



## **HealthChoices Advisory Committee Meeting NorthWest Zone**

Wednesday, October 9, 2019

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant  
250 W. Seventh Street  
Erie, PA 16501

### **Meeting Agenda**

#### **10:05am Welcome & Introductions**

Ms. Comes welcomed everyone, called the meeting to order and had the committee and audience attendees introduce themselves.

➤ **Roll Call Committee:**

- In Attendance: Spencer Duffee (Parent); Cookie Jones (Parent); Rhonda Schember (Advocate/Parent); Lenore Collupy (NWBHP Inc.); Andy Smith (AmeriHealth Caritas); Dale Barney (Gateway); Skip Boykin (UPMC); Lisa Babo (CCBH); Shelley Thomas (Beacon Health Options/VBH/Parent); Bobbie Jo Comes (PA EAP)
- Absent: Wanda Keefer (Parent), Christen Porterfield (Parent), Juli DiAngi (Consumer), Michael Gwin (CCBH), Cathryn Easterling (Aetna); Tracy Palazzotto (Family Caregiver Alliance/Parent); Barbara Juskewycz (Erie JPO); Diana Ames (MH Association)

➤ **Introductions by Audience**

- In Attendance: Refer to Sign-In Sheet

#### **10:10 am July Meeting Minutes**

- July Meeting Minutes were not approved by the committee and were tabled until the next meeting. Ms. Thomas noted a discrepancy in the Beacon Health Options reports in regards to the support groups. Clarifications and corrections will be made.

#### **10:15 am Enrollment Assistance Program Report**

- a. Data Review -- Ms. Teresa McDonnell provided enrollment data from PA Enrollment Services from January through May 2019. Additional data was provided from June 2019 through August 2019 regarding:
  - Enrollments
  - Web Transactions
  - PCP Selection Rates
  - Plan Transfers – Health plans consumers are transferring from
  - Plan Transfers – Health plans consumers are transferring to
  - Top 10 Transfer Reasons – Specific to the Zone, Overall top 10 transfer reasons across the state.



- b. 2019 Webinar Series -- Ms. Teresa McDonnell referenced webinars are posted on the [www.enrollnow.net](http://www.enrollnow.net) website. There are webinars that are posted on the website for all to attend. Registration invitations are sent out to the email distribution list within 30-45 days of the scheduled webinar. A reminder email is sent to all registered attendees 7 days prior and 1 day prior to the webinar. Webinars held since the July meeting included:

- o Tuesday, October 8, 2019; 10:00am LIHEAP -- 76 individuals attended this webinar

Upcoming webinars include:

- Tuesday, November 12, 2019; 10:00am Immunizations – By the Department of Health, Bureau of Immunizations

**10:25 am DHS**

- a. BMCO Report -- Mr. Stephen Luckie from the Department of Human Services, Bureau of Managed Care Operations gave the following updates:

**Medical Assistance/HealthChoices:** As a follow-up to the information presented at our meeting in July regarding the Suicide Prevention Task Force:

- On August 21, 2019, the Suicide Prevention Task Force held a session at the PA Mental Health Planning Council meeting with the goal of gaining insight and perspective on the development of a comprehensive suicide prevention plan.
- The task force began its focus on addressing the prevalence of suicide by firearms. Gov. Wolf announced an executive order taking action to reduce gun violence. As part of this effort, the Suicide Prevention Task Force will focus more closely on suicides by firearms and issue recommendations to reduce their prevalence, promote safe storage policies, and help those in crisis who are considering using a gun.
- The recommendations will be shared with the Special Council on Gun Violence later this fall.
- The Task Force also announced a series of public listening sessions around Pennsylvania over the next several months.
- Individuals and families affected by suicide through their own experience or a loved one are invited to share their experience to help inform the task force's work and reduce stigma around discussing topics like mental health and suicide.
- Representatives from Pennsylvania's National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the Mental Health Association of Pennsylvania (MHAPA), and the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association (PMHCA) will be on site during the listening sessions to facilitate meaningful discussion and consolidate feedback from listening sessions to provide a report to the task force to inform the plan.
- Listening sessions were scheduled around the state through November 15.
- The locations in October are York, Scranton, and Allentown.
- The locations in November are Pittsburgh, Slippery Rock, Radnor and State College.



