

A New CommonWealth



The inaugural RCPA conference at Seven Springs Mountain Resort October 8 – 11 brought together 650 guests from across the state. The theme was designed to reflect on the uniting of the two historical associations and the goals of increasing presence, leverage, power, and value. Energized by activities taking place, the theme highlighted the wealth of knowledge, influence, advocacy, and passion of members to serve people across Pennsylvania created by this collaboration. In efforts to maintain an unprecedented learning experience for colleagues, the RCPA Conference Committee offered 58 workshops, a keynote presentation of trends in health care by Dr. Paul Keckley, and a Friday plenary featuring Capt. Luis Carlos Montalván and Tuesday and his recovery from the physical and

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- 1 Fran Billen won the drawing for the grand prize gift certificate.
- 2 Luis Montalván and Tuesday shared a passionate and moving address about recovery from trauma during Friday's plenary.
- 3 Presenter Michael Cohen keeps attendees engaged during a presentation on managing trouble in organizations.
- 4 Curtis Upsher (l) and CEO Jim Gavin, Community Care Behavioral Health Organization, greet visitors in Exhibit Hall.
- 5 The 2013 RCPA Conference Committee, led by Co-chairs Mike Hanawalt and Lisa Cronauer.

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A New Commonwealth

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behavioral traumas of war. In addition, a vibrant Exhibit Hall, enthusiastic networking events, time to relax and interact with colleagues, and opportunities for creative thinking were enjoyed by all. Fran Billen, Community Counseling Center of Mercer County, was the winner of the \$1,000 Southwest Airlines grand prize and Jen McLaughlin, Community Services Group, winner of the weekend for two at Seven Springs.

RCPA thanks all of the presenters, exhibitors, and especially our sponsors for support of the conference. Mark your calendar for October 7–10, 2014 and plan to join your colleagues for another exceptional learning event.

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The Conference: First Impressions



We are always listening, analyzing, and looking to improve.

The first RCPA conference is over! By all accounts and reports, a wonderful success for our first year. But as you can expect, there has also been no shortage of member feedback and we are still analyzing all the comments received. All of the feedback helps us plan for the years ahead and incorporate changes and new ideas. Here are a few things we have already learned...

First, attendance was amazing. Six hundred and fifty people represents a significant increase over events held by the historical associations. People appreciated the range of topics, the keynote and plenary addresses by Dr. Paul Keckley and Capt. Luis Montalván, and the many networking events. While each member might choose something different, I found the session with Sen. Teplitz and Reps. Murt and Reed a highlight. Nearly every attendee expressed appreciation on the work that went in to getting a "first" conference to be cohesive while addressing the diverse interests of our 300+ members.

But what else? The venue received a lot of comments. Seven Springs is a unique place to host a conference. It does take extra time to get to the resort, particularly from the eastern side of the state. The physical plant is showing age in places and it is not the most handicapped-accessible conference center. Something we must address in planning.

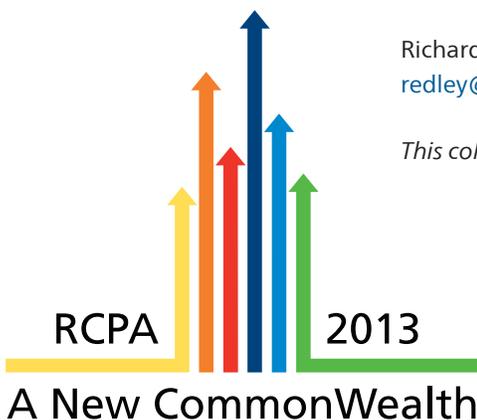
On the other hand, it was noted by many that the location pushed networking. Given the merging of two strong organizations and cultures, networking is as critical as all the other planned educational events. There were also many positive comments about the receptions, the setting, golf, and even PAC bowling. (I should note that RCPA has contracts signed pre-merger with Seven Springs that take us through 2015. The feedback is critical and will help us make adjustments, but some suggestions may not be able to be immediately implemented).

We are always listening, analyzing, and looking to improve. If you have additional comments about the conference or other activities at the association, please make sure that we hear them.

I thank all of you who attended and look forward to planning next year's event, incorporating member feedback. We plan to make it an even stronger and more successful event.

Richard S. Edley, PhD, President/CEO
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This column represents my opinion, not necessarily that of the association.



A New Commonwealth

RCPA Honors Excellence at Conference

RCPA honored individuals and exemplary programs during the 2013 awards luncheon at conference. Hosted by President and CEO Richard Edley, who also shared association highlights and plans for the year ahead, the luncheon recognized three individuals and four groups for their accomplishments.

- Jim Gurerri, CEO, The Arc of Cumberland and Perry Counties, received the Community Service Award in recognition of the tremendous vision and services he has steered over the course of his career. Gurreri focused on residential and vocational services for persons with disabilities and has provided a lifetime of leadership to the field.
- ① Dr. Edley and Board of Director Co-chairs Jeff Wilush and Susan Blue honored and thanked members of the Joint Operating Committee who led merger activities and decisions. A plaque will hang in the RCPA office in recognition of this group.
- ② Tom Sweeney, Esq., received a special recognition award from the association, meant to reflect thanks for his dedicated years as a friend and supporter of the association and the behavioral health industry. With a long history of involvement with members and the former associations, Sweeney focused his practice on issues relevant to members and assured that the association had relevant information and training on issues such as privacy, HIPAA, records retention, billing, and other legal issues. He was also an ardent supporter of the political action committee and the conference. Mr. Sweeney is preparing to retire.





