

HealthChoices Advisory Board

In-Person and Zoom Meeting August 15, 2024

- I. Introductions: Those in attendance were: Janet Verga, Drew Lazo, Mike Ramsey, Kristy Cole, Tisbine Moussa, Tom Walker, Matt Bauder, and Donna Thorman
- II. Review of May 30, 2024 minutes – no edits noted; minutes approved as final
- III. Community Healthcare Alliance Report:

Member/Family Advisory Committee

- Ronnie was not in attendance
- Matt provided Ronnie's recent report from CHA
 - Ronnie indicated that there remain on-going issues with Lanta and added that there tends to be turn over in drivers; Ronnie provided a reminder about the Lanta complaint process to address member concerns
 - Ronnie added that there have been situations encountered where drivers have made inappropriate comments to members on the van and Haven House staff have needed to intervene

Provider Advisory Committee – Position is open

- No updates provided

Children's Advisory Committee – Mike Ramsey

- Mike noted that the updated Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) regulations were sent to the state's Independent Review Commission (IRC). There will be a meeting held with Providers and other entities on September 19th. Once the regulations come out of IRC, they will be moved to final, published and implemented state wide. It usually takes a year or so for regulations to move through the IRC process.
- Mike indicated that there is a PCCD grant available related to School Safety and Mental Health. Schools would need to apply for these funds directly. These are non-competitive dollars being made available and schools have a great deal of discretion on how the dollars are used. Award amounts are based on the size of the school district. The only downside to such a grant is that it creates even more competition for staff in the Mental Health field in that schools tend to want to develop their own program as opposed to contracting with a community based program that may already exist.

IV. NAMI/OMHSAS/Provider/Peer/News

- Donna reported that NAMI held its' annual picnic for Group Homes on August 14 and it was well attended and everyone had a great time.
- The NAMI Walk will occur on September 7th
- Family to Family Training for family members (an 8-week course) begins at the Palmer Recovery Center on September 4th and another begins at Oasis House on September 18th.
- A Peer-to-Peer course will be held in Fall 2024 but the exact dates have not been identified yet.
- Donna reminded the group of the free weekly support groups that NAMI offers
- NAMI will conduct its local Board of Directors elections in September. Board meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month and anyone is welcome to join.
- NAMI is close to becoming a Board-Certified Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trainer, which would make it one of the first in PA for NAMI programs
 - Donna noted that NAMI has agreed to include Parole/Probation officers in the training as there has been interest expressed by those entities
- Janet spoke about issues being experienced by young adults (typically aged 18-24) attempting to get Peer Support services. She noted that there is very little immediate availability with many experiencing wait lists that stretch into months at times.
- Janet added that some providers have better responsiveness than others as well as better communications than others.
 - Mike noted that VYH has experienced staffing challenges in its' CPS program and thought that maybe other programs are experiencing similar issues. Mike added that there is a new CPS training coming up.

V. Magellan Behavioral Health Report

- Tom reminded the group that the MA unwinding has finished and July is the new normal for membership
 - There was an 18% reduction in membership in Lehigh from January – June
 - There was a 22% reduction in membership in Northampton from January to June
- The loss of membership has had large impact on revenue for the HealthChoices programs.
- Tom added that utilization of all services has increased
- The increased utilization and reduced revenue have lead to costs concerns for the program.
- Both Counties have needed to tap into their respective Risk and Contingency accounts to cover losses related to these increased costs.
- The Counties and Magellan have kept OMHSAS and the Department of Human Services apprised of the cost concerns that are being experienced.
- OMHSAS had signaled that they are willing to look at a mid-year rate adjustment given these costs concerns however it is unknow what that rate adjustment will look

like, when it will take effect, and how much it will impact the cost concerns that are being experienced.

