

Chair: Lori Delmonaco
Co-Chair: Fiorella Salas Toledo
Scribe: Kathleen Shiomos
Date: Thursday, December 5, 2024,

Location (in-person):
20 W Broad St, Hazelton, PA 18201
Location (virtual): [zoom info](#)
Time: 11:00am-1:00pm

1. Call to Order

Fiorella Salas Toledo, Community Relations Representative, called the meeting to order at 11:05 am.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Fiorella Salas Toledo welcomed the group to the fourth quarter Participant Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the Northeast zone. Fiorella Salas Toledo announced the change to a virtual meeting due to weather. Fiorella Salas Toledo will make accommodations to provide PAC meeting information to any PAC members who planned to join in-person who could not join virtually. Fiorella Salas Toledo introduced the Community Outreach Team.

Feedback: N/A

Action items: Fiorella Salas Toledo met with a group of six PAC members in-person at the Hazleton Wellness Center on December 19th @ 10:00 am to review the PAC meeting agenda and information presented during the virtual meeting.

3. PAC Member Updates/Discussion

Fiorella Salas Toledo completed the level setting, including a reminder not to share Personal Health Information (PHI) during the meeting. Fiorella Salas Toledo reminded the PAC members that they can contact Nicole Ragab (Manager of Community Outreach CHC), Jasmine (Community Relations Representative in the Southeast Zone), Ally (Community Relations Representative in the Northwest and Southwest Zones), and Nguyen (Community Relations Representative in Lehigh Capital Zone), with any personal service-related questions, and they will help to connect them to their Service Coordinator. Nicole Ragab welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda and presenters and welcomed anyone on the line to introduce themselves.

Feedback: N/A

Action items: N/A

4. Health Education & Outreach Activities

Fiorella Salas Toledo presented the Community Outreach Team's health education and outreach updates:

- Participant Newsletter 3rd Edition 2024
 - The Participant Newsletters are available through the website as a digital copy. Physical copies can be made available to any Participant who requests them. These can also be in different languages as needed.
 - Link to newsletter:
<https://www.amerihealthcaritaschc.com/participants/eng/healthwellness/newsletter.aspx>



- Outreach Team Activities
 - 12/18/24 – Scranton Senior Community Center Holiday Party – Lackawanna County
 - 1/7/25 – 2025 Ready, Set, Go! Health and Wellness Fair – Luzerne County
 - 1/8/25 – Diabetes Health Education at Washington West Apt Bldg. – Lackawanna County
 - 1/17/25 – Diabetes Health Education at Pittston Senior Center – Luzerne County
- Community Resources
 - **Roads to Freedom CIL**, <https://www.facebook.com/RTFCIL>
24 East Third Street Williamsport, PA 17701
 - **Anthracite Region CIL**, <https://anthracitecil.org/contact-arcil/>
8 West Broad St. Suite 228 Hazleton, PA 18201
 - **MyCIL Center for Independent Living**, <https://www.mycil.org/>
1142 Sanderson Ave, Scranton, PA 18509
- Hazelton Wellness Center – 20 West Broad Street, Hazelton, PA 18201
 - 12/6/24 at 10:00 am – Easy Quick, Healthy Cooking
 - 12/11/24 at 1:30 pm – Yoga Flow with Lisa Mo
 - 12/12/24 at 10:00 am – Medicare Event
 - 12/16/24 at 9:15 am – Zumba Class
 - 12/18/24 – 11:30 am – Dealing with Stress through Journaling by Anna Shraud
- Mobile Wellness Unit
 - 12/17 - @ 12:00 PM – Health Education at Pocono Services for family and Children.
 - Link to Mobile Wellness Unit Calendar
<https://www.amerhealthcaritaspa.com/community/mobile-wellness-center.aspx>

Feedback: N/A

Action items: N/A

5. Health Education & Outreach Activities/Redetermination Reminder

Fiorella Salas Toledo presented the Redetermination Reminder.

- Update your address and phone number via online www.dhs.pa.ove/COMPASS, mobile App: myCOMPASS PA, phone at 1-877-395-8930 or in person at County Assistance Office.
- Sign up for alerts – at www.dhs.pa.gov/TEXT or eNotices at www.dhs.pa.gov/COMPASS
- Complete Renewal forms in timely manner at online www.dhs.pa.ove/COMPASS, on paper on in person at the County Assistance Office or via phone at 1-866-550-4355.

