



Government Affairs

Midterm Election Results: Split Decision Nationally and Good Night for PA Democrats in State Races

The midterm election results were a mixed bag of results nationally for both parties. The Democrats took control of the House Representatives, while the Republicans maintained control of the Senate. After a cursory look at the federal election results in Pennsylvania and nationwide, it looks like the blue wave did materialize like some had predicted. Nationally, the Democrats gained a little better than the historic average of 28 seats for the party out of power during a presidential mid-term election. The Democrats in Pennsylvania took advantage of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court-drawn congressional map and congressional retirements to flip seats in the Southeast. The breakdown of the PA Congressional Delegation prior to last night was 13-5 in favor of the Republicans; after last night, the PA Congressional Delegation breakdown will be 9-9 between Democrats and Republicans.

In the Senate, Incumbent Senator Bob Casey had an easy time dispatching his challenger Lou Barletta. Nationally, the Republicans held control of the Senate and added 3 to 4 seats to their majority. The Senate still has races that are "too close to call" in Montana and Arizona, and in Mississippi there will be a run-off election on November 27, because no one received more than 50% of the vote.

Turning back to Pennsylvania, Governor Tom Wolf defeated his opponent Scott Wagner by a 17% point margin, ensuring him 4 more years in the Governor's mansion. In the General Assembly, the Senate Democrats were able to pick up 4-5

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©2018. This monthly newsletter is written by the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) for the health and human services communities. Deadline for publication is the 20th of every month or the Friday before.

Members in the News

RCPA Members Save on National Council Conference

XtraGlobex, Inc. Launches 10-Part Blog Series Focused on Value Based Payments

Congratulations to RCPA members Community Guidance Center, Children's Crisis Treatment Center, and Primary Health Network!



IN MEMORIAM

RCPA offers its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of David Dan, who passed away on November 14. David has been a vital part of the behavioral health treatment community for many years. A staunch advocate for children, David most recently served as the Children's Services Director for Community Care Behavioral Health. View David's obituary [here](#).



Visit the [RCPA website](#) for up-to-date information on legislation, meetings, trainings, and other industry developments. ◀



As the largest state association of its kind, RCPA continues to look for ways to strengthen its voice.

One way to facilitate this is by the recruitment of

new members.

For new provider members, there are financial incentives for the first two years of membership.

If you have questions about membership or know of an organization that would benefit from membership with RCPA, please contact [Tieanna Lloyd](#), Accounts Receivable/Membership Services Manager.



Midterm Election Results continued from front page

seats (one seat is “too close to call”). The PA Democrat Senate picked up at least 3 seats in the Southeast and one in the Southwest. The race in Bucks County between Incumbent State Senator Tommy Tomlinson and Democrat Challenger Tina Davis is “too close to call” with Senator Tomlinson leading by 500 or less. Incumbent State Senate Republicans Tom McGarricle (R – Delaware County) and John Rafferty (R – Montgomery) lost to their Democrat challengers. In the Southwest (Allegheny County – District 38), Democrat Lindsey Williams defeated Republican Jeremy Shaffer, who won the primary against the Incumbent Republican Senator Randy Vulakovich by a margin of 50.22% to 49.78%. When the PA Senate returns in January, the Republicans will maintain control of the Senate by a margin of 29 – 21 or 30 – 20 (depending on the outcome of the Tomlinson v. Davis race in Bucks County).

New members of the PA Senate are as follows:

- ▶ Steve Santarsiero (D – Bucks). He defeated former State House Republican Marquerite Quinn
- ▶ Maria Collet (D – Bucks/Montgomery). She defeated retiring State Senator Stewart Greenleaf’s son
- ▶ Tim Kearney (D – Delaware). He defeated Incumbent State Senator Tom McGarricle
- ▶ Kristin Phillips-Hill (R – York). She won Republican Gubernatorial Candidate Scott Wagner’s open seat
- ▶ Judy Ward (R – Blair/Fulton). She won the seat vacated by Republican State Senator John Eichelberger
- ▶ Lindsey Williams (D – Allegheny). She defeated Republican Jeremy Shaffer, who won the primary against the Incumbent Republican Senator Randy Vulakovich
- ▶ Katie Muth (D – Berks/Chester/Montgomery). She defeated incumbent State Senator John Rafferty

The Democrats also had a good night in state House races. The Democrats picked up 10 seats in the PA House. Again as in the PA Senate, House Democrats picked up most of their seats in the collar counties of Philadelphia. The Republicans had 121 of the House’s 203 seats to defend. Out of those 121 seats, 20 seats were open because of Incumbent Republican retirements. Democrats won 5 of the open seats, which were held by Republicans, and they unseated 8 Republican incumbents; however, the Democrats also lost 3 of their own seats to Republicans for a net gain of 10. The Republicans will still maintain control of the PA House of Representatives by a margin of 111 – 92.