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- There is a link to the location date and times and to register online for one of the Listening Tour Locations at [www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/SuicidePrevention/](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/SuicidePrevention/)  
**MEDIA CONTACT:** Erin James - 717-425-7606
- **Shift Care Update:**
  - As the shift care work group continues its efforts, there are some new and upcoming ideas for bettering reporting across all MCO's. DHS continues these workshops to collaborate services between the providers and the MCOs. DHS is working towards developing a stronger support system in this area.
- **DHS – SNAP:** Secretary Teresa Miller submitted public comment to the Trump Administration opposing its proposal to drastically reduce Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SNAP, previously known as food stamps, helps more than 1.8 million Pennsylvanians access nutritional meals and puts food on their tables.

BBCE is a policy that gives states, including Pennsylvania, the flexibility to determine appropriate income thresholds and extend SNAP benefits to low-income families and individuals who would otherwise struggle to afford food.

- With BBCE, a Pennsylvania family of four is eligible for SNAP if they earn no more than about \$40,000 a year. If BBCE is reduced, that family of four's SNAP income limit will drop from about \$40,000 a year to no more than \$32,000 a year. For elderly single-person households, the income limit would change from approximately \$24,000 a year to about \$15,000.
- Reducing BBCE would also jeopardize free lunches for nearly 22,600 households whose children who currently qualify. This would not only cause more students to go hungry at schools – it also risks access to programs that provide nutritious meals for children after school and during summer months.
- Reduced BBCE would increase Medicaid spending and reduce long-term health outcomes due to the direct connection between food security, proper nutrition, and good health.

DHS Comments to the Trump Administration can be viewed at:

[http://dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c\\_291772.pdf](http://dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c_291772.pdf)

Information about SNAP program can be found at:

<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/supplementalnutritionassistanceprogram>.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Erin James - 7174257606



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○ **DHS/Other:** Blood lead

Governor Tom Wolf has discussed his initiative to create a lead-free Pennsylvania by calling on the legislature to increase access to blood testing for children in alignment with federal guidelines, increasing local response efforts, and planning for training of more certified lead abatement professionals.

- “Pennsylvania has the sixth-highest percentage rate for children suffering from lead poisoning and this is only the number who have been formally diagnosed,” Gov. Wolf said.
- The governor called on the legislature to increase access to blood testing for children in alignment with federal guidelines.
- Currently, only about 30 percent of children in Pennsylvania have been tested for lead, and about 4.6 percent of those children had elevated blood lead levels.
- The federal guidelines advise parents and guardians to have their children given a finger prick test for lead exposure between age 9 and 12 months and then again at age 24 months.
- If children are not given this test in that timeframe, it is recommended that schools encourage testing when children enter the classroom at age 6 or sooner. The preference, though, is for early detection so the source of the lead exposure can be eliminated before any permanent damage occurs

In addition to calling for legislation for universal blood testing that follows the federal guidelines, Gov. Wolf outlined other initiatives associated with creating a lead-free Pennsylvania, including:

- **Local Response Teams**
- **Workforce Training**
- **Resources for Families-** The departments of Health and Human Service have updated online resources for families to access information on lead testing, lead poisoning and lead remediation. That information is available at on [pa.gov/lead](http://pa.gov/lead).

Lead Poisoning symptoms – [www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Lead](http://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Lead)

- Childhood lead poisoning at low levels may make learning difficult, interfere with growth, harm hearing and delay development.
- Childhood lead poisoning at high levels may cause coma, convulsions and even death.

Information about the free water testing website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/data/index.htm>

**Question 1:** Pennsylvania has the sixth-highest percentage rate for children suffering from lead poisoning. Is this just children or does the percentage include children and adults?

**Answer:** It is only children.

**Question 2:** Is it a standard practice for pediatricians to screen for blood lead levels?

**Answer:** Under the HealthChoices Program, it is part of the EPSDT screening done for children.



- **Department of Health:** As a follow up to the DOH Hepatitis A outbreak: The Wolf Administration announced \$50,000 in state funding for vaccines and outreach to slow the spread of hepatitis A. Pennsylvania is currently in the midst of a hepatitis A outbreak, along with 28 additional states, including neighboring states New Jersey, Ohio and West Virginia.
  - Pennsylvania declared a hepatitis A outbreak in May 2019.
  - Pennsylvania has seen 376 outbreak related hepatitis A cases, with 82 percent of patients hospitalized and seven deaths.
  - The case count for 2019 is nearly nine times the number expected based on historical data.
  - In addition to using the state funds to purchase vaccines, the Department of Health is exploring federal funding streams that will be used to enhance Pennsylvania’s outbreak response by purchasing additional vaccines and providing more local hepatitis A outreach.

