

Lackawanna-Susquehanna Behavioral Health/Intellectual Disabilities/Early Intervention Program



Program Accomplishments 2022

I. Overview

The Lackawanna-Susquehanna Behavioral Health/Intellectual Disabilities/Early Intervention Program is pleased to present a summary of Program Accomplishments achieved in 2022.

In the face of many challenges, including flat funding from the PA Department of Human Services for County Programs and the ongoing workforce staffing crisis, the Program continues to collaborate with our contracted providers and Health Choices partners to provide comprehensive behavioral health, intellectual disability, and early intervention services in support of our mission: *to connect consumer satisfaction, outcome evaluation and accountability with the planning, procurement, and the efficient management of effective services and supports.*

We are pleased to highlight areas of accomplishment for 2022 that we believe reflect our hard work and commitment to the residents of Lackawanna and Susquehanna Counties.

II. Administration and Fiscal

❖ Ongoing Support to the Provider Network through Bridge Payment Funding

The Program supported Community Mental Health Centers and intellectual Disability community-based services through an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA). APA payments are available when approved by the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) and Office of Developmental Programs and are designed to:

- Offer providers financial support to stabilize the workforce (pay/preserve essential direct care staff); and
- continue to provide individuals with access to essential mental health and intellectual disability services and help people manage other social needs.

❖ Other Administrative and Fiscal Support for New and Innovative Projects

- The Program provided rate increases for County funded services matching rate increases for Waiver and Health Choices services, thereby assuring consistent rates across all funding streams for the provider network.
- The Program collaborated closely with our peer county programs to support the grand opening of Renovare Place, the multi-county Residential Treatment Facility for Adults (RTF-A).
- The program participated in a mandatory monitoring by the PA Department of Human Services Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Bureau of Policy, Planning, & Program

Development for the fiscal compliance of the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant program.

- The Program has provided administrative and fiscal support to the System of Care Grant and Crisis Grant initiatives initiated in August 2021.

III. Behavioral Health

❖ **Restructuring Crisis**

Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Unit

With reinvestment funds allocated by the Health Choices Program, and in conjunction with the Northeast Behavioral Health Care Consortium (NBHCC), the Program has developed a plan to create a Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Unit (CRSU) which will be operated by Scranton Counseling Center. The CRSU will provide short-term (under 24 hours) observation and crisis stabilization services to adults aged eighteen (18) and older, as a walk-in service, in a home-like, non-hospital environment. In addition, the CRSU will offer crisis residential short stay of three to five days for individuals requiring short term stabilization. Crisis receiving and stabilization services offer the community a no-wrong-door access to mental health and substance use care; operating much like a hospital emergency department that accepts all walk-ins, ambulance, fire, and police drop-offs. The CRSU will offer diversion from hospital emergency departments and criminal justice system involvement. The CRSU is expected to open in June 2023.

❖ **Behavioral Health (BH) Works Screening**

The Lackawanna Susquehanna BHI/DEI Program has partnered with Drexel University to initiate use of the BH Works screening tool. Drexel is currently implementing a grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to use BH Works in Student Assistance Programs (SAP) across Pennsylvania. The Program's SAP providers began implementing the BH works screening tool in school districts in both Lackawanna and Susquehanna Counties with the 2022-2023 school year. The Program is also partnering with Drexel to utilize the tool for crisis and outpatient services at the community mental health centers.

IV. Intellectual Disabilities

❖ **ID Awareness- Direct Support Professional Appreciation & Recognition**

In March 2022, to celebrate Developmental Disability Awareness Month, and in conjunction with local provider organizations, the Program recognized three (3) outstanding and dedicated staff: Jean Ann Lance from Allied Services, Michele Mandarano from St. Joseph's Center, and Rachel Kania from Goodwill Industries. The three individuals were presented with a certificate of recognition, and the Program sponsored a digital billboard campaign to share the good work these three exemplary staff are engaged in with the community.

❖ **Specialized Training**

The Program, through the Quality Management (QM) plan, identified the need for ongoing additional trainings for the local provider network. In response, we hosted four (4) training opportunities for our local network of providers. Training topics included: Trauma Informed Care, Professional Boundaries, Healthy Sexuality, Impact of Trauma & Positive Approaches, Understanding and Approaching Sexual Behaviors, and Understanding Gender Identity. These trainings were offered to increase understanding of human behavior, enhance rapport building strategies, and increase the overall knowledge of staff working in the field, reduce the need to engage with emergency services, and decrease unnecessary emergency

room visits for behavioral concerns. The program also hosting a training with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Committee to promote understanding of Racial Discrimination, Bias, Equity, and Inclusion.

❖ **Heroes for Humanity- Abuse Prevention**

As part of our Program’s Quality Management (QM) Plan, we launched our inaugural abuse prevention campaign- *Heroes for Humanity, Advocates Honor Award* in July 2022 with the aim to reduce instances of abuse within the joinder and recognize exemplary staff who work for providers of Behavioral Health and or Developmental Disability Services. Provider organizations were asked to nominate staff who demonstrate awareness of abuse and neglect, understanding of prevention strategies, leadership, care, dedication, compassion, positive practices, and who work tirelessly to improve the lives of the individuals they support. The Program is recognizing one staff per month by meeting with providers to celebrate their nominated staff and to present them with the *Advocates Honor Award*. Photos are taken at the award presentation and a one-page announcement is shared via email with our provider network and is posted on our website.

V. Early Intervention

❖ **Capacity Building**

The Program has expanded our capacity to meet the increasing need for Infant Toddler Early Intervention Services in both counties. We have established contracts with two new EI Provider agencies and have expanded Service Coordination by contracting with an additional Service Coordination Organization to support infants, toddlers, and families in Upper Lackawanna County and Susquehanna County.