New members of the House are as follows:

- ▶ 2nd District - Democrat Robert Merski (OPEN)
- ▶ 15th - Republican Joshua Kail (OPEN)
- ▶ 21st - Democrat Sara Innamorato
- ▶ 29th - Republican Meghan Schroeder (OPEN)
- ▶ 30th - Republican Lori Mizgorski (OPEN)
- ▶ 34th - Democrat Summer Lee
- ▶ 39th - Republican Michael Puskaric (OPEN)
- ▶ 40th - Republican Natalie Mihalek (OPEN)
- ▶ 44th - Republican Valerie Gaydos (OPEN)
- ▶ 53rd - Democrat Steven Malagari (OPEN)(PICK-UP)
- ▶ 54th - Republican Robert Brooks (OPEN)
- ▶ 61st - Democrat Laura Hanbidge (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 62nd - Republican James Struzzi (OPEN)
- ▶ 68th - Republican Clinton Owlett (OPEN)
- ▶ 71st - Republican James Rigby (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 74th - Democrat Dan Williams (OPEN)(PICK-UP)
- ▶ 76th - Republican Stephanie Borowicz (OPEN) (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 79th - Republican Louis Schmitt (OPEN)
- ▶ 80th - Republican James Gregory (OPEN)
- ▶ 82nd - Republican Johnathan Hershey (OPEN)
- ▶ 93rd - Republican Paul Jones (OPEN)
- ▶ 105th - Republican Andrew Lewis (OPEN)
- ▶ 112th - Democrat Kyle Mullins (OPEN)
- ▶ 143rd - Democrat Wendy Ullman (OPEN)(PICK-UP)
- ▶ 144th - Republican Todd Polinchock (OPEN)
- ▶ 146th - Democrat Joseph Ciresi (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 150th - Democrat Joseph Webster (OPEN)(PICK-UP)
- ▶ 153rd - Democrat Ben Sanchez (OPEN)
- ▶ 155th - Democrat Danielle Otten (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 157th - Democrat Melissa Shusterman (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 158th - Democrat Christina Sappey (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 162nd - Democrat David Delloso (OPEN)(PICK-UP)
- ▶ 163rd - Democrat Michael Zabel (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 165th - Democrat Jennifer Omara (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 167th - Democrat Kristine Howard (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 175th - Democrat Mary Isaacson (OPEN)
- ▶ 177th - Democrat Joseph Hohenstein (OPEN) (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 178th - Republican Wendi Thomas (PICK-UP)
- ▶ 181st - Democrat Malcolm Kenyatta (OPEN)
- ▶ 184th - Democrat Elizabeth Fiedler (OPEN)
- ▶ 193rd - Republican Torren Ecker (OPEN)
- ▶ 197th - Democrat Danilo Burgos (OPEN)
- ▶ 199th - Republican Barbara Gleim (OPEN)

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Analysis

On the national level, it will be interesting to see whether the Democrat Speaker of the House (presumably, Nancy Pelosi) will be able to manage the various factions of the Democrat caucus. As you may recall, Speaker Paul Ryan had the same issues with the Republican caucus. Look for the President, Senate, and House to work together on issues of infrastructure and other smaller initiatives. The big issues of health care, immigration, the deficit, the passage of a budget, and tax cuts will probably not be resolved and be left as issues for the 2020 election.

At the state level, the Governor can pursue large initiatives such as raising the minimum wage, tax increases, pension reform, and other such issues because he will not be on the ballot in four years; however, both chambers of the General Assembly are still controlled by Republicans by comfortable margins, so the Governor's initiatives will be tempered by a more conservative General Assembly.

RCPA looks forward to our continued working relationship with the Governor, returning members of the General Assembly, and we look forward to meeting and working with the newly elected members.

For RCPA members who are political enthusiasts, please take a look at the Pennsylvania Department of State's midterm election [website](#) for results of each of the races. Questions, contact RCPA Director of Government Affairs [Jack Phillips](#). ◀

PA Senate Leadership Chosen for 2019–20 Session

On Wednesday, November 14, members of the Senate Republican and Democratic caucuses chose their respective leadership teams for the upcoming 2019-20 Legislative Session. When the Senate re-convenes in January, the Senate Republicans will hold a 29-21 majority, with the possibility of that number going to 28-22 on the outcome of a "too close to call" election in Bucks County.

The Senate leadership elections did not provide any changes to either caucus' leadership team for the 2019-20 Session. The Senate Republican Caucus will consist of the same leadership team of:

Senate Pro-Tempore - Joe Scarnati (Jefferson). Sen. Scarnati was chosen by the full Senate to be the nominee for Senate President Pro Tempore. His nomination will be voted by the full Senate when the chamber convenes on swearing-in day, which will be Jan. 1, 2019.