If you are uninsured or underinsured, contact 1-877-PA-HEALTH to find a state health center near you where you can be tested and monitored.

For more information about hepatitis A, visit [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov)

MEDIA CONTACT: Nate Wardle, 717-787-1783

- b. OLTL Report – Community HealthChoices Rollout -- Ms. Jill Vovakes, Chief of Staff from the Office of Long Term Living presented on the Phase 3 rollout of Community HealthChoices for January 1, 2020.
  - Refer to the Power Point Presentation – “Community HealthChoices”
  - Question 1: Is Medicare still primary?  
Answer: Yes, Medicare is still primary.
  - Question 2: If my Medicare doctor is not Medicaid approved can I still go to him?  
Answer: Yes, for all Medicare covered services, if your Medicare doctor is not Medicaid enrolled you can still go to him/her. He/She can still get the cost sharing and deductible up to the MCO fee schedule under Community HealthChoices.
  - Question 3: Consumers transitioning from HealthChoices to Community HealthChoices don’t want to leave their HealthChoices (HC) plan, do they need to leave their HC Plan?  
Answer: Yes. Participants must choose one of the Community HealthChoices plans; AmeriHealthCaritas, PA Health & Wellness, UPMC. Community HealthChoices goes live in the NorthWest Zone as of January 1, 2020. The consumer would want to look at the providers and additional value services when making a decision.
  - Question 4: I have a person on my caseload who will age out of HealthChoices and roll to Community HealthChoices in November, when he turns age 21. What should I be doing now?  
Answer: I will give you my card. Please get in touch with me. We have Amy High through the Office of Long Term Living (OLTL) handling these cases.



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- Question 5: How will non-emergency transportation be handled in the rural areas? Will you use contractors?  
Answer: Non-emergency medical transportation will be provided through the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP). For non-medical transportation, this will be provided through the Managed Care Organization. Each MCO has a transportation broker that will work with the participant's service coordinator to arrange for needed transportation.
- Question 6: We have a Supports Coordinator through the Office of Developmental Programs, will we roll to Community HealthChoices?  
Answer: Supports Coordination and Service Coordinator are two different services under two separate entities. Supports Coordination is under the Office of Developmental Programs. You will remain HealthChoices and not roll to Community HealthChoices Service coordination under the office of long term living waiver services is provided by service coordination entities that include area agencies on aging. I can see where these services/terms get confused and make it confusing.
- Consumer Comment: I am a consumer and went to one of the participant meetings. I like the additional services I will be eligible to receive under Community HealthChoices. Also, I found the participant session very helpful.

### 11:50 am Regional Report

- a. SDHP - Regional Housing Coordinator Update – Ms. Dawn Edwards, Regional Housing Coordinator shared the following information:
  - The Self Determination Housing of PA is a statewide non-profit who works to connect stakeholders with information and resources – to increase choice and affordability in housing for people with disabilities. Stakeholders include service providers, non-profits as well as state and local government.
  - We offer training on the following topics: Fair housing, Housing 101, PREP, Landlord/Property Manager Education, 811 PRA Program and Accessible Housing.

#### Regional Updates

**Funding: PHARE RFP opened RFP opened – September 9th . ♦ Applications due by 2pm on November 15<sup>th</sup> awards will be announced spring/summer of 2020**

<https://www.phfa.org/legislation/act105.aspx>

What is PHARE? Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE)



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The PHARE Act outlines specific requirements that include preferences, considerations, match funding options and obligations to utilize a percentage of the funds to assist households below 50% of the median area income. The PHARE Act provides a fairly broad canvas regarding the types of programs and the specific uses of any funding to allow flexibility in working with other state and federal acts and programs.

For Program Year 2019/2020, the PHARE Fund includes funds available through:

Marcellus Shale (Act 13 of 2012) Erie is not one of the qualifying counties

Realty Transfer Tax ("RTT") Funds (Act 58 of 2015) All 67 counties are eligible

National Housing Trust Fund ("HTF"), Each state receives 3 million, 90% of which is to be used for low income households in rental units

Open this link below for a complete list of the first round of 2019 PHARE summary awards to see how other county agencies, municipalities, county governments, for profit and non-profit organizations are working together to increase affordable housing in their communities.