Feedback:

- Nicole Ragab thanked PAC members for successfully participating and providing input during an Ad Hoc PAC meeting back in August regarding possible changes of the Plan of Care (POC). Nicole provided an update of the recent changes of the POC including:
 - Reordering of POC sections for better flow.
 - Revising essential information regarding self-direction.
 - Adding free text fields to some areas including health information, prioritization of trigger events that lead to goals, and strengths and capabilities.

Feedback: N/A

Action items: N/A



6. Health Education & Outreach Activities/Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and other programs.

Nicole Ragab presented the Low-Income Household Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) information:

- LIHEAP helps low-income families pay heating bills. These can be by Cash Grants of \$300-\$1000. The qualifications depend on household size, income, and fuel type.
- LIHEAP Crisis Program - Households facing a heating crisis may be eligible for more benefits through the LIHEAP Crisis Program. If you have an emergency call your County Assistance Office.
- How to Apply: Apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us or download or request paper application at www.dhs.pa.gov or your County Assistance Office or contact LIHEAP.
- There is a Statewide Toll-free LIHEAP hotline 1-866-857-7095, which helps with home heating crisis situations. This is available 24-hours a day through your County Assistance Office (CAO).
- Commission on Economic Opportunity: Luzerne County: 1-800-822-0359 and Wyoming County: 1-800-836-4090.

Nicole Ragab presented Other Stay Warm Programs information:

- Contact your utility company. Your utility company can help explain what programs are available and help you get set up with the one that is right for you.
- Dollar Energy Fund's Hardship Program – It is a one-time grant applied directly to your utility bill. Call 1-800-683-7036 or visit the website <https://www.dollarenergy.org/programs/?state=pennsylvania> for more information.

Feedback:

- PAC member asked if he could receive the LIHEAP information via email. PAC member mentioned he has a Bhutanese Foundation for his community and invests a lot of financial resources into his establishment. PAC member asked if his situation would be eligible to receive LIHEAP services.
 - Nicole Ragab responded that calling LIHEAP would be the best option to receive an answer. Also, Fiorella Salas Toledo will provide this information via email.

Action items: N/A

7. CHC Programs & Updates/Health Equity and Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services

Anne Dodd, Health Equity & Quality Analyst presented the following information on Health Equity and Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (HECLAS):

Program Health Equity 2023 Program Evaluation:

- Create program to help African American and Hispanic participants control their blood pressure, which was partially met.
- Create a Health Equity advisory workgroup to discuss Health Equity Projects across AmeriHealth Caritas Community Health Choices, which was met.
- Host at least two webinars for all employees focused on Culturally Responsive Care, which was met.



Feedback: N/A

Action items: N/A

8. CHC Programs & Updates/Annual Flu Shot and Breast Screening Reminders

Marci Kramer, Director of Quality Management for CHC presented the following information on flu shots and breast screening reminders:

- Flu Shot
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CHC) recommends everyone over the age of 6 months receive a flu shot.
 - Flu shots are very important for everyone, especially if you are pregnant or have a chronic illness such as diabetes, asthma, lung disease, or heart disease.
 - Speak with your doctor regarding your situation to make the right decision.
 - To prevent spreading germs, you should follow the following steps daily:
 - Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
 - Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw it away after each cough or sneeze.
 - You can receive your flu shot or nasal flu vaccine from your doctor or a participating pharmacy.
- Breast Cancer Screening
 - A mammogram is an x-ray of the breast.
 - Having regular mammograms can lower the risk of dying from breast cancer.
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends if you are between the ages of 40 to 49, talk to your doctor about when you should receive a screening mammogram. If you are between the ages of 50 to 74, you should have a screening mammogram every two years.
 - Tips for women with disabilities:
 - When scheduling your mammogram ask: how you should dress, how to prepare if you use a wheelchair or scooter, how long is the appointment.
 - Let the scheduling staff know what you can/cannot do such as: sit upright with or without assistance, lift and move your arms, transfer from your chair/scooter, and undress without assistance.
 - When preparing for a mammogram remember: wear a blouse that opens in the front, wear a bra that you can easily remove, do not wear deodorant or body powder, and talk to your healthcare provider about any disability related concerns.
 - Resources - CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/righttoknow/>

Feedback:

- During the in-person PAC review on December 19th, PAC member commented she has been going to get mammograms and has been following the steps given in the presentation.

