

Thursday, March 5, 11:00 am
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)
Location (in-person): 20 W Broad Street, Hazelton, PA 18201
Location (virtual): [zoom info](#)

Chair: Fiorella Salas Toledo
Co-Chair: Tracy Brekke
Scribe: Kathleen Shiomos

1. Call to Order

Fiorella Salas Toledo, Community Relations Representative for AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania (ACP) Community HealthChoices (CHC) called the third quarter Participant Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the Northeast Zone to order at 11:03am.

2. Welcome, Introductions, and Updates

Fiorella introduced the Community Outreach team as well as Tracy Brekke, Manager of Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) for ACP CHC'S Northeast Zone.

Meeting attendees introduced themselves either in person, virtually, or in the Zoom chat. Fiorella also introduced satellite meetings that were taking place at Edenbrook North Skilled Nursing Facility (Williamsport, PA), Forest Hills Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center (Weatherly, PA), and Highlands Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center (Laporte, PA).

Nguyen Nguyen, Manager of Community Outreach, completed the level setting for the meeting. Fiorella reviewed the meeting agenda.

**Note: this presentation was translated into Spanish for in-person attendees by Fiorella Salas Toledo (Community Relations Representative).*

3. Health Education & Outreach Activities

Fiorella, Community Relations Representative, reviewed the health education and outreach updates for the Northeast, 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/wellness-center-hazleton.aspx>
- <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

**Note: this presentation was translated into Spanish for in-person attendees by Fiorella Salas Toledo (Community Relations Representative).*

4. CHC Programs and Updates-CHC Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS)

Marci Kramer, Director of Quality Management, discussed the 2025 Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) Survey Results.

- The Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) Survey is a telephone only survey developed for measuring experience with Medicaid HCBS delivered by providers, including Service Coordinators.
- Our vendor, Press Ganey conducts the survey, and calls are made from August through October each year.
- Survey response rates are calculated individually for each of the five regions and a statewide aggregate rate is calculated.
- There are 15 core measures which cover topics such as:
 - Getting needed services
 - Communication with Providers, Case Managers, and Service Coordinators.
 - Choice of services
 - Medical transportation
 - Personal safety
 - Community inclusion, and empowerment.
- We met goal of 86% for 10 of 16 measures.
- Improved scores from 2024 – 2025 for 11 of 16 measure
- Some measures did not meet 86% Performance.
- An HCBS CAHPS Intervention Work Group has been meeting to develop, implement, monitor, assess, review, and update the Improvement Plan.
- Intervention Plan includes:
 - Service Coordinators will receive training in motivational interviewing with the goal of increasing Participant engagement in their care planning.
 - The Quality department, Participant services, transportation and Complaints and Grievances departments will continue to meet quarterly to review data and develop interventions to improve Participant satisfaction with transportation, access to their Service Coordinator, Personal Assistance Services, and Cognitive Rehabilitation staff.
 - Service Coordinators will use the Plan of Care’s social determinants of health section to identify activities important to the Participant and assist them in accessing their needed services.



Feedback: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

**Note: this presentation was translated into Spanish for in-person attendees by Fiorella Salas Toledo (Community Relations Representative).*

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

Aimee Thrasher-Hanson, Outreach and Engagement Supervisor for Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians, presented information about their program.

- Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians serves residents with blindness, visual or physical disability, deaf-blindness, or reading disability. In addition, they can provide large print books for people who have a decline in their vision.
- Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians offers:
 - Braille and audio books, magazines, downloads
 - Braille e-Readers
 - Digital audio playback equipment
 - Large print books
 - Audio-described DVD films
 - All physical LAMP resources are mailed and postage-free returned in boxes or bags.
- How to sign up for services?
 - Application can be emailed, mailed or printed from MyLAMP.org.
 - A Certifying authority needs to complete part of the form. A Certifying Authority can be one of the following: Doctor of Medicine, doctor of osteopathy, ophthalmologist, optometrist, psychologist, registered nurse, therapist, or professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public or welfare agencies (such as an educator, social worker, case worker, counselor, rehabilitation teacher, certified reading specialist, school psychologist, superintendent, or librarian).
 - Once application is completed, this can be mailed, faxed, or scanned and emailed back to the Library of Accessible Media.
 - Service is completely FREE for those who qualify.
- One approved for the program, how do you request material?
 - By telephone (800-222-1754 or 800-242-0586)
 - By email (LAMP@freelibrary.org or info@myLAMP.org)
 - By online form (MyLAMP.org)
 - By using the BARD app to download materials to a reader's smart device
 - By mail
 - In-person

