

Thursday, March 10, 2026, 11:00 am
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)
Location (in-person): 600 Penn St 3rd FL Reading, PA 19602
Location (virtual): [zoom info](#)

Chair: Nguyen Nguyen
Co-Chair: Johnny Cartagena
Scribe: Fiorella Salas Toledo

1. Call to Order

Nguyen Nguyen, Manager of Community Outreach for AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania (ACP) Community HealthChoices (CHC) called the fourth quarter Participant Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the Lehigh Capital Zone to order at 11:05 am.

2. Welcome, Introductions, and Updates

Nguyen introduced the Community Outreach team as well as new PAC Chair Johnny Cartagena, Manager of Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) for ACP CHC'S Lehigh/Capital Zone.

Meeting attendees introduced themselves either in-person, virtually, or in the Zoom chat. Nguyen also introduced a satellite meeting that was taking place at Laurel Lakes Rehab and Wellness Center Skilled Nursing Facility (Chambersburg, PA).

Nguyen completed the level setting for the meeting and Jhonny reviewed the meeting agenda.

3. Health Education & Outreach Activities

Nguyen, Manager of Community Outreach, reviewed the health education and outreach updates for the Lehigh Capital, 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/reading>
<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. 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 a Service Coordinator would be a certifying authority. Aimee responded that Service Coordinators would most certainly be a certifying authority for this application.

A PAC Member asked if these materials are available in different languages. Aimee commented that these materials are available in other languages such as Spanish. However, their lists are limited. They are working on having Spanish speaking people voice record the audiobooks currently.



Nguyen mentioned that this service is available for Participants residing in the nursing facilities. Aimee commented that nursing facility Participants interested in receiving these services can work along with the activities director to open personal accounts. There are times when they work with activities directors at nursing facilities to assist with book clubs.

Next Steps: The Community Outreach team will send this information to the group.

5. 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.
- 2026: 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



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 if Peer Support is given to children. Kelly Anne mentioned it is, but it depends on the context.

A PAC Member asked if presenter thinks Peer Support should be integrated into every nursing facility, and what does she see in Berks County. Kelly Anne mentioned that Peer Support is a program that benefits people in nursing facilities and has had success with the services in these environments. There are, however, some difficulties working alongside nursing facilities. Some nursing facilities are struggling financially, and are understaffed, so many of them think that Peer Support will be there to judge, a concern that Kelly Anne dispelled.

A PAC Member asked how does this work? Kelly Anne mentioned that usually the Peer Support specialist and Participant sit down to talk about all the things the Participant needs and goal plan.



A PAC member asked who certifies mental health conditions? Kelly Anne mentioned this could be a primary care physician or medical director in a nursing facility. Kelly Anne added a certified peer support only talks with the Participant, and they are HIPPA complaint. If the Participant is in the nursing facility, the certified peer support

Next Steps: Community Outreach team will send this information to the group.

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.amerhealthcaritaschc.com/participants/participant-handbook>

Feedback: N/A

Next Steps: The Community Outreach team will send this information to the group.

8. Open Forum

Nguyen 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

9. Next Meeting

The 2nd Quarter PAC meeting of 2026 for the Lehigh Capital zone will be held on June 9th, 2026. The Community Outreach team 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.

10. Meeting Adjourned

Nguyen adjourned the meeting at 12:45 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	Carrie W.	Manager SC
V	Kathleen S.	Executive Assistant II
V	Jennifer F.B.	Manager LTSS Behavioral Health/Collaborative Services
V	Jasmine M.	Health Equity and Quality Analyst
P	Deanna S.	Sup. Service Coordinator
V	Emily H.	Service Coordinator
V	Kathleen W.	Service Coordinator
V	Lea S.	Housing Coordinator
V	Robert M.	Housing Program Manager
V	Sarah K.	Sup. Service Coordinator
V	Singin C.	Behavioral Health Coordinator
V	Steven D.	Sup. Service Coordinator
V	Tammy T.	Director Service Coordinator
P	Abigail M.	Service Coordinator
P	Johnny C.	Chair/Manager SC
V	Delia S.	Regulatory Affairs Analyst Sr.
V	Kimberly R.	Sup. Service Coordinator
V	Lionel W.	Coordinator Employment LTSS
V	Lynn S.	Manager SC
V	Marci K.	Director of Quality
V	Richard R.	Sup. Service Coordinator



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

Method of Participation	Name	Title
P	MG	LTSS Participant
M	Th. W	NF Participant
M	Ti. W	NF Participant
P	HW	LTSS Participant
V	GG	LTSS Participant
P	CD	LTSS Provider
P	AV	Dental, BH, PH
V	KS	LTSS Provider- Peerstar
V	CT	LTSS Provider-Aveanna
V	RS	NF Participant
V	SB	LTSS Provider- VRI
V	CC	LTSS Provider- Mom's Meals
V	WK	LTSS Provider- Aveanna
V	AE	Allentown Food Bank
M	ER	Dental, BH, PH
M	EPP	LTSS Participant
M	EB	LTSS Participant
M	KG	DCW
M	DH	NF Participant
M	BO	NF Participant
M	ME	NF Participant
P	MD	NF Participant
P	EN	NF Participant
P	JK	NF Participant
P	BB	NF Participant