Three organization received innovation awards:

- 3 The Arc of Centre County Forever Home that provides progressive quality care to individuals who have an intellectual disability and Alzheimer's disease or dementia.
- 4 Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic of UPMC- Child and Adolescent Bipolar Services Program dedicated to the assessment and recovery of children and adolescents with severe mood problems who have or are at risk of bipolar disorder.



- 5 NHS Human Services Dual Diagnosis Treatment Team, a service delivery model for individuals with mental illnesses and intellectual and developmental disabilities that addresses clinical needs during acute episodes and during periods of transition back to the community.

- 6 In a surprise presentation, Children's Steering Committee Co-chairs Tammy Marsico and Brad Barry presented – for the final time – the Marilyn Mennis award. The Mennis award had been presented by PCPA since 1995 to celebrate and continue her legacy of leadership, commitment, and advocacy in the child-serving systems. With the support of the RCPA Executive Committee, Policy Specialist Connell O'Brien was recognized for his 30+ years of tireless advocacy for developing a system of quality and integrity to serve children with special needs.



Conference PAC Activities

Thanks to all who supported the RCPA Political Action Committee (PAC) fundraising activities at the conference. A special thanks to the Board of Directors for the iPad donation/drawing, allowing RCPA the opportunity to educate attendees about the PAC and generate pledges and donations. Those who participated in the Silent Auction, golfed, bowled, or made a general donation helped raise \$4,400. The RCPA PAC plays a vital role in educating elected officials and helping to elect and reelect candidates who support quality community services. A strong PAC contributes immeasurably to the success of RCPA's statewide advocacy programs.

The Silent Auction focused on electronic items, drawing generous bids. Members that made these generous donations possible are:

- Community Services Group,
- Family Services of Western Pennsylvania,
- Intercommunity Action,
- Lenape Valley Foundation,
- PerformCare,
- Salisbury Behavioral Health,
- Sarah A. Reed Children's Center,
- Skills of Central Pennsylvania, and
- Wesley Spectrum Services.

The bowling tournament was also a big success, with six teams vying for the championship. The Gears of The HealthWorks Group won the trophy with the Wesley Wildcats of Wesley Spectrum Services taking second. Special kudos to The Gutter Gang, Community Services Group, for getting sponsors and raising over \$615 for the PAC. Thanks to these members for sponsoring bowling teams:

- The HealthWorks Group (The Gears),
- Community Services Group (The Gutter Gang),
- JEVS/ACT (The Bowling Stones),
- Lenape Valley Foundation (The Lenapins),
- ReMed (Team ReMed), and
- Wesley Spectrum Services (The Wesley Wildcats).

NHS Hosts Patriots for Parity Event

Almost 100 attendees welcomed the Honorable Patrick Kennedy, former Congressman from Rhode Island, as the keynote speaker at Patriots for Parity October 1 in the Philadelphia City Hall Council Chambers. Special guest panelists addressed the problems individuals with mental health and addictions issues have accessing professional care in local communities throughout Pennsylvania.

"Access to mental health and addictions services is one of the most important and most neglected civil rights issues facing the nation," said Kennedy. "For too long, persons living with mental disorders and addictions have suffered from discriminatory policies and practices at all levels of society."



The forum was co-sponsored by NHS Human Services, RCPA, and the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association (PMHCA). Panelists included (from left to right):

- Ms. Lynn Keltz, executive director, PMHCA;
- Dr. Richard Edley, president and CEO, RCPA;
- The Honorable Patrick Kennedy;
- The Honorable M. Joseph Rocks, chairman and CEO, NHS Human Services;
- Dr. Arthur Evans, commissioner, Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disability Services; and
- Ms. Linda Rosenberg, president and CEO, National Council for Community Behavioral Health.

ACE Awards Nominations Open

RCPA member Inglis House has opened nominations for its Awards for Continuing Excellence (ACE). The awards honor the outstanding performance of not-for-profit organizations in the Greater Delaware Valley that provide direct services, products, and/or advocacy for people with physical disabilities. The awards are intended to identify and expand opportunities for people with physical disabilities. Awards are unrestricted grants of up to \$10,000 which reflect and reward past performance. The deadline to apply is November 18. To learn more and submit an application, visit the [Inglis House web site](#).

Allied and Heinz Hospitals Honored

Members Allied Rehab Hospital, Scranton, and Heinz Rehab Hospital, Wilkes-Barre, received awards for Excellence in Health Care Compliance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The awards are presented annually to facilities that have no health citations during the last state licensure survey and no major life safety code deficiencies. The hospitals were two of only seven to earn the award. The awards were presented by Department of Health Secretary Michael Wolf on October 23. RCPA congratulates both members on this achievement.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

For additional information on legislative issues, contact RCPA at 717-364-3280. For copies of bills, call your local legislator, the House Document Room 717-787-5320, or visit the General Assembly's Electronic Bill Room at www.legis.state.pa.us.



