity Wraparound: Pinebrook Family Answers is handling 24 active cases, with 12 in the process of enrollment. The Social Determinants of Health program is assisting 18 members with food, clothing, and transportation needs.

2:1 Program for AVA Support Services: One member is receiving services while awaiting RTF placement, and another member is lined up for admission once discharged.

Respite Services: The contract with Concern Behavioral Health is delayed but is expected to officially roll out by the end of June. Marketing materials and promotional efforts will be shared with the child distribution list and presented at upcoming events.

System Coordination:

Veronica Lefurgy announced that Lehigh County Integrated Services has hired Karen Walsh as a part-time system coordination representative and is in the process of hiring a full-time person to address service gaps and support families waiting for services.

VIII. Northampton County: Updates / Reinvestment / Issues

Reinvestment Plan Updates:

Housing Program: Referrals for Northampton's Housing Program, including contingency and bridge funding, now go directly to the Lehigh Conference of Churches, bypassing the Mental Health Department to reduce delays.

Safe Harbor Expansion: The Safe Harbor location in Easton is expanding. Permits are in progress, and groundbreaking is expected in the fall.

Restoration LTSR: Comhar is the provider for the Restoration LTSR. The facility is getting closer to opening, with licensing completed and staffing underway.

Respite Services: Contracts for respite services through Concern Behavioral Health are signed, with promotional materials to follow.

High Fidelity Wrap Around: Approved for families not involved with CYF, allowing direct funding for services. Flyers will be distributed once contracts are finalized.

CAMS Care Initiative: Suicide prevention training for clinicians focusing on adolescents. An information session will be held in July at the IU, with a Save the Date to follow. An RFI will be released for providers interested in staff training.

IX. Other

X. Meeting Schedule

Date	Chair	Minutes
January 24, 2024	Kristy Cole	Magellan
March 27, 2024	Matt Bauder	Magellan
May 22, 2024	Kristy Cole	Magellan
July 24, 2024	Matt Bauder	Magellan
September 25, 2024	Kristy Cole	Magellan
November 20, 2024*	Matt Bauder	Magellan

* Third Wednesday

XI. Contact Information

Committee / Organization

Member/Family Advisory Committee
Provider Advisory Committee
Children’s Advisory Committee
Lehigh County HealthChoices
Northampton County HealthChoices
Magellan Behavioral Health of PA, Inc.

Contact Name

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