[https://www.phfa.org/forms/phare\\_program\\_phare\\_fund/funding\\_announcements/2019\\_project\\_summaries\\_final.pdf](https://www.phfa.org/forms/phare_program_phare_fund/funding_announcements/2019_project_summaries_final.pdf)

**SDHP Programming;** Webinars and trainings on various topics will be offered, please refer to the handout and contact me if you would like to know more about the topics

### **811 PRA Updates (811 Project Rental Assistance)**

- **Erie County** has a very short wait list so referrals are strongly encouraged. Erie only has one property currently participating and that is Villa Maria II located at 815 Plum Street in Erie. They have three 2BR units. (again, that doesn't mean they are available but rather that's what the property committed to for the program) HANDS will also have another participating property that is breaking ground in April and most if not all will be 1 bedroom units.
- **Mercer** has a short wait list so referrals are strongly encouraged. Mercer has two properties, Arlington Manor 835 Arlington Dr, Greenville, and Brandy Springs in Mercer. Five 1BR units and one 2BR unit at Arlington, five 1BR units at Brandy Springs
- **Jefferson** has a short wait list at the location of Ridgewood Greene in Reynoldsville has five 1BR units committed to the program
- **Beaver** short wait list. Koppel Terrace in Koppel, PA has four 1BR units and Riverview Apartments- four 1BR units
- **Butler** has a healthy wait list. Madison Grove in Slippery Rock has four 1BR apartments committed.
- **Warren-Forest** has no wait list with units at Rivercourt Apartments in Tionesta. They have one 1BR and one 2BR unit committed.



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Clarion, Cameron, Elk, Clearfield, McKean, Potter, Venango, and Crawford are currently not active with the 811 PRA on the property end. If providers from that area want to refer individuals to the 811 wait list they may still do so. Individuals can select up to three counties if they wish and they may change their interested counties at any time.

Local Lead Agencies: Have some copies of Western PA, SDHP's Region 3 PHFA's list of LLAs:

[https://www.phfa.org/forms/local\\_lead\\_agencies/dhs-local-lead-agencies.pdf](https://www.phfa.org/forms/local_lead_agencies/dhs-local-lead-agencies.pdf)

If you or your agency want more information on 811 PRA:

- Upcoming Overview for 811 (Wed. October 23 @ 10 am)
- Request to participate on the webinar by e-mailing [811@sdhp.org](mailto:811@sdhp.org)

### **12:00 pm Physical Health Managed Care Initiatives, Updates & Upcoming Events**

- Aetna Better Health Plan – No update shared.
- AmeriHealth Caritas– Mr. Smith shared the following information:
  - Erie, Crawford Counties: Titusville, YMCA, Meadville BC Event
- Gateway Health Plan- Mr. Barney shared the following information:
  - Health Literacy Month
  - Medicaid – Working with the Social Determinants of Health
- UPMC For You- Mr. Boykin shared the following information:
  - 10/30/19 Sponsoring the Health Education Advisory Meeting – This is our Fourth Annual Spanish Meeting
  - 12/06/19 Downtown Delights

### **12:05 pm Behavioral Health Managed Care Updates & Upcoming Events**

- Community Care Behavioral Health- Ms. Babo shared the following information:
  - Re-assigned Community Relations Coordinators
  - Erie:
    - 11/06/19 1:00pm – 2:30pm St. Martin's Center – Adult Member Meeting
    - 11/07/19 12:00pm St. John's Lutheran Church – Family Member Meeting
  - Other Meetings:
    - 10/13/19 Bradford – Parent Member Meeting
    - 10/23/19 Coudersport – Adult Member Meeting
- VBH/Beacon Health Options- Ms. Thomas shared the following information:
  - We are officially Beacon Health Options, the VBH can be dropped.
  - 11/07/19 Acknowledging the Journey – Crawford, Venango, Mercer Counties



**12:10 pm Community Based Organization Updates & Upcoming Events**

- CSP Meeting – At Disability Options Network, New Castle, PA

**12:18 pm Consumer & Family Feedback**

- No updates shared by the Committee nor the Audience in regards to Consumer and Family Feedback.

**12:20 pm Open Discussion**

- Ms. Capper from UPMC's Special Needs Unit shared the following information:
  - We are currently revamping our Special Needs Unit
  - Working with DHS
  - Have a Case Manage Unit
  - Working to increase our Warm Transfers

**12:00 pm Adjourn**

- Please complete the survey in your packet, your feedback is very important to us.

**Total Number of Attendees: 38**

**Committee Meeting minutes and presentations available at [www.enrollnow.net](http://www.enrollnow.net)**

**Next Meeting:** HealthChoices Advisory Committee Meeting NorthWest Zone  
April 2020  
Date, Time, Location – To Be Determined