Resolution Introduced to Evaluate Block Grant Program

Senator Rob Teplitz has introduced SR 225, directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct an evaluation of the Department of Public Welfare Human Services Block Grant Pilot Program. In introducing the resolution, Teplitz stated that before the pilot program was expanded, it was crucial to determine whether the program has been beneficial or whether Pennsylvania citizens who receive behavioral health and intellectual disability services have been harmed. RCPA continues to urge the General Assembly to refrain from expanding the program until the report has been reviewed by stakeholders. RCPA also urges that the allocation for the Community Hospital Integration Program Project (CHIPP) be removed from the Human Services Block Grant in order to keep promises made when state hospitals were closed that the community mental health service infrastructure would be maintained.

Committee Holds Hearing on Involuntary Commitment

The House Human Services Committee held a public hearing October 15 seeking input on possible changes to the mental health involuntary commitment process. Numerous testifiers, including representatives of counties and advocacy groups, indicated that before making changes it is imperative that there first be a better and more consistent understanding of how the current law is used. An issue highlighted was that any changes to the law would be ineffective unless accompanied by better funding of outpatient treatment services that help prevent people from reaching a crisis in the first place. Access to outpatient services, including peer support, clinical care, case management, and other services were seriously affected by a 10 percent budget cut in 2012/13 and a chronically underfunded system for many years prior.

In April, Senator Pat Vance introduced [Senate Bill 796](#) and it is possible that there may be legislation introduced in the House this session. SB 796 removes the current requirement that a person act on a threat to harm self or others before involuntary commitment can be ordered, instead providing that if a threat is made, officials can consider the totality of circumstances and make a determination to proceed with an involuntary commitment.

RCPA has not taken a position with regard to specific legislation, but emphatically agrees with the need to address the chronic underfunding of the mental health service infrastructure and is in the process of meeting with members of the General Assembly to share budget priorities for the next fiscal year. Further questions may be addressed to [Anne Leisure](#).

Justice-Involved Persons With Intellectual Disabilities

By The Pennsylvania Mental
Health and Justice Center of
Excellence

In an effort to enhance the commonwealth's justice response to special populations, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Mental Health and Justice Action Committee asked the Center of Excellence (CoE) to gather information from selected counties and neighboring states (Maryland, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia) about practices for managing and treating persons with intellectual disabilities in the criminal justice system.

As part of this effort, the CoE conducted interviews with more than 50 individuals within and outside of Pennsylvania. The interviews gathered information on three phases of justice processing: law enforcement, courts, and corrections. Topics included identification of intellectual disabilities; availability of diversion programs, support options, and partnerships with community providers; and differential treatment during processing. Respondents were also asked to describe ways they thought their systems for handling persons with intellectual disabilities should be improved. Findings will be released in two upcoming reports which will be made available on the Center of Excellence [web site](#).

CHIP Program Reauthorized

Governor Tom Corbett signed into law reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). [House Bill 108](#) became Act 74 on October 16. Act 74 also eliminates the six-month waiting period for many children who apply for the program's insurance coverage. Corbett signed the bill as part of his *Healthy Pennsylvania* plan, noting that Act 74 increases access to quality, affordable health care by helping to insure all children in a timely manner.

HB 1504 Passes House

Legislation that provides for training first responders, including police and minor judiciary, on how to work with individuals with mental health, intellectual/developmental disabilities, or those dually diagnosed passed the House and was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. [House Bill 1504](#) was introduced by Rep. Caltigirone, who included intellectual and developmental disabilities after meeting with RCPA. The training is proposed to include (1) recognition of mental health conditions and intellectual disabilities, (2) proper techniques to interact and de-escalate individuals suffering from mental health episodes or episodes stemming from intellectual disabilities, and (3) alternative services or diversionary options available to individuals suffering from mental health conditions or intellectual disabilities. RCPA appreciates the efforts of Rep. Caltigirone to address these issues and encourages members to ask their Pennsylvania Senate members to support HB 1504. Further questions may be directed to [Anne Leisure](#) or [Linda Drummond](#).

Tobacco Settlement Reduction Impacts Human Services

The recently announced [decision](#) by the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office that the commonwealth's annual share of the tobacco master settlement agreement will be reduced by an estimated \$180 million will have both short- and long-term effects on providers of human services. The reduction will be seen in the payment due in April 2014, which supports funding for the current year's budget. In response to the upcoming shortfall, Pennsylvania is freezing some discretionary tobacco settlement funding streams; most significantly uncompensated care payments to hospitals and discretionary funds related to tobacco prevention and cessation programs. Funding for direct services and mandatory components of programs will not be affected. This includes funding for home- and community-based services to individuals over 60; the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) program; Department of Aging programs; and mandatory tobacco use, prevention, and cessation programs.

Not only will RCPA member hospitals who receive uncompensated care funds be directly impacted, there will be a ripple effect on the budget. Since the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) can't cut entitlement programs funded by tobacco settlement funds, it will have to find general fund revenues to meet those costs, putting further strain on the DPW budget. The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office is appealing the decision. RCPA will work to prevent the destructive possible impact this development could have on the rehabilitation and community services infrastructure and will keep members informed. Further questions may be addressed to [Anne Leisure](#).