Resources

<https://mylamp.org/>

Feedback:

A PAC member asked if they have experience working with Participants in a Nursing Facility? Aimee mentioned they have 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. More people are eligible than they realize.



Next Steps: Fiorella will send this information to the group.

**Note: this presentation was translated into Spanish for in-person attendees by Fiorella Salas Toledo (Community Relations Representative).*

6. Resources from our Community Partners- PeerStar Overview

Kelly Anne Smith, Program Manager Regional Outreach Director for Peerstar, presented information about Peer Support Overview.

- Medicaid began funding Peer Support Services in 2007, and Peerstar of Pennsylvania began providing peer support services in 2008.
- They offer services in 34 Pennsylvania counties.
- Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) use their lived experience with mental health recovery to walk beside those that are currently struggling. Certified Peer Specialists provide one-on-one support services such as:
 - Crisis support
 - Community roles and natural support
 - Individual advocacy
 - Self-Help/self-improvement
 - Wellness and recovery
 - Social Networking
- Peerstar employs over 400 staff with more than 80% having lived experience.
- Certified Peer Specialists (CPS)'s Training:
 - They receive a two-week training certification from a state-contracted vendor.
 - They must complete a test to become Credentialed by the Pennsylvania Certification Board.
 - They are given an additional week of orientation, and specialized training by Peerstar, which includes topics such as Forensics, Co-Occurring, Dual Diagnosis, Senior Living Solutions/Empowered Aging, Wellness Coaching, Boundaries, Ethics, and much more.
- Referral Process
 - 18 years or older
 - Eligible to receive Medical Assistance Benefits
 - Have a mental health diagnosis or serious emotional disturbance.
 - Motivated to recover and change.

Resources

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

Feedback: A PAC member asked what would you say to providers that would like information about Peerstar? Kelly Anne mentioned providers and seniors can go to the website, call or email her.

Next Steps: Fiorella will be send this information to the group.

**Note: this presentation was translated into Spanish for in-person attendees by Fiorella Salas Toledo (Community Relations Representative).*



7. Home and Community Based Services Waiver Services Spotlight- Participant Directed Services

Lauren Cottington, Direct Care Worker Workforce Program Manager, discussed the Participant Directed Services.

- 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 PAC member asked if AmeriHealth Caritas CHC provides general direct care worker training? Lauren mentioned Tempus Unlimited Inc. provides training on a monthly and weekly basis as well as new hire training. The Service Coordinator has information they can pass on to the Participants and their direct care workers.

Next Steps: Fiorella will be send this information to the group.

**Note: this presentation was translated into Spanish for in-person attendees by Fiorella Salas Toledo (Community Relations Representative).*

8. Open Forum

Fiorella 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.

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.

Nguyen extended a thank you to everyone who participated in today's meeting and encouraged attendees to join the next meeting.



Feedback: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

**Note: this presentation was translated into Spanish for in-person attendees by Fiorella Salas Toledo (Community Relations Representative).*

9. Next Meeting

The 2nd Quarter PAC meeting for the Northeast zone will be held on June 4, 2026. Fiorella will follow up with mail, phone calls, and email reminders.

Today's attendees will receive a post-PAC follow-up email with the resources from today's meeting as well as a feedback survey. Attendees are encouraged to complete the survey and return it to the Community Outreach team.