- ▶ Senate Majority Leader - Jake Corman (Centre)
- ▶ Senate Majority Whip - John Gordner (Columbia)
- ▶ Senate Majority Appropriations Committee Chair - Pat Browne (Lehigh)
- ▶ Senate Majority Appropriations Committee Vice-Chair - Kim Ward (Westmoreland)
- ▶ Senate Majority Caucus Chair - Bob Mensch (Montgomery)
- ▶ Senate Majority Caucus Secretary - Rich Alloway (Franklin)

Two positions are still vacant — those positions of Senate Majority Caucus Administrator and Senate Majority Policy Committee Chair will be appointed by Senator Joe Scarnati once he is officially elected Senate Pro-Tempore.

The Senate Democrat Caucus leadership team did not have any changes. The Senate Democrat Caucus leadership team is as follows:

- ▶ Senate Minority Leader – Jay Costa (Allegheny)
- ▶ Senate Minority Whip – Anthony Williams (Philadelphia)
- ▶ Senate Minority Appropriations Committee Chair – Vincent Hughes (Philadelphia)
- ▶ Senate Minority Appropriations Committee Vice-Chair – Judy Schwank (Berks)
- ▶ Senate Minority Caucus Chair – Wayne Fontana (Allegheny)
- ▶ Senate Minority Caucus Secretary – Larry Farnese (Philadelphia)
- ▶ Senate Minority Policy Committee Chair – Lisa Boscola (Northampton)
- ▶ Senate Minority Caucus Administrator – John Blake (Lackawanna)

Questions, contact RCPA Director of Government Affairs [Jack Phillips](#). ◀

PA House Leadership Chosen for 2019–20 Session

On Tuesday, November 13, members of the House Republican and Democratic caucuses chose their respective leadership teams for the upcoming 2019-20 Legislative Session. When the House re-convenes in January, the House Republicans will hold a 110-93 majority, which is historic, because this is only the second time since 1924 that the Republicans have maintained the majority in the House for four or more consecutive two-year legislative sessions.

The House Republican leadership team for the 2019-20 Session is as follows:

House Speaker Mike Turzai (Allegheny), was chosen by the caucus as its Speaker-designee for the coming two-year session. Given the GOP's solid majority in the House, Turzai is a virtual shoe-in to repeat as Speaker, a position voted on by the entire House during the General Assembly's swearing-in day, which will be Jan. 1, 2019 this time around.

Majority Leader - Bryan Cutler (Lancaster). Rep. Cutler takes over the Majority Leader role because Rep. Dave Reed is leaving for a private sector job.

Majority Whip – Kerry Benninghoff (Centre). With Cutler vacating the Whip post, current House GOP Policy Committee Chairman Kerry Benninghoff, R-Centre, was elected to replace him.

Majority Policy Chair – Donna Oberlander (Clarion). Current GOP Caucus Secretary, Rep. Donna Oberlander, R-Clarion, was elected by the caucus to replace Benninghoff as Policy Committee Chair – the first woman to hold that position in the House GOP Caucus.

There were no changes for the other caucus leadership spots with the current leadership team winning re-election for their positions. Those positions are as follows:

Appropriations Majority Chair – Stan Saylor (York).

Caucus Administrator - Kurt Masser, (Northumberland).

Caucus Chair - Marcy Toepel (Montgomery)

Caucus Secretary - Mike Reese (Westmoreland). Rep. Reese will be replacing Rep. Oberlander as Caucus Secretary.



The House Democrat leadership team for the 2019-20 Session is as follows:

Minority Leader Frank Dermody, D-Allegheny, will continue to lead the caucus during the next legislative session as a result of Tuesday's leadership election. He ran unopposed.

The House Republican leadership team for the 2019-20 Session is as follows:

Minority Caucus Whip - Jordan Harris (Philadelphia).

Minority Appropriations Chair - Matthew Bradford (Montgomery).

Reps Harris and Bradford succeed two western Democrats - Reps. Mike Hanna, D-Clinton, and Joseph Markosek, D-Allegheny, who are retiring from the House and their whip and appropriations jobs, respectively.

Rep. Matt Bradford defeated Rep. Dan Frankel (Allegheny) in a close vote for the appropriations post. At one point before the vote, Bradford and his supporters went to another room to caucus on strategy.

Rep. Jordan Harris defeated Rep. Mike Carroll (Luzerne) for the caucus whip post.

Minority Caucus Chair - Joanna McClinton (Philadelphia). Rep. McClinton defeated Rep. Robert Freeman (Northampton), and Rep. Robert Matzie (Beaver) for that post. McClinton was elected to the House in 2015.

Minority Caucus Administrator - Neal Goodman (Schuylkill). Rep. Goodman turned back a challenge from Rep. Leanne Krueger-Braneky (Delaware), to win another term.

Minority Policy Committee Chair - Mike Sturla (Lancaster). Rep. Sturla won re-election for this position without opposition.

Minority Caucus Secretary - Rosita Youngblood (Philadelphia). Rep. Youngblood was reelected Minority Caucus Secretary without opposition.

