

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



Program Accomplishments 2023

I. Overview

The Lackawanna-Susquehanna Behavioral Health/Intellectual Disabilities/Early Intervention Program is pleased to present a summary of Program Accomplishments achieved in 2023.

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 2023 that we believe reflect our hard work and commitment to the residents of Lackawanna and Susquehanna Counties.

II. Administration and Fiscal

❖ Other Administrative and Fiscal Support for New and Innovative Projects

- The Program maintained rate increases for County funded services matching rates for both Waiver and Health Choices services, thereby assuring consistent rates across all funding streams for the provider network.
- The Program continues to collaborate closely with our peer county programs to support Renovare Place, the multi-county Residential Treatment Facility for Adults (RTF-A), all five(5) beds allocated to Lackawanna and Susquehanna residents are full.
- 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.

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 received their operating license on November 22, 2023 and is expected to open in December 2023.

❖ **Forensics**

Forensic Multidisciplinary Team Meetings

In September 2023, the Program began facilitating monthly Forensic Multidisciplinary Team meetings to enhance communication, collaboration, and increase positive outcomes for individuals moving through the criminal legal system. Members are present from the Lackawanna County Prison, the Courts, Scranton Counseling Center (forensic case management and IMED),

❖ **Reinvigorating Peer Supports- Lackawanna County Prison**

Peer Supports began within the Lackawanna County Prison with the aim of facilitating more effective transitions before the Covid-19 pandemic and ceased during the pandemic because of restricted access to the prison and staffing shortages. The need for this service to resume became evident in early 2023 and a new contract for the 2023-2024 fiscal year was created. Peerstar is working to identify staff who meet criteria to go into the prison to provide support to folks who will be re-entering the community imminently.

IV. Intellectual Disabilities

❖ **ID Awareness- Event in Susquehanna County**

The Program hosted an ID Awareness event at Clifford Township Park with the goal of increasing the public's understanding of access and availability of our service system. The well attended event brought together representatives from local provider agencies, supports coordination organizations, and the PA Office of Developmental Programs, who were available to share information with individuals and families on various services and programs offered and available throughout the county joinder. Food, games, and giveaways were provided to the community.

❖ **Specialized Training**

The Program, through our Quality Management plan, identified a need for ongoing additional training for the local provider network. In response, we hosted a training opportunity for direct service professionals and other front-line staff with the aim of improving the quality of service-delivery and staff competency. The full day training seminar focused on improving staff capacity with supporting individuals with Intellectual and developmental disabilities that have complex behavioral health needs. Participants received training certificates upon completion of the seminar which can be used toward their required annual training hours.

❖ **Heroes for Humanity- Abuse Prevention**

As part of our Program's Quality Management Plan, we launched an abuse prevention campaign- Heroes for Humanity, Advocates Honor Award in July 2022 with the aim to reduce instances of abuse within the joiner and recognize exemplary staff who work for providers of Behavioral Health and or Developmental Disability Services. This campaign concluded in June 2023. Provider organizations nominated staff who demonstrated 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 recognized at least one staff per month and met with providers to celebrate these staff and to present them with the Advocates Honor Awards. Photos were taken at the award presentation and a one-page announcement was shared via email with our provider network and posted to our website.

V. Early Intervention

❖ **Implementation/refinement of Coaching Model**

The Program has continued efforts to support and implement the Early Intervention Infant and Toddler's Coaching model of service delivery. Members from the Coaching Core Leadership Team, alongside endorsed coaches from Lackawanna and Susquehanna Counties created an informational video in March 2023 which provides an overview of the service delivery model and the positive impact it has on both families and Providers of Early Intervention Services. Revised session documentation was introduced in July 2023, which is intended to document service delivery and progress made towards outcomes.