Action items: N/A



9. CHC Programs & Updates/Winter Blues- Signs and Symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder

Jennifer Ford-Bey, Manager of Long-Term Support and Services Behavioral Health and Collaborative Services presented the following information on Signs and Symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder/Winter Blues:

- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that comes and goes with the seasons, with symptoms typically starting in the late fall or early winter and going away during the spring and summer.
 - Symptoms include depression in a recurrent seasonal pattern, oversleeping, overeating, and social withdrawal.
 - People diagnosed with SAD must meet the criteria of experiencing symptoms of winter or summer pattern SAD, these episodes must occur during specified season for at least two consecutive years, and depressive episodes are more frequent than at other time of the year.
 - Who develops SAD? It is more common in people with depression, anxiety, or other mental health disorders. It also occurs more often for people who live farther norther with shorter daylight hours during winter.
 - Treatment includes light therapy, psychotherapy, antidepressant medication, and vitamin D.
 - We recommend talking to your healthcare provider about the benefits and risks of treatment options.
- National Warmlines – This is a peer-run phone line from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) that offers callers emotional support and is staffed by volunteers who are in recovery themselves. It is usually 24 hours a day, can be called for any reason, even if you just want to speak with someone.
- Resources
 - Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org or 911 in life-threatening situations.
 - www.nami.org
 - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder>
 - <https://www.warmline.org/>

Feedback:

- PAC member commented the Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) topic was relevant for his Bhutanese community. He commented he was very thankful the PAC meeting considered bringing awareness to this topic. PAC member provided feedback on Service Coordinators needing more training on this topic.
 - Nicole Ragab thanked PAC member for the feedback, and we will follow up on this matter.
- During the in-person PAC review on December 19th, PAC member commented she has been taking vitamin D, because she knows it is important to reduce symptoms of depression. PAC member mentioned she was not aware of light therapy as treatment and asked if this is something the insurance covers.
 - Fiorella Salas Toledo stated these light therapy devices are usually over the counter at most stores, however, this is something PAC member should discuss with the primary care physician as well as Service Coordinator.

Action items: N/A



10. HCBS Waiver Services Spotlight/Home Health Aide, Nursing & Physical, Occupational and Speech & Language Therapies

Mary Banda, Supervisor Service Coordinator of LTSS CHC, provided information on Home Health Aide, Nursing & Physical, Occupational, and Speech & Language Therapies.

- Home Health Aide
 - This service is ordered by a physician that includes help with personal care such as help with bathing, monitoring a participant's medical condition, and help with walking, medical equipment, and exercises.
 - This service helps with community integration while ensuring the health, welfare and safety of the participant.
 - This service is provided by a home health aide who is supervised by a registered nurse.
 - This service may only be funded through the waiver when this service is not covered by Medicare or private insurance.
- Nursing
 - This is a service of a registered nurse or Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) ordered by a physician and includes diagnosing and treating health problems through health teaching, health counseling and skilled care prescribed by the doctor.
 - This service may only be funded through the waiver when this service is not covered by Medicare or private insurance.
- Physical Therapy (PT)
 - This service is ordered by a physician, which includes evaluation and treatment of a Participant to limit or prevent disability after an injury or illness.
 - To receive this service, it must be documented in the Participant's Person-Centered Service Plan.
 - This service may only be funded through the waiver when this service is not covered by Medicare or private insurance.
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
 - This service is ordered by a doctor, which includes an evaluation of Participant's skills while helping Participant to change daily activities so Participant can perform activities of daily living.
 - To receive this service, it must be documented in the Participant's Person-Centered Service Plan.
 - This service may only be funded through the waiver when this service is not covered by Medicare or private insurance.
- Speech and Language Therapy
 - This service is ordered by a doctor and is performed by a licensed American Speech-Language-Hearing associate or certified speech-language pathologist.
 - This service includes the evaluation, counseling, and rehabilitation of a Participant with speech disabilities.
 - To receive this service, it must be documented in the Participant's Person-Centered Service Plan.
 - This service may only be funded through the waiver when this service is not covered by Medicare or private insurance.