Today, the state Senate's political caucuses will choose their new leadership teams.

Questions, contact RCPA Director of Government Affairs [Jack Phillips](#).

(Source: Capitolwire.com, Chris Comisac and Robert Swift, Wednesday, November 14, 2018) ◀

RCPA PAC Needs Your Help!!

Now, more than ever, health and human service providers need to be proactive in helping elected officials work towards common sense solutions in the areas of workforce, tax, regulation, health care, and human services.

The RCPA PAC raises money and supports campaigns of state legislators who work tirelessly on issues that benefit mental health, intellectual disabilities, children's services, substance use disorder treatment and services, brain injuries, medical and vocational rehabilitation, physical disabilities and aging, and other related human services. The funds raised through RCPA PAC can make the difference between a win and a loss on an issue or assist in making a new ally.

Interested in learning about more fun ideas to raise money for RCPA-PAC or interested in donating now? Please visit our website, download the [PAC FAQ Card](#), [Donation Card](#), or email [Jack Phillips](#), RCPA Director of Government Affairs.

Your participation in the RCPA-PAC is completely voluntary and you may contribute as much or as little as you choose. Donations are not tax-deductible and will be used for political purposes. You may choose not to participate without fear of reprisal. You will not be favored or disadvantaged by reason of the amount of your contribution or decision not to contribute. ◀

RCPA Government Affairs Monthly Conference Call to Resume in 2019

In January 2019, RCPA Government Affairs will resume monthly conference calls. These calls will give RCPA members an inside look as to what is happening down at the Capitol in Harrisburg and Washington, DC. The conference calls will occur every third Thursday of the month starting at 9:00 am — the call-in number and agenda will be sent out to RCPA members who are interested. If you would like to participate, please email [Jack Phillips](#), RCPA Director of Government Affairs. ◀

RCPA Legislative Tracking Report on Hiatus

RCPA's legislative tracking report will be taking a much needed rest after a very busy and hectic legislative session. The tracking report will resume after the General Assembly reconvenes in January!! ◀



2019 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule & Quality Payment Program Final Rule Released

The calendar year (CY) 2019 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) and Quality Payment Program (QPP) final rule was [released](#) and published in the November 23, 2018 *Federal Register* by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The rule includes several documentation, coding, and payment changes to reduce administrative burden and improve payment accuracy for outpatient evaluation and management (E&M) visits over several years, with the implementation of the E&M coding reforms delayed until 2021. Some highlights of the MPFS final rule include updates to the Medicare Accountable Care Organization (ACO) program and expansion of the list of Medicare-covered telehealth services. ◀

CMS Proposes Overhaul of Medicaid Managed Care Rules

*by Stephanie Pellitt, Policy Associate,
National Council for Behavioral Health*

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released a [proposed rule](#) to update the regulations governing Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) managed care plans. The proposed rule would rollback many of the managed care standards established by the Obama Administration in 2016 that help ensure Medicaid beneficiaries have timely access to comprehensive health care. Now CMS intends to "increase state flexibility" by relaxing requirements that support network adequacy and provider pay. CMS is accepting comments on the proposed rule through January 14, 2019. See the full National Council article, featuring their top concerns, [here](#). (Source: *Capitol Connector*) ◀

CMS Issues Proposed Rule for Prescription Drug Manufacturers to Post Prices

On October 18, 2018, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a [proposed rule](#) that would require that prescription drug manufacturers post the wholesale acquisition cost or list price for drugs covered in Medicare or Medicaid in direct-to-consumer television advertisements. The rule proposes that the price required to be posted would be for a typical course of treatment for an acute medication (like an antibiotic), or a 30-day supply of medication for a chronic condition that is taken every month, and the posting would take the form of a legible textual statement at the end of the ad. An exception to this requirement to post prices for prescription drugs are those with list prices of less than \$35/month. CMS is hopeful this proposed rule will ensure beneficiaries are provided with relevant information about the costs of prescription drugs so they can make informed decisions to assist with minimizing their out-of-pocket costs. Comments on this proposed rule will be accepted through December 17, 2018. ◀



HHS Publishes Semiannual Regulatory Agenda

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [published](#) the semiannual regulatory agenda in the November 16, 2018 *Federal Register*. The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 and Executive Order (EO) 12866 require the semiannual issuance of an inventory of rulemaking actions under development throughout the Department, offering for public review summarized information about forthcoming regulatory actions. ◀

HHS Ordered to Clear ALJ Backlog by End of FFY 2022

On November 1, 2018, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia issued a [suit](#) against the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to clear the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) backlog by the end of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2022. This decision comes after an ongoing litigation between the American Hospital Association (AHA) and HHS. The Court also ordered that there be a 49 percent reduction by the end of FY 2020, and a 75 percent reduction by the end of FY 2021. HHS does have the option to file an appeal on this decision; however, it would need to be filed by December 31, 2018. ◀

