

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



Program Accomplishments 2024

I. Overview

The Lackawanna-Susquehanna Behavioral Health/Intellectual Disabilities/Early Intervention Program is pleased to present a summary of Program Accomplishments achieved in 2024.

In the face of many challenges, including insufficient funding increases 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*. While additional funds were received in 2024, they are insufficient to address long-term needs and service expansion.

We are pleased to highlight areas of accomplishment for 2024 that are reflective of 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, thereby assuring consistent rates across all funding streams for the provider network.
- The program continues to collaborate closely with our county colleagues to support Renovare Place, a multi-county Residential Treatment Facility for Adults (RTF-A) which supports individuals with forensic involvement and serious mental illness. Five (5) beds are allocated for Lackawanna and Susquehanna residents, and there is a waitlist for this service.
- The Program continues to expend Community Mental Health Services Block Grant Funds to support the Crisis Co-Responder program at Scranton Counseling Center. These funds were set to expire in 2023-2024, but an extension was obtained and the funds now have to be spent by June 2025.
- In June 2024, the Bureau of Financial Operations began an audit of the Program, which is ongoing at this time.

III. Behavioral Health

❖ **Restructuring Crisis**

Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Unit

In January 2024, Scranton Counseling Center opened an eight (8) bed Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Unit at 329 Cherry St., in Scranton. The program was made possible through the use of reinvestment funds allocated by the Health Choices Program, and in conjunction with the Northeast Behavioral Health Care Consortium (NBHCC). The CRSU provides 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 offers crisis residential short stay of three to five days for individuals requiring short-term stabilization. This Program offers the community 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 offers a diversion from hospital emergency departments and criminal justice system involvement.

The Program was granted American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support individuals without insurance or private insurance to be served at the CRSU for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year.

❖ **New Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program**

Katie's Place Clubhouse

In May, 2024, Katie's Place Clubhouse, a recovery oriented Psychiatric Rehab program opened on Penn Avenue in downtown Scranton. The program was made possible using reinvestment funds allocated by the Health Choices Program, and in conjunction with the Northeast Behavioral Health Care Consortium (NBHCC). Katie's Place Clubhouse follows the standards of Clubhouse International, which strives to create a welcoming community for members striving for mental health recovery.

❖ **Forensics**

Forensic Multidisciplinary Team Meetings

The Program continues to facilitate 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 Intercept Model Early Diversion), Area Agency on Aging, and Drug & Alcohol Services.

IV. Intellectual Disabilities

❖ ID Awareness- Intelligent Lives Film Screening

March is Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Month, to raise awareness for what is possible for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the Program partnered with service providers to present a screening of the film *Intelligent Lives*. This film tells the stories of three individuals living with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are empowered to follow their desires and live the lives of their choosing. There were 134 attendees at the screening.

❖ Specialized Training

In response to numerous incidents, the Program sponsored two training courses for Direct Support Professionals focusing on Choking Prevention and Internet Safety. The trainings were facilitated at the IHM Center by Northeast Healthcare Quality Unit and New Leaf Supports, respectively, and were both well attended.

❖ Increased Waiver Enrollment

The Program worked in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs through several initiatives to remove 41 individuals from the emergency waiting list. These individuals were enrolled in Home and Community-Based waivers and were able to remain living in the community with the support of services.

❖ Medically Complex Children's Initiative

The Program has qualified St. Joseph's Center to provide and develop a Lifesharing Program for children with Medically Complex Conditions. This program, an initiative of the State, would allow children under the age of 22 with medically complex conditions to be diverted from congregated care settings and remain at home with families while receiving needed medical support.

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. The Coaching Core Leadership Team is conducting a survey beginning in December 2024 to identify how the team can better support Early Intervention providers implement family guided routine-based interventions.