Medical Division Meeting

RCPA will conduct its next Medical Division meeting November 7. Agenda topics include a federal update from Carolyn Zollar, American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association; state update from Bill Miller, SR Wodjak and Associates; open forum discussion (e.g. Recovery Audit Contractor activity, *The Fairness for Beneficiaries Act of 2013*, compliance issues, payer issues, meeting format and dates); Act 60 of 2013; upcoming conferences and trainings; and an overview and demonstration of the Pain Assessment Interview Network-Clinical Advisory System. For more information contact [Melissa Dehoff](#).

AMRPA Schedules Congressional Fly-In and Fly-Out

Congress is actively considering cuts to inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and units (IRH/Us) under the semblance of “post-acute care reform.” Specifically, Congress is considering (1) making market basket payment cuts to IRH/Us, (2) reinstatement of the 75 percent rule policy, and (3) establishing site neutral payments for certain conditions treated in IRH/Us and skilled nursing facilities. Many members are also reporting excessive Recovery Audit Contractor audits that are placing severe burdens on IRH/Us and harming patient care. The American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association (AMRPA) is encouraging members to educate elected officials about the need to balance program integrity with patient care. As well, the fiscal cliff legislation extended the therapy caps exceptions process only through December 31. AMRPA is seeking another extension to the exceptions process.

AMRPA, of which RCPA is a member, is conducting legislative days in November to address these issues and concerns. Members are encouraged to participate in one or both of these initiatives. Congressional Fly-Out, November 4 – 11, in the Congressional district. Meet with your representative during this week or encourage them to visit your hospital or outpatient setting.

Travel to Washington, DC to participate in the Congressional Fly-In and meet with elected representatives/staff. AMRPA and RCPA will assist with scheduling these meetings if desired. An in-person briefing will be held on November 21 at 8:00 a.m. AMRPA will also host a reception for fly-in attendees at its office building (1710 N St NW, Washington, DC). The reception is November 21 from 4:00 – 6:30 p.m.

RCPA members are asked to contact [Melissa Dehoff](#) to indicate (1) if assistance is needed in scheduling a meeting, (2) to RSVP for the fly-in, and (3) to indicate if you will participate in the fly-out. Members requesting assistance to schedule a meeting are urged to be in contact with Ms. Dehoff immediately. **RSVPs for the fly-in must be made by November 6 so that information may be communicated to AMRPA by its deadline.**

Conference Geared to Parents of Children With Special Needs

A free informational seminar, *Tools for Meeting Life's Challenges*, is being conducted in Philadelphia on November 16, 8:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. The seminar will focus on the critical medical, legal, nursing, and funding issues that face families of children with cerebral palsy or catastrophic physical disabilities. The seminar is intended for caregivers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, doctors, nurses, etc. Space is limited. Register early online or at 866-369-5092.

■ VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Vocational Rehabilitation Subcommittee

RCPA has added a Vocational Rehabilitation Subcommittee. The subcommittee will be co-chaired by Will Stennett, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania and Colleen Stuart, Venango Training and Development Center. Based on the October 8 Vocational Rehabilitation Roundtable, the first initiatives will include:

- Review of US [House Resolution 831](#): Fair Wages for Workers with Disabilities Act,
- Review of Department of Justice actions in other states pertaining to workshops,
- Review of the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Employment First initiative, and
- Development of a paper, *Best Practices in Vocational Rehabilitation for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*.

Members are asked to share ideas and recommendations for this paper with [Linda Drummond](#). This initiative will review the role of sheltered workshops, how workshops have expanded with business contracts and employment options, and other types of services that can be provided in work centers for those unable to work in competitive employment. In addition, recommendations will be sought to share with ODP and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation regarding training for job coaches and supported employment programs on topics such as how to contact community employers and assisting individuals with socialization at new jobs and with co-workers.

OVR Supported Employment Workgroup

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) work group on Supported Employment Policy continues to address cross-system employment issues with the Office of Developmental Programs. The subcommittee on Funding and Collaboration is focused on recommendations to policy changes, competency and qualification of supported employment providers, funding of extended services, and how funding is structured through community-based work assessment and performance-based job coaching.

■ BRAIN INJURY

DOH Announces HIP Withdrawal of Accreditation Waiver

The Department of Health (DOH) published a [notice](#) in the October 5 *Pennsylvania Bulletin* announcing that effective November 1, the Division of Child and Adult Health Services' Head Injury Program (HIP) will no longer accept requests for waivers of Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accreditation from providers of rehabilitation services interested in contracting with DOH to provide services to HIP applicants and clients. As of November 1, in order to be eligible to contract with DOH as a participating provider, the provider must be accredited by a national accrediting body approved by DOH ([28 Pa. Code § 4.4](#)). This includes providers of residential, outpatient, day, and home-based rehabilitation services whose services are eligible for payment by HIP. The Joint Commission for rehabilitation hospitals and CARF for nonhospital rehabilitation facilities were approved by DOH. The department published an August 4, 2007 [notice](#) announcing that the HIP would accept requests for waivers of CARF accreditation from providers of home- and community-based rehabilitation services. Effective November 1, the waiver opportunity is withdrawn.

TBI Advisory Board Meets November 1

A [notice](#) was published in the October 12 *Pennsylvania Bulletin* about the upcoming Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board meeting. The public meeting is November 1, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Community Center at Giant Food Store, 2300 Linglestown Rd, Harrisburg.