CMS Releases Letter to Clinicians That Addresses Reducing Administrative Burden

On November 8, 2018, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a [letter](#) to clinicians that outlines how they are reducing administrative burden through reform of documentation and coding requirements. Through CMS' "Patients over Paperwork" initiative, they collected feedback and are updating their policies (both Medicaid and Medicare) that are outdated, duplicative, or overly burdensome. ◀

State News

OLTL Issues CHC Medicaid/Medicare Billing Fact Sheet

In order to promote improved coordination between Medicare and Medicaid as the rollout of Community HealthChoices (CHC) in the Southeast portion of the state gets closer, the Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) released a [CHC Medicaid/Medicare billing fact sheet](#). The fact sheet includes information and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding coverage and how billing works under CHC. ◀

CHC Eligibility and Dating Rules Fact Sheets Available

Due to continued confusion surrounding Community HealthChoices (CHC) eligibility requirements and dating rules for changing Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), the Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) created a [CHC Provider Eligibility Fact Sheet](#) (includes details on who is eligible for CHC, who is not eligible, and information on other programs for long-term services and supports) and [CHC Provider Dating Rules Fact Sheet](#) (outlines plan transfer deadlines). ◀

MLTSS Subcommittee Meeting Scheduled for December 6

The next Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 6, 2018 in the Honor's Suite at 333 Market Street Tower in Harrisburg, from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. ◀

Home and Community-Based Services Loan Program Available

The Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) recently informed providers of long-term services and supports (LTSS) of the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) loan program. Loan amounts between \$50,000 and \$200,000 are available to qualified providers for projects that help the Commonwealth meet its goal of expanding opportunities for LTSS in the community. Specifically, the focus of the HCBS Loan Program is to provide support for the OLTL network of LTSS providers, including service coordination entities, as they prepare to successfully transition to managed care and Community HealthChoices (CHC), with the goal of improving the quality of care for seniors and adults living with disabilities. The HCBS Loan Program Guidelines and Application [document](#) provides background information. ◀

CMS Publishes Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System Final Rule

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published the hospital outpatient prospective payment system (OPPS) [final rule](#) with comment period for calendar year 2019 in the November 21, 2018 Federal Register. The final rule included adoption of the proposal to control unnecessary volume increases for certain clinical visits by utilizing site-neutral payments for these visits that will be phased in over two years. Essentially, CMS will apply a Physician Fee Schedule (PFS)-equivalent payment rate for the clinic visit service when provided at an off-campus provider-based department (PBD) that is paid under the OPPS. According to CMS, the site-neutral payment will result in lower copayments for beneficiaries and savings for the Medicare program in an estimated amount of \$380 million for 2019. ◀

CMS Statement on Counting of Student Therapy Minutes Causes Confusion

During the question and answer segment of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) National Provider call that focused on the inpatient rehabilitation facility (IRF) payment and coverage policies for the fiscal year 2019 final rule on November 15, 2018, there was a response from CMS on the role of therapy students in providing care to patients in IRF hospitals and units that caused a great deal of confusion. The question related to counting minutes of therapy provided by a therapy student with guidance. The response was that these minutes would not count, regardless of the level of supervision. Due to the amount of confusion this call has triggered, the therapy professional associations will be working with CMS on this issue and clarification will likely be forthcoming. RCPA will provide this clarification to members once this is received. ◀

Brain Injury

BIAA Announces Upcoming Webinars

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) has [posted](#) their upcoming live webinars, including Managing Stress as a TBI Caregiver; Concussion as a Craniocervical Injury; Neuroendocrine Function after Brain Injury; and Protecting Vulnerable Populations from Exploitation. ◀

BIAA Offers Free Webinar on Pseudobulbar Affect

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) is offering a **free** Carolyn Rocchio Caregivers webinar on Thursday, December 13, 2018 from 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm that will focus on Pseudobulbar Affect (PBA). PBA is a neurologic condition that causes sudden, frequent, uncontrollable episodes of crying and/or laughing that are exaggerated and/or don't match how you feel. This condition can happen as a result of certain neurologic conditions or brain injury. [Registration](#) for this webinar is now open. ◀



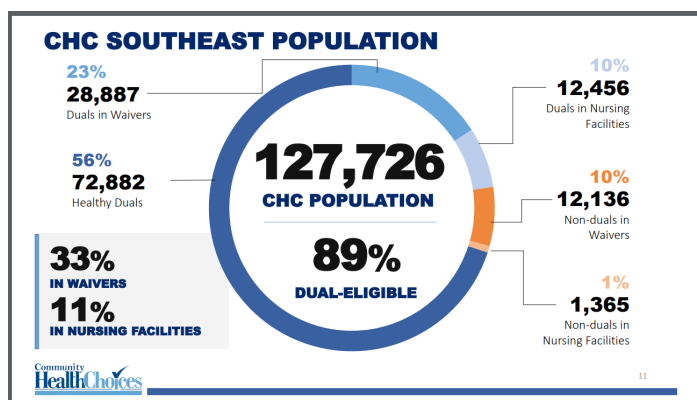
Registration Open for 2019 Brain Injury Business Practice College