Action items: N/A

11. HCBS Waiver Services Spotlight/Community Integration & Specialized Medical Equipment and Supplies

Jennifer Ford-Bey, Manager of Long-Term Support and Services Behavioral Health and Collaborative Services presented the following information on community integration.

Jennifer presented the following information:

- Community Integration
 - Community Integration is a short-term goal-based service to improve self-help, communication, socialization, and other skills needed to live in the community. This is provided during life-changing events such as moving from a nursing home to a new community or other change that requires new skills.
 - This service is reviewed/updated on a quarterly basis by the Service Coordinator.
 - The Service Coordinator reviews progress of goals and how goals are affecting the participant's ability to complete tasks identified in the Person-Centered Service Plan (PCSP).

Michelle Buselli, Supervisor Service Coordinator of LTSS CHC, provided information on Specialized Medical Equipment and Supplies.

Michelle presented the following information:

- Specialized Medical Equipment and Supplies
 - These are items specified in the Person-Centered Service Plan (PCSP) that allow participants to increase or maintain their ability to perform daily living activities.
 - Some examples are but not limited to durable medical equipment (DME), hospital beds, wheelchairs.
 - This service may only be funded through the waiver when this service is not covered by Medicare or private insurance.
 - This service requires an independent evaluation by a medical professional and a physician's prescription.

Feedback: N/A

Action items: N/A

12. HCBS Waiver Services Spotlight/Telecare

Tracy Brekke, Supervisor Service Coordinator of LTSS CHC, provided information on Telecare.

Tracy presented the following information:

- Telecare
 - Includes three services that use technology to help participants be as independent as possible:
 - Health Status Measuring and Monitoring: it uses a wireless technology or a phone line to collect health-related data such as pulse and blood pressure to help a provider know what the Participant's condition is and providing education and consultation.
 - Activity and Sensor Monitoring: it uses a sensor-based technology 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by remotely monitoring and passively tracking Participant's daily routines.
 - Medication Dispensing and Monitoring: it helps Participant by dispensing medicine and monitoring whether the Participant is taking the medicine as prescribed.



- To receive these services, these must be documented in the Participant's Person-Centered Service Plan.

Feedback: N/A

Action items: N/A

13. Open Forum

Fiorella encouraged any meeting attendees with specific questions related to the presented topics or any concerns they may have, to bring them up at this time. The post PAC survey will be sent out along with the meeting materials.

PAC members introduced themselves as new PAC members:

- Amiee Thrasher-Hanson introduced herself as the Outreach and Engagement Supervisor for the Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians (LAMP). She mentioned they offer books and magazines for all Pennsylvanians in various formats including audio, large print, or braille. These services are free, and materials are sent through mail or email. If you have questions Amy can be reached at trasher-hansona@mylamp.org or MyLamp.org.
- Tracy Hunt introduced herself as the representative for Allied Services personal assistance service agency. They provide services in 26 counties in Pennsylvania. She mentioned it was her first time in this meeting and is looking forward to continuing to do so.
- Nicole Ragab provided a special thank you to Michelle Lorson (Service Coordinator) for assisting PAC members from Williamsport North Rehabilitation and Nursing facility joining our PAC meeting today.
- Nicole Ragab thanked everyone who has participated in today's meeting as well as those the rest of the year.

14. Next Meeting

Fiorella announced that the 2025 first quarter PAC meeting for the Northeast zone will be held March 6, 2025. We will follow up with mail, phone calls and email.

15. Meeting Adjourned

Nicole Ragab adjourned the meeting at 12:20 pm.

In the in-person PAC review on 12/19/2024, PAC members went into different breakout sessions to address specific Participant needs. Fiorella Salas Toledo helped PAC members answer questions regarding the request of hearing aids, scooters, physical therapy services, and Personal Emergency Response System unit. Fiorella Salas Toledo connected the Service Coordinator assigned for follow up with these requests.