Governor Signs Health Care Apology Bill

On October 23, Governor Corbett signed [Senate Bill 379](#), which makes any benevolent gesture (action that conveys a sense of apology, explanation, or compassion related to discomfort, pain, suffering, injury, or death of a patient) made prior to the commencement of a medical liability action by a health care provider, assisted living residence, or personal care home, inadmissible as evidence of liability or an admission against interest. The governor advocated for this apology provision as a key part of his *Healthy Pennsylvania* initiative.

Cognitive Rehabilitation Conference Planned

Main Line Rehabilitation Associates, Inc. is hosting [Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy in the Home and Community](#), on November 14, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Radisson Valley Forge in King of Prussia. The conference is free to families and survivors.

■ MENTAL HEALTH HEADLINES

Coalition Focused on CMS Challenge to HealthChoices

RCPA and members of the Behavioral Health Coalition met October 18 with Deputy Secretary Dennis Marion and Ms. Lynn Patrone from the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) regarding the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) challenge to HealthChoices. RCPA released an *Info* in mid-September summarizing the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) response to the CMS challenge and commending the department on the strength of the response.

Deputy Secretary Marion outlined plans for another letter being developed by OMHSAS to further address CMS concerns. The coalition offered strong support for the work being done by DPW and OMHSAS to defend the carve-out. The deputy secretary also shared a September report from the US Government Accountability Office (GAO): *Medicaid Managed Care – Use of Limited Benefit Plans to Provide Mental Health Services and Efforts to Coordinate Care*. The report provides information on 13 states' (including Pennsylvania) use of Medicaid managed care. The GAO examined the extent that states provide mental health services through limited benefit plans and steps states and CMS have taken to facilitate the coordination of mental and physical health care services for adult beneficiaries enrolled in these plans.

The coalition will continue to develop advocacy efforts that supplement the work being done by DPW and OMHSAS, including letters and meetings with state and federal officials and representatives. For more information, contact [Lynn Cooper](#).

Outpatient Task Force Meets

The statewide Outpatient Task Force met October 21 and outlined the process for a major review and revision of outpatient regulations. A small group will be organized to review the regulations and report back to the larger task force and other stakeholders as the process unfolds. Initial plans are to have two tracks, the first being things that have consensus and can move more quickly and the second for things that will take more time. Numerous issues will have to be considered including federal regulations, payment under Medical Assistance, prior bulletins and policy clarifications, and requirements within PROMISE. These meetings will begin soon and include representation from providers, consumers, managed care, and counties. Some of the regulations that will be addressed include psychiatric hours and the use of psychiatrist, the use of nurse practitioners, the requirement regarding treatment plan signage, psychiatric supervision, and medication management. All recommendations will be sent to the larger outpatient task force for review, but will also be sent to all RCPA members for comment and input as the process moves forward.

The group also discussed work being done by the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) regarding coordination of medications upon discharge from a state hospital. OMHSAS is working to identify individuals preparing to leave the state hospital, will verify their eligibility for Medicaid to start the day they leave the hospital, and make sure they leave with a prior authorization for medications needed.

In addition, the task force discussed the need to revisit the issue of medication management and alternative payment arrangements. This will be on the agenda for the meeting in January 2014.

■ ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

First Responder Training on ASD

A 2008 needs assessment by the Bureau of Autism Services revealed a high level of dissatisfaction with interactions between individuals who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), their families, first responders, and general health care providers. To address a deficiency of training on the needs of individuals with ASD at times of health care crisis, the Western Region Autism Service, Education, Resource and Training Collaborative convened a team of experts that includes psychologists, educational specialists, and an emergency physician experienced in assessing and treating patients with developmental disabilities. This cross-system collaborative has developed separate training materials for emergency medical services and emergency department personnel that focus upon the characteristics of ASD, the common acute care needs of this population and techniques for medical management. Training materials will soon be available on www.paaaautism.org. To purchase hard copies, contact [Dr. Jeff Fratangeli](#), project director or [Lynnette Colton](#), project assistant.

Upcoming Webinar Series: SBIRT in Action

By Jessica Williams, IRETA

The national Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC) is hosting SBIRT in Action, a webinar series focusing on implementation. Presenters will examine the use of SBIRT in a variety of settings, describe various ways the SBIRT process can be designed, share lessons learned, and review obstacles and opportunities for SBIRT. Continuing education credit is available for each webinar. Register [online](#).

- November 13, 1:00–2:30 p.m.
SBIRT in Action—Another Vital Sign

This webinar shows that SBIRT can easily be implemented in a primary medical care setting with minimal costs and significant results.
- December 11, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
SBIRT in Action—Accelerator for Healthcare Integration

This webinar explores lessons learned by a small not-for-profit provider who has used SBIRT to facilitate integration in a variety of public health and commercial settings.
- January 15, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
SBIRT in Action—Implementing SBIRT in Two Primary Care Clinics

This webinar details a collaboration project between De Paul Treatment Centers and Legacy Health.

Drug and Alcohol Regulation Review Update

RCPA staff and a group of hard-working members have been reviewing drug and alcohol regulations line by line and providing detailed feedback to the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs for needed changes. RCPA was informed that the general regulations, Chapter 709, are making their way through the process and should be out in final form by summer 2014. It appears that the decision has been made to hold on staffing regulation changes for the time being. The next regulations that will be reviewed are the free-standing regulations. An RCPA work group will be organized. Members interested in being a part of this work group should contact [Lynn Cooper](#).