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) has announced that registration is now open for their 2019 [Brain Injury Business Practice College](#) scheduled for January 23–25, 2019 in San Diego, CA. The program will: provide information on approaching changes in legislative, regulatory, and business environments for rehabilitation; examine theory and operational strategies of culture and performance; and encourage sharing of best practices through case study, interactive, and networking sessions. Peter Thomas of Powers, Pyles, Sutter & Verville PC will offer insights on the state of government affairs for rehabilitation. ◀

Articles and topics selected for this newsletter are designed to help build continued knowledge base among our members for the topics that will impact you most as we move to managed care in Pennsylvania.

The Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) Subcommittee of the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee (MAAC) monthly meeting transcripts and related documents are posted on the Community HealthChoices (CHC) website [here](#), along with the schedule for the 2019 meetings.

The Southeast population affected by CHC on January 1, 2019 is shown in this graphic from the Office of Long-Term Living:



Homecare and Respite in Medicare Advantage Plans

Traditionally, Medicare Advantage plans could only offer supplemental benefits that were defined as primarily health related. Beginning in calendar year (CY) 2019, CMS is expanding the definition to consider an item or service as primarily health related if it is used to diagnose, compensate for physical impairments, acts to ameliorate the functional/psychological impact of injuries or health conditions, or reduces avoidable emergency and health care utilization. A supplemental benefit is not primarily health related under the previous or new definition if it is an item or service that is solely or primarily used for cosmetic, comfort, general use, or social determinant purposes. A plan may opt to cover items and services for certain enrollees who have met the plan's criteria, such as being assessed as needing assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL). Plans are responsible for clearly identifying what will and will not be covered in the plan's Evidence of Coverage (EOC), including any limitations on coverage.

For 2019, an estimated 3% of Medicare Advantage plans will offer the newly-available expanded services. It is expected that the 2020 plans will include additional services, described in the [April 27, 2018 letter](#), upon evaluation of how the benefits may help them manage health care services for enrollees. ◀

On November 8, 2018, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued proposed significant regulatory revisions to streamline the 2016 managed care regulatory framework. The changes reflect a broader strategy to relieve regulatory burdens; support state flexibility and local leadership; and promote transparency, flexibility, and innovation in care delivery. While the 2016 managed care final rule was a substantial and comprehensive rewrite of the Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) regulatory structure, it included provisions that many states and stakeholders identified as unnecessarily prescriptive, and as adding unnecessary costs and administrative burden to state Medicaid programs without contributing to the improvement of health outcomes. A working group of state Medicaid directors reviewed and analyzed the regulation to identify opportunities to achieve a better balance between appropriate federal oversight and state flexibility, while also maintaining critical beneficiary protections, ensuring fiscal integrity, and promoting accountability for providing quality of care for Medicaid beneficiaries. Review the [summary of proposed changes](#) and view the proposed rule. Comments on the [proposed rule](#) are due January 14, 2019. ◀



Psychiatric Outpatient Regulations Under Legal Review for Legislative Requirements Passed in November

Once again, the outpatient regulations are under internal legal review by the OMHSAS legal team. The reason for the current review was the legislation to include social workers as diagnosticians and most recently the assisted outpatient treatment bill. The reality is that any time a change is made through legislation, the draft regulation has to be reviewed and amended to meet the legislation. Having said that, there have been at least three laws this past year that have impacted the outpatient regulations being promulgated. As a result, RCPA staff and members will work with the Mental Health Caucus to review the overarching laws that govern the regulatory process. Join us at the RCPA Mental Health Committee meeting on Wednesday, December 5 to learn more. ◀

OMHSAS Medical Director Named

Dr. Mahmood (Mike) Usman has been named the OMHSAS medical director. Dr. Usman brings great skills and experiences to this position. For the past 10 years he has been with Merakey, formerly known as NHS. While at Merakey, he performed a variety of clinical work with Community Treatment Teams (CTT)/Assertive Community Teams (ACT), Dual Diagnosis Treatment Teams (DDTT), Long Term Structured Residences, as well as a number of outpatient clinics. Dr. Usman has also served in an administrative capacity as both a county and regional medical director.

While at Merakey, Dr. Usman acquired extensive experience working with the Allegheny DDTT team, and has been working with individuals who are dually diagnosed for almost 30 years. OMHSAS and ODP have identified working with individuals who are dually diagnosed with a developmental/intellectual disability and a mental illness as a priority for both offices.

Dr. Usman has also been working in disaster response with various organizations since 2002. He is currently working with Team Rubicon (USA), Team Rubicon UK, the American Red Cross, and the Allegheny County Medical Reserve Corps. He has been deployed to a number of natural disasters and, most recently, to the tragic events at the Tree of Life Synagogue, in Pittsburgh.