- Tom noted that what is occurring in Lehigh and Northampton is being seen by almost all counties across the state of Pennsylvania. Tom added that there are other states in the US that are also experiencing similar challenges.
- Tom reported that Magellan is looking to engage in a member campaign related to getting and maintaining Medical Assistance benefits. This campaign may target specific zip codes in which we have seen a disproportionate number of members that have been dropped from MA roles.
 - Tom noted that as members stabilize in their mental health, they tend to not maintain their MA benefits due to “feeling” better. Members will be encouraged to maintain benefits even in light of stabilization as mental health needs can change quickly and without warning.
- Tom indicated that Counties and Magellan will be holding a Behavioral Health Summit in October. Main topics for the Summit include Workforce development, Emergency Room Boarding, Behavioral Health continuum of care, and Social Determinants of Health and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
 - These are seen as core tenets of HealthChoices and the behavioral health system
 - The goal is to have robust conversations across providers and individuals related to these topics. It is hoped that action plans can start to be developed related to these discussions.
 - There will be follow-up meetings in 2025 related to this Summit.
- Tom gave updates on other Magellan/County initiatives including:
 - CAMS Care project with Northampton County that will train clinicians to better work with and address needs of students that present with increased risk of suicide
 - MYLIFE is currently being restructured and reorganized with a goal of starting it up again in 2025.
 - Magellan is working to partner with and do warm handoffs between Community Health Workers that are embedded with local police departments and local community providers. Current community partners include Neighborhood Centers of the LV, Preventive Measures, and Hispanic American Organization (HAO).
 - Magellan is working on Integrated Health targeting Mental Health, Physical Health, and Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities. The goal is to streamline processes for members with an ID diagnosis to better facilitate their care. There is a new tool being worked on with this regard and will be rolled out to Community Living Arrangement providers and members in the coming months. There is a second project integrated health project looking to better address needs of members in rural communities. This project will focus on Physical Health and psychiatric services and will likely include a telehealth component. Current providers being targeted include Nulton Diagnostic Services, Methodist Services, Recovery Revolution, and Neighborhood Centers of the LV, etc.

VI. Northampton County HealthChoices Report

- Tisbine provided updates related to Northampton County's reinvestment plans
 - Social Determinants of Health plan through Conference of Churches – 23 members served in May 2024
 - Outpatient Restoration Long Term Structured Residence – still no opening date identified
 - Respite program through Concern – 6 current referrals and group services are being offered
 - High Fidelity Wraparound program – contract is currently being executed
 - CAMS Care – contracts are being worked on to move this plan forward
 - Kristy added that they are working on flyers that can be provided to members related to Respite Services as well as High Fidelity Wraparound to ensure members and families are aware of the programs, what they offer, and how they can be of benefit

VII. Lehigh County HealthChoices Report

- Matt provided updates related to Lehigh County's reinvestment plans
 - High Fidelity Wraparound through Pinebrook/Family Answers – there were 18 active cases in July with 4 members pending to be brought into the program.
 - 2:1 ABA Support Program – the 1 member that had been being served in the program was admitted to an RTF in May. There have been no new members since though there was a referral recently made at the end of July.
 - Housing Clearinghouse through Conference of Churches – 20 new members served with 194 members assisted year to date
 - Social Determinants of Health through Conference of Churches – 2 new members were intake in June with 18 members served year to date
 - Respite program through Concern – 4 members have been referred since June. Home based and group services are scheduled to begin in the next couple weeks.
- Drew reported that the state required Performance Improvement Project (PIP) continues to focus on Substance Use Service Against Medical Advice (AMA) discharges as well as follow-up after discharge rates. This PIP will continue through the remainder of 2024.
- Drew noted that the HealthChoices program continues to look for panel members for the Complaint and Grievance processes. Panel members for Substance Use service grievances are especially needed at this time. There is a stipend offered to members for participation and most complaints and grievance are held virtually. It was also recently determined that CPS and CRS are eligible to serve as panel members as long as they

perform the duty on their own time and are not allowed to serve on panels that involve a provider they work for.

VIII. Adjournment

Next meeting will be held on **November 21, 2024 at 2:00pm** at the Valley Youth House office or via TEAMS depending on circumstances.