Pennsylvania Looks to Upgrade PDMP

By Jessica Williams, IRETA

In October, the Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) released *Prescription Drug Abuse: Strategies to Stop the Epidemic*, a state-by-state analysis of harms related to prescription drug abuse (including overdose) and the extent to which each state utilizes a set of 10 indicators of known strategies to help curb the epidemic. The result in Pennsylvania? The data shows the commonwealth has the 14th highest drug overdose mortality rate in the US and scored four out of 10 on a report card of promising strategies to help curb prescription drug abuse.

Of the 10 indicators, Pennsylvania did receive a point from the TFAH for having an existing Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). However, it did not receive a point for “requiring mandatory utilization by prescribers” within the PDMP. In fact, although Pennsylvania had one of the first PDMPs in the country (begun in 1972), it is currently one of the most limited in the nation. It tracks only Schedule II controlled substances, data is updated monthly, and access is limited to law enforcement officers.

It seems that political will is building to modernize the current PDMP and the 2013/14 session may be a window of opportunity to create policy change that will reduce harms associated with prescription drug abuse. Governor Corbett’s Medicaid redesign proposal, *Healthy Pennsylvania*, includes an upgrade to the PDMP. On September 23, House Bill 1694 (a revision of House Bill 317), was approved by the House Human Services Committee. From there, the bill headed to the House floor for deliberation.

Serving the Dually Diagnosed Population

Mercer Consulting developed a report and presentation reviewing how the mental health system and managed care organizations serve the dually diagnosed population, *Dual Diagnoses: Best Practices for People with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Conditions*. Highlights and issues include:

- Recommendations include active care management, network and workforce development, expand capacity of service, develop community-based service alternatives, and the importance of effective service/support coordination.
- Dually diagnosed consumers have a higher risk of mental health issues, often resulting from trauma.
- There is a need for a collaborative systems approach to move to best practice models, including support for pilot programs and other innovative projects.
- The focus group is concerned that the report listed co-occurring substance use disorders for the population. None of the Office of Developmental Programs-funded providers in the work group have found this to be an issue.

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) has released the following information.

- **Re-Issued: Informational Packet #053-12:** Right to be Free from Abuse Notification Handout New Version. Revised handout and a reminder of supports coordinators' responsibility to annually explain to individuals in service the right to be free from and report abuse.
- **Announcement #081-13:** Harry M. Settlement Agreement Provider Survey is Now Available. This federal lawsuit was approved in August and the settlement agreement is to ensure that Pennsylvanian's who are deaf and have intellectual disability and enrolled in the ODP Consolidated Wavier are provided with specialized services based on assessed need.
- **Announcement Memo #082-13:** Harry M. Settlement Agreement Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) Survey is Now Available. SCOS are requested to complete this survey to assist in identifying individuals who are deaf with intellectual disability and in the Consolidated Waiver or on the emergency waiting list.
- **Announcement #085-13:** Introduction to Individual Support Plan Monitoring Course Now Available. This is 2013 required training for supports coordinators and supervisors and professional development for administrative entity and provider staff.
- **Announcement #086-13:** Provider Monitoring 2013/14 Tool Now Available.
- **Announcement #087-13:** ODP Year 6 Desk Review Training Registration for AEs. Web-based training.
- **Announcement #088-13:** SC Curriculum 2013 Required Training: Talking about the Right to Be Free from Abuse.
- **Announcement #089-13:** SC Curriculum 2013 Required Training: Common Chronic Health Conditions. Course is available until December 31.
- **Announcement #090-13:** DPW Medication Administration Program. For Departments of Public Welfare- and Aging-licensed programs.
- **Announcement #092-13:** ODP Futures Planning. Provides details on how to submit public comments through November 5.
- **Announcement #093-13:** Corrective Action Plan Process. Provides clarification regarding the use of the standardized corrective action plan template issued by ODP and the development of an improvement plan to prevent the recurrence of non-compliance.

Capitol Art Display



Artist Patrick Cleary, Verve Vertu Studio, displays his work.

“Creativity without Limits,” featuring the works of artists with disabilities, was the State Capitol Art Display for October. Coordinated by the Governor’s Cabinet and Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, the art displayed was from Verve Vertu Art Studio, Luzerne County, and Friendship Heart Gallery, Lancaster County. The Opening Reception and Press Conference was hosted by Devon Grant, executive director, Governor’s Cabinet; Fred Lokuta, deputy secretary, Office of Developmental Programs; and Steve Suroviec, director, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.



Art from additional contributors hangs on display

Aging/ID Committee

The Pennsylvania Aging and Intellectual Disability (ID) Committee has reviewed proposal requirements for county team projects. The purpose of these teams is to help local Departments of Aging and Public Welfare programs to develop cross-systems, collaborative activities. The maximum grant project request is \$3,500 in 2014. Activities funded will include cross-systems training activities and case review process. Details will be released in November and are available from Co-chairs [Amy Comarnitsky](#), Department of Aging, and [Carmen Donegan](#), Office of Developmental Programs.