Dr. Usman will be transitioning into his new role with OMHSAS over the next two months, beginning full time in January 2019. ◀



Urgent Request: DDAP Advocating for Providers; Survey Responses Needed ASAP

RCPA sent this information out previously; however, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) has reported that there was very little response. This information is critically needed as DDAP advocates for support for services provided. Members have been providing some services that are costly but never reimbursed; DDAP is working to rectify this. Please complete the survey ASAP — Your input is needed, thank you.

Below is the request from DDAP:

With the current transition to ASAM, DDAP and DHS are working to establish provider designations for 3.5 and 3.7 levels of care. To accomplish this, providers of residential services were asked to complete a survey to provide information necessary for this designation process. However, a large portion of providers did not complete the requested information. This will impact those of you who contract (or plan to contract) with an SCA or BH-MCO. Therefore, it is *imperative* that a survey be completed for each licensed facility delivering these levels of care.

Below are two links for the same survey. If you have difficulty accessing the survey using one link, please try the other; however, complete only ONE survey per licensed facility.

- <https://arcg.is/yqC5C>
- <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/e493be90d4714530a7ade2cf8084edf4>

If you have already completed the survey as a result of the two prior requests to do so, please DO NOT complete it a second time. If you are receiving this email, but are not the person within your agency who would be responsible for completing the survey, please forward it to the appropriate person. Preparation is already underway to notify those providers who have already responded. It is the responsibility of the provider organizations to complete this information in order to receive a level of care designation by the state. Thank you for your attention to this request. Please contact RCPA Drug and Alcohol Division Director Lynn Cooper with questions. ◀

Staffing Change at DDAP

This message is to inform our members that Wenona (Wake) Wilson is no longer at the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP); the position of Bureau Director for Quality Assurance is now vacant. DDAP will not be naming anyone in an acting capacity but are considering all options for filling the position as quickly as possible. If RCPA members were working on any projects directly with Wenona, please contact Deputy Secretary Ellen DiDomenico so that they can determine how to get you the information needed or to designate someone else to participate in relevant meetings. DDAP will be working to ensure that operations continue to run as smoothly as possible. RCPA wishes the best to Wenona as she moves on to a new path. ◀

New State Program to Help Individuals Battling Opioid Use Disorder Find and Maintain Housing in Pennsylvania

Governor Tom Wolf recently announced a new state program that aims to direct \$15 million for an opioid housing initiative that will fund a minimum of eight pilot projects in eligible urban and rural communities throughout the Commonwealth. The proposed pilot programs must help individuals to become and remain engaged in evidence-based treatment interventions, provide individuals with the necessary support services to maintain housing stability, and provide pre-tenancy and tenancy education services. The full article can be read [here](#).

(Source: Governor Tom Wolf official site news release, October 17, 2018) ◀

Webinar Recording From IRETA: Addressing Opioid Addiction in Acute Care Settings

If you were unable to participate in October's webinar, you can still [view it online](#). Dr. Michael Lynch has led efforts to improve care for patients with substance use disorders both in the emergency department (ED) and in the hospital, coupled with connection to ongoing treatment. RCPA really appreciated him sharing his expertise on the topic of opioids.

The IRETA Current is disseminated twice monthly to addiction and allied health and human service providers, as well as policymakers, advocates, and researchers interested in addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery. If you received an edition of *The IRETA Current* from a colleague, [please make sure to subscribe directly](#). ◀

ACHIEVA Endorses Training

by Rose Warman, Vice President, ACHIEVA Support Compliance

ACHIEVA recently sponsored KEPRO's Southwest Healthcare Quality Unit (KEPRO HCQU) face-to-face instructor-led training entitled "Sexuality: Every Person's Rights" as part of our initiative to address the sexual health of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD).

KEPRO HCQU's training focused on three main areas:

1. Defining the concept of sexuality;
2. Recognizing potential harmful beliefs regarding sexuality; and
3. Identifying individual rights regarding sexuality and privacy based on the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Bulletin 00-18-01: [Guidelines Concerning Sexual Health, Personal Relationships, and Sexuality](#).

The instructor, a clinical therapist, began our presentation with an overview of the components of sexuality from birth through adulthood, explaining how each of us are "hard-wired" for sexuality. This led to a robust discussion of the unhealthy beliefs, assumptions, and myths regarding sexuality for people with I/DD. One particular myth that resonated with the group was "people with I/DD are incapable of understanding or learning about sexuality." Most attendees believed that being able to live one's sexuality was a right and that people with I/DD are often misinformed or not informed as they should be. This followed with a thorough review by KEPRO of the Office of Developmental Programs bulletin, which outlined the purpose and principles of the bulletin, expectations for privacy, and family, individual, and agency responsibilities when supporting an individual regarding sexuality issues.