**Note: this presentation was translated into Spanish for in-person attendees by Fiorella Salas Toledo (Community Relations Representative).*

10. Meeting Adjourned

Fiorella adjourned the meeting at 1:26 pm after all inquiries were answered.



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

Method of Participation	Internal Staff	Title
P	Nguyen N.	Manager, Community Outreach
V	Ally H.	Community Relations Rep
P	Fiorella S. T.	Community Relations Rep
V	Yolanda S.	Community Relations Rep
V	Tracy B.	Co-chair/Manager SC
P	Michelle B.	Supervisor SC
P	Alyson B.	Supervisor SC
P	Alicia C.	Supervisor SC
V	Mary B.	Supervisor SC
V	Lindsey H.	Supervisor SC
V	Joanna C.	Housing Coordinator
V	Jessica C.	Housing Coordinator
V	Lauren C.	Direct Care Worker Workforce Program Manager
V	Jocelyn S.	Director Service Coordinator LTSS
V	Lea S.	Housing Coordinator
V	Marci K.	Director Quality Management
V	Melanie W.	Behavioral Health Coordinator
V	Samara F.	Workforce Initiative Program Manager
V	Shirleyanne W.	Coordinator Quality Improvement
V	Yvette T.	Regulatory Affairs Analyst
V	Jennifer F.B.	Manager LTSS Behavioral Health/Collaborative Services
V	Kathleen S.	Executive Assistant II
P	Ashley G.	Service Coordinator
P	Madison B.	Service Coordinator
P	Nicole S.	Service Coordinator



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

Method of Participation	Name	Title
M	PR	LTSS Participant
M	LL	Family Member
M	LN	Caregiver
P	FT	NFI Participant
M	JA	NFI Participant
M	OV	LTSS Participant
P	CN	LTSS Provider- PAS-Age in Place
M	TB, JDS	LTSS Provider- Genentech
V	VW	LTSS Participant
V	MW	Family Caregiver
M	CS	CBO- BFSA
M	KL	CBO-MyCIL
M	CC	LTSS Provider- HDM- Mom's Meals
M	MG	CBO-UNC
V	SB	LTSS Provider- PERS- VRI Cares
M	AC	CBO- RTFCIL
M	KH	CBO- CRI
M	DK, JM,	Behavioral Health- Lycoming-Clinton Joinder Programs
M	CB	CBO- Lehigh Valley CIL
M	KK	LTSS Provider-PAS- Comfort Keepers
M	S	LTSS Provider- PAS- Global Health and Home Care
M	JD	CBO- UDS Foundation
M	MB	Physical Health Provider- AR Health
M	CJ	Behavioral Health- Clarion Psychiatric Center
P	DS	CBO- Alzheimer's Association
M	CB	Hospice Provider- Commonwealth Hospice of Berwick
M	KS	Lackawanna AAA- SHARE program
V	NF, BE	Dental, Primary Care and Behavioral Health- The Wright Center



V	JH	LTSS Participant
M	BN	LTSS Participant
M	AMN	Family member
P	ET	LTSS Participant
P	MT	Caregiver
P	JT	LTSS Participant
P	NA	LTSS Participant
M	JGP	LTSS Participant
M	DJM	LTSS Participant
M	LGJ	Caregiver
P	AG	Caregiver
P	MMC	LTSS Participant
P	LF	NFI Participant
P	MG	NFI Participant
P	AR	NFI Participant
P	NV	LTSS Participant
P	VM	NFI Participant
P	MMM	LTSS Participant
P	AV	LTSS Participant
P	TM	NFI Participant
P	KS	NFI Participant
P	BL	NFI Participant
P	MG	NFI Participant
P	NP	NFI Participant
P	MC	LTSS Participant
P	CP	LTSS Participant
P	SB	LTSS Provider- PAS- Help at Home
P	MA	Wider Circle
P	MK	Wider Circle



P	RP	CBO-Hazleton Integration Project
P	ER	CBO-Hazleton Integration Project