Health Reform Impact Noted

The Autism Self Advocacy Network has issued *The Affordable Care Act and the IDD Community: An Overview of the Law and Advocacy Priorities Going Forward*. It is recognized that while this population is primarily covered by Medicaid and/or Medicare, the concern has been that there are disparities in access to quality health care. Medicaid expansion may impact those with intellectual or developmental disabilities that do not qualify for Supplemental Security Income. This may be due to earning too much income or not meeting impairment criteria. There is a possibility that this may impact many adults on the autism spectrum.

DD Group Offers Recommendations

The Dual Diagnoses Focus Group reviewed the list of barriers and suggestions received from RCPA intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health/behavioral health providers from across the state. Highlights included the following.

- The need for comprehensive treatment approaches continue.
- IDD consumer choice needs to recognize cognitive barriers and their impact on choice understanding. Need well-educated clinical staff to work with direct support staff to assist consumer with understanding choices.
- The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Dual Diagnoses (DD) team goal is to build capacity to serve these individuals and prepare staff to better serve this population.
- The Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care team has developed the curriculum and is currently focused on train the trainer preparation. As of July 30, 21 dual diagnoses modules have been piloted. These modules may assist staff in obtaining National Association for Dual Diagnosis (NADD) certification. The team is also developing training for peer specialists.
- Current dual diagnoses curriculum trainings: 1,800 have been trained by the Health Care Quality Units. Four trainings are being offered online for supports coordinators. Next spring, the new dual diagnoses manuals are to be completed.
- Lack of financial incentives for provider and staff to obtain trainings and possible NADD certification remains an issue which needs to be addressed by the Department of Public Welfare. CPT and Medical Assistance codes must be reviewed and managed care organizations should be approached regarding rates or increasing rates to serve individuals with dual diagnoses.
- The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services needs to emphasize having its clinical and provider staff attend these trainings. Community provider psychiatrists and doctors also need these trainings. It is important to understand the intellectual cognitive functioning levels before mental/behavioral health options are implemented.

Futures Planning Feedback Requested

In March, Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Deputy Secretary Lokuta implemented a future planning process, "Today's Vision...Tomorrow's Reality...Think of the Possibilities." This process includes long-range plans through 2023 and short-term objectives. Meetings will continue through November. ODP is offering a second and final public comment period ending November 5. [Announcement #092-13](#) provides details on how to submit those public comments. RCPA members are asked to share their comments with [Linda Drummond](#). [Long-range goals](#) are related to the person's choices, services, supports, and innovation of non-traditional services and supports. Eight work groups are addressing [short-term objectives](#).

Group #5 work group recommendations include:

- Simplify everything, including the Individual service Plan (ISP), to allow focus to be on the individual and not procedures and paperwork;
- Link the ISP with monitoring forms, medical, and medication sections; and
- Address serious safety considerations in the community (violence, drugs, etc.) to offer protection to the individual.

*Stop being who you were
and become who you are.*

– Paulo Coelho

System of Care Expansion Grant

Pennsylvania has been awarded a \$4 million four-year cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to enable all Pennsylvania counties to become part of the national system of care movement.

Pennsylvania's current Systems of Care (SOC) includes 11 partner counties and eight learning communities leading the current SOC implementation cooperative agreement, which ends in 2015.

The SAMHSA-supported [SOC Partnership](#) will provide technical assistance to existing and new counties as they establish local leadership teams and progress towards the defined SOC standards, which embody equal partnership among youth, family, and systems partners so that desired outcomes are achieved in a cost-effective manner through evidence-based practices and natural supports.

An additional focus of the new funding will be on furthering SOC counties in implementing the enhanced *National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care*. A state leadership team will be responsible for coordinating the work of the new cooperative agreement.

Members of the team will attend the December 4 meeting of the RCPA Children's Committee to review and discuss the initiative.

Members seeking additional information are encouraged to contact [Ellen DiDomenico](#), director, Bureau of Policy, Planning and Program Development.

Identifying Depression and Anxiety in Students

School nurses are in a key position to screen for mental health issues in the school setting. Early detection of mental health problems in school-age children offers the opportunity for prompt referral to treatment which is critical to success in school. A collaborative research project conducted by the Pittsburgh Board of Education and the School of Nursing, University of Pittsburgh, looked at how school nurses could use two validated screening tools. The project used the Patient Health Questionnaire, a nine-item tool for detecting depression, and the five-item Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders, for detecting anxiety in middle and high school-aged children. Students having positive screens were referred to the Student Assistance Program team for further evaluation and referral. These screens improved the identification and referral for treatment of children suffering from anxiety and/or depression by expediting the connection to services.

A Guide on Integrated Care for Children

Integrated health care services can have great impact on the whole health of children, adolescents, and families. A new resource from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration and Health Resources Service Administration is designed specifically for community behavioral health and health centers to support the development of approaches to care that comprehensively address primary care, specialty care, and social support needs of children and youth. RCPA staff and members were pleased to contribute to this publication. *Integrating Behavioral Health and Primary Care for Children and Youth: Concepts and Strategies* was developed in collaboration with the National Council for Behavioral Health. This new guide provides information on:

- Models of organizing service delivery for youth,
- Five core competencies of integrated care systems for children with behavioral health problems, and
- Financing mechanisms that support integrated care systems for children with behavioral health problems.