The therapist closed our presentation with "Helpful Approaches" that offered advice on how to best support someone when presented with difficult challenges related to sexuality. One challenging scenario presented involved a mother who told her daughter that she would become physically ill if she got involved with boys and sex. Even though such a scenario likely happens infrequently, dealing with family obstacles/beliefs/backlash was the number one response when attendees were asked **"What three concerns do you have with supporting an individual with a disability as it relates to personal relationships and sexuality?"** Other concerns included how to deal with staff perceptions/beliefs, how to protect against victimization, and how to best educate the individual.

At the end of our presentation, attendees were asked **"What three takeaways from this training will you practice as an employee?"** More than a third responded how important it is to advocate, educate, and communicate about sexuality and protection from sexual abuse with individuals and their families as well as to fellow staff.

All in all, attendees believed this was a training that should be presented to all staff and was a topic "everyone needs to know" and would provide "better support for the people we support." ACHIEVA is working to develop a plan to carry out the goals and objectives contained in ODP's sexuality bulletin, and training will be an important component of the plan. ACHIEVA encourages other agencies to contact KEPRO to see if their trainings on the topic are available in their area. ◀



Work Group Addressing Barriers to “Employment First”

Employment providers across Pennsylvania have shared that they have experienced critical impact based upon the recent implementation of OVR’s Supported Employment Policy and Pre-Employment Transition Services (P.E.T.S.) Provider Agreement. A work group of Pennsylvania employment providers within RCPA, APSE, and PAR have developed a survey to gather information and data regarding the impact to serve OVR customers.

The intent is to gather and report the results of this survey to all survey responders as well as OVR, ODP, and OLTL leadership to encourage open dialogue, educate stakeholders, increase partnership, and offer solutions to the critical impact in order to assure access to employment services for individuals with disabilities.

Please designate one person who has expertise in employment service management within your organization to complete the 24-question survey. Surveys will be emailed to organizations in early December. If your organization provides these services but did not receive an email by that time, please contact [Carol Ferenz](#) as soon as possible in order to participate. Every organization’s responses are critical and valuable to providing the most accurate statewide impact to customers and providers. All survey responses will be anonymous when publishing final results.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the survey as we partner to provide the highest quality employment supports and services for Pennsylvanians with disabilities. ◀

Intellectual Disabilities/Autism (ID/A) Coalition Asks for Support of DSP Petition

RCPA, The Arc of PA, UCP of PA, and PAR have joined efforts to call attention to the Direct Support Professional (DSP) crisis in the ID/A field by gathering signatures on a petition asking the governor to take the following actions in the budget for fiscal year 19/20:

1. Help #FixTheDSPCrisis by funding a \$120 million (in state funds) rate increase through increased DSP wages, benefits, and training.
2. Reduce the ID/A Emergency Waiting List by funding services for 1,000 of the 5,000 people currently on the Emergency Waiting List, plus an additional 100 for unanticipated emergencies.
3. Strengthen Early Intervention (EI) services by raising rates for EI services by \$5.7 million to address a decade of insufficient adjustments and reimbursement.

View the [joint petition](#) supported by RCPA, The Arc of PA, UCP of PA, and PAR.

Please sign and share widely to increase our efforts to call attention to the DSP crisis and other budget priorities. **Ask the individuals you serve (self-advocates) and their family members to sign, and ask your staff and their families to sign. There is power in numbers.** Please contact [Carol Ferenz](#), RCPA IDD Division Director, with questions. ◀

ODP Publications since last RCPA News

- [096-18 Comprehensive Employment Report](#)
- [097-18 Family Listening Sessions \(third reissue\)](#)
- [097-18 Attachment Reissue Final](#)
- [098-18 Now Available on MyODP Waiver Amendment Webinar Recording](#)
- [099-18 Requesting an Enhanced Communication Rate for Services for Individuals Who Use Sign Language](#)
- [Enhanced Communication Rate Request Form](#)
- [100-18 Home and Community Based Services Provider Settings Self-Assessment Update 4](#)
- [Health Alert Maintaining Skin Integrity and Preventing Pressure Injuries](#)

RCPA Members Will Soon Enjoy Full Benefits of ANCOR Membership

The RCPA Board of Directors recently approved full membership for the association with the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), which in turn will benefit all members of RCPA. ANCOR represents over 1,400 service providers and 52 state provider organizations who support more than one million Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities through the Medicaid Program. ANCOR provides advocacy on a federal level and represents the workforce of community providers across the country who empower people with developmental disabilities including Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, and autism, to live and work with dignity in their own communities.

Effective in January 2019, all RCPA members will be considered members of ANCOR, and will enjoy the benefits of their membership. There is no additional charge to our members for this; you will receive a welcome email and may choose to opt out or sign up for pertinent email lists.

ANCOR membership offers a multitude of benefits, including:

- ▶ Up to date information regarding federal policy;
- ▶ Opportunities to be involved in shaping public policy;
- ▶