

Tuesday, March 3, 2025, 11:00 am
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)
Location (in-person): 1432 Wilkins Rd Erie, PA 16505
Location (virtual): [zoom info](#)

Chair: Ally Hindman
Co-Chair: Nicole Burton
Scribe: Kathleen Shiomos

1. Call to Order

Ally Hindman, Community Relations Representative for AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania (ACP) Community HealthChoices (CHC) called the first quarter Participant Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the Northwest Zone to order at 11:03am.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Ally introduced the Community Outreach team as well as Nicole Burton, Manager of Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) for ACP CHC'S Northwest Zone.

Nguyen Nguyen, Manager of Community Outreach introduced herself as the manager.

Meeting attendees introduced themselves either in person, virtually, or in the Zoom chat. Ally also introduced a satellite meeting that was taking place at DuBois Nursing Home (DuBois, PA).

Ally, Community Relations Representative, completed the level setting for the meeting and reviewed the meeting agenda.

3. Health Education & Outreach Activities

Ally, Community Relations Representative reviewed the health education and outreach updates for the Northwest, including:

- Last quarter's Community Outreach team activities
- Partners in the Community
- Upcoming Community Outreach team activities
- Activities in your Community
- Wellness and Opportunity Center information and calendar of events
- Participant Communications
- Participant Handbook

Resources:

<https://www.amerihealthcaritaspa.com/community/mobile-wellness-center.aspx>
<https://www.amerihealthcaritaschc.com/participants/eng/health-wellness/newsletter.aspx>
<https://www.amerihealthcaritaschc.com/participants/eng/participant-handbook.aspx>



Feedback: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

4. CHC Programs and Updates: CHC HCBS CAHPS Presentation

Marci, Director of Quality Management, provided an overview of CHC HCBS CAHPS, a telephone-only survey for measuring experience with Medicaid HCBS delivered by Providers, including Service Coordinators. Calls are made from August through October each year and this presentation highlighted those results.

- Results:
 - The NW service area had a 7.9% response rate to the survey.
 - Improved scores from 2024 – 2025 for 11 of 16 measure
 - An HCBS CAHPS Intervention Work Group has been met to develop, implement, monitor, assess, review, and update the Improvement Plan.
 - Intervention Plan includes motivational interview training, teams across the plan meeting quarterly to review data and develop interventions and Service Coordinators using assessment to aid Participants in accessing needed services and activities.

Feedback:

A PAC Member asked how we can improve participation rates in the NW region. Marci explained that the entire eligible population was included on the sample list. A texting campaign was implemented and initially had a good response. In September, a list was sent to SCs to reach out to participants that did not respond. In the future they plan to make the second contact earlier in the campaign.

Next Steps: N/A

5. Resources from our Community Partners- Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians (LAMP) Overview

Amy Thrasher Hansen, LAMP Outreach and Engagement Supervisor presented information on Library for Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians (LAMP) program.

- LAMP serves Pennsylvanians with Blindness, visual or physical disability, deaf blindness, reading disability and veterans. LAMP offers:
 - Braille and audio books, magazines, downloads, braille e-Readers, digital audio playback equipment, large print books, audio-described DVD films and more.
- Applications for LAMP Services:
 - Individual and Institutions
 - Need a certifying authority the person is disabled. The authority can be doctor, optometrist, case worker, and cannot be a family member.
 - Application can be emailed, mailed for printed from <https://mylamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/New-application-10.3.2024.pdf>

Resources:

<https://www.mylamp.org/>



Feedback:

A PAC Member asked if LAMP has experience working with participants in a Nursing Facility? Amy offered more insight into their individual applications and Institutional accounts. There are multiple ways to access the benefit. There is an opportunity to have development days or lunch and learn sessions in facilities or at events. LAMP is also able to come out to a facility or location and help start a book club and provide materials so everyone who wants to take part is able.

Next Steps: Ally will send all presentations out following the meeting.

6. Resources from our Community Partners- PeerStar LLC: Peer Support Overview

Kelly Anne Smith, Regional Director overviewed the PeerStar LLC Program and Highlighted some of the services they offer in 34 PA counties.

- Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) deliver personalized support services including:
 - crisis intervention, assistance with community involvement and natural support networks, individual advocacy, promoting wellness and recovery, and facilitating self-help.
- Specialty services and advanced training cover:
 - Co-occurring disorders: comprehensive training, recovery planning, advocacy, and support,
 - Certified recovery services,
 - Forensics: setting recovery goals, identifying resources, coordinating referrals,
 - Dual diagnosis: offering encouragement, improving processing speed, helping set and achieve goals,
 - Senior Living Solutions: focused support for older adults, Medicaid-funded.
- Referral Process
 - 18 years or older
 - Eligible to receive Medical Assistance Benefits
 - Have a mental health diagnosis.
 - Motivated to recover and change.

Resources:

<https://www.peerstarllc.com/>

Feedback: *A Participant asked What would you say to providers that would like information about PeerStar? Kelly offered insight on that by explaining the best way was to connect to the website, there is a Get Support Now button, you can also call or email.*

Next Steps: N/A

7. HCBS Waiver Services Spotlight: Participant Directed Services

Lauren, Direct Care Workforce Program Manager, provided an overview of one of our waiver services, Participant Directed Services. These services and supports are for Participants who want to direct their services, hire their own workers, and keep a budget for their services under Services My Way.

- This program includes:
 - Helping the Participant with basic living skills such as eating, drinking; and household chores such as shopping, laundry, and cleaning; and help with participating in community activities.
 - This option allows you to hire your own direct care worker (DCW) and have more control over the care you receive.



- If the Participant-Directed Community Supports option is chosen, the Participant is known as the common law employer (CLE). The CLE must:
 - Hire, train, and schedule the DCW.
 - Complete all paperwork on time.
 - Monitor the DCW's hours.
 - Submit approved time sheets for the DCW.
- Financial Management for this service is through Tempus Unlimited Inc
 - The Participant will have help from the Financial Management Services (FMS) provider.
 - The FMS will process payroll and tax withholding, Issue paychecks and manage tax records.
 - The FMS can instruct Participants and DCW's around technology for submitting and approving shifts.

Resources:

<https://pa.tempusunlimited.org/>

<https://pa.tempusunlimited.org/resources/#resource-tabs|0>

<https://www.amerihealthcaritaschc.com/participants/participant-handbook>

Feedback:

A Participant asked if their general direct care worker training? Lauren explained that Tempus does monthly training, weekly training, and new hire training. The Service Coordinators have information they can pass on to the Participants and their direct care workers. There are also many resources from Tempus and AmeriHealth Caritas for Direct Care Workers.

Next Steps: N/A

8. Open Forum

Nguyen gave a reminder about Appeals, Grievances and State Fair Hearings, noting that any Participant who would like to initiate such processes can contact Participant Services 1-855-235-5115 or TTY 1-855-235-5112

Ally encouraged any meeting attendees with specific questions related to the topics presented or any concerns they may have to bring them up at this time. The post PAC survey will be sent out along with the meeting materials. Resources that we share or are requested during the PAC meetings will be sent to the group after the meeting. They will also be on the AmeriHealth Caritas Community HealthChoices website under the Community tab. <https://www.amerihealthcaritaschc.com/community/index.aspx>

Feedback: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

9. Next Meeting

Ally announced that 2026 second quarter PAC meeting for the Northwest zone will be held on June 2, 2026. We will follow up with mail, phone calls, and email.



10. Meeting Adjourned

Ally adjourned the meeting at 12:15 pm.


Internal Attendance (In-person= P, Virtual = V)

Method of Participation	Internal Staff	Title
V	Nguyen N	Manager, Community Outreach
P	Ally H.	Community Relations Rep
V	Fiorella S. T.	Community Relations Rep
V	Yolanda S.	Community Relations Rep
V	Nicole B.	Co-chair/Manager SC
P	Kayla W.	Service Coordinator
V	Marci K.	Director of Quality Management
V	Lauren C.	DCW Workforce Program Manager,
V	Robert M.	Housing Program Manager
V	Lea S.	Housing Coordinator
V	Jennifer C.	Service Coordination Supervisor

External Attendance (In-person= P, Virtual = V, Member not present= M)

Method of Participation	Name	Title
P	JS	NF Participant
V	TM	LTSS Provider
M	JH	LTSS Provider
M	SW	PH, BH, DH Provider
M	SE	PH, BH, DH Provider
M	KM	LTSS Provider
M	NM	LTSS Participant
M	HK	LTSS Participant
M	LB	BH Provider
V	JW	Participant