RCPA Member Voice in CASSP Newsletter

The September [PA CASSP Newsletter](#) focused on "Voices from the Field." This edition of the newsletter, published by the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, featured providers and clinicians reflecting on what it's like to work in children's behavioral health. Articles by RCPA members and provider organization leaders Robert Bartelt, executive vice president, Silver Springs-Martin Luther School and Jay Deppeler, president and CEO, Edison Court, address some of the complex and often burdensome fiscal and regulatory challenges faced by community providers. The articles reflect the sense of mission and commitment to child and adolescent service of the organizations and the regulatory and economic complexity that often conflicts with the goals of quality, effective, and efficient stewardship of public funding.

Draft BHRS/STAP Bulletins for Review and Comment

The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) conducted work groups to discuss clinical and managed care practice improvement, consumer, and operational concerns with regard to Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (BHRS) and Summer Therapeutic Activities Programs (STAP). As one element of this process OMHSAS developed draft bulletins. The [BHRS bulletin](#) has been revised to accommodate many of the concerns and comments provided by members of the BHRS Work Group and others. The [STAP bulletin](#) revisions are minimal, done to be consistent with the BHRS bulletin. OMHSAS is requesting review, comments and suggestions on these drafts. Please submit your comments and changes to [Cristal Fowler](#) by the close of business November 15.

RCPA and Early Childhood Services

With the July merger came the realization that RCPA members now hold a unique role in Pennsylvania's array of early intervention (EI) services to children exhibiting developmental delays and the need for evaluation, planning, and services. Members with expertise in occupational, physical, and speech and language therapies; behavioral interventions; and early childhood mental health are present in every community and region. Achieving the potential for member engagement in the state and local EI systems has included meeting with leadership of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). The OCDEL Bureau of Early Intervention Services director attended the RCPA Children's Committee. A presentation about RCPA and its members was also provided to the state Interagency Coordination Council for Early Intervention. RCPA will continue to explore opportunities for expanding service opportunities and informing policy and planning for our youngest citizens.

Behavioral Health in Primary Care

Pennsylvania continues to be a national leader in the developing field of integrated health care design and delivery. Research and practice leaders from The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at Thomas Jefferson University, and the University of Pittsburgh STAR Center in Pittsburgh conducted a symposium on clinical skills for medical staff to help identify, assess, treat, and refer high-risk youth experiencing a range of behavioral health and trauma issues. Workshops focused on screening, adolescent risk assessment, parental engagement, and medication management. The youth suicide prevention approaches developed by the STAR Center and the Pennsylvania Garrett Lee Smith initiatives were featured. A measure of level of interest and the state's leadership role was the nearly 100 practitioners attending in person and the 400 individual and group webconference remote viewing participants that included viewers from Japan, Germany, Brazil, Canada, and across the US. Congratulations to the leaders of this effort and to the state's youth suicide prevention initiative whose Garrett Lee Smith grant helped to make this event possible.

Bill Reauthorizes Adoption Incentive Program

In October the US House of Representatives voted 402-0 to pass *Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act (HR 3205)*, a bill that would reauthorize the Adoption Incentive program through fiscal 2016. The measure would amend the formula used to calculate payments by awarding grants to states based on the adoption rate of foster children rather than the raw number of adoptions, as well as permit states to spend funds over three years rather than two. The bill would also reauthorize a \$15 million program known as Family Connection Grants through 2016 and pay for this program by requiring states to recover certain unemployment insurance overpayments through offsetting federal income tax refunds.

OCYF Rate Methodology Update

The Rate Methodology Task Force formed under the leadership of the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) is exploring viable models for reporting costs and establishing framework provider rates. The task force is supported by several ad hoc work groups made up of leaders from provider organizations. The task force has moved forward with a comprehensive review of approaches and models used by other states and Washington, DC. Discussions are being informed by leaders from the Bureau of Financial Operations and the federal Administration for Children and Families. The group is working to explore provider reporting and audit approaches that are cost sensitive while complying with complex internal, county, state, and federal regulator and funding structures.

■ CALENDAR

NOVEMBER		
Wednesday, November 6	10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Brain Injury Committee <i>RCPA Office</i>
Thursday, November 7	10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Medical Division Meeting <i>RCPA Office</i>
	2:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Northwest Regional Meeting <i>Erie</i>
Wednesday, November 13	10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Human Resources Committee <i>RCPA Office</i>
Monday, November 18	8:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Dual Diagnoses Focus Group <i>RCPA Office</i>
Wednesday, November 20	9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	UDSMR Training - Defending Your Medicare Denials With Effective Appeals <i>RCPA Office</i>
DECEMBER		
Tuesday, December 3	12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	P-DOT: Pediatric Dysphagia Outcomes Tool <i>IPRC Webinar</i>
	1:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Drug & Alcohol Committee <i>Best Western Premier Central Hotel & Conference Center</i>
Wednesday, December 4	9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Mental Health Committee
	1:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Children’s Committee <i>Best Western Premier Central Hotel & Conference Center</i>
Thursday, December 5	9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Committee
	1:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Supports Coordination Organization Subcommittee
	1:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Vocational Rehabilitation Subcommittee <i>Best Western Premier Central Hotel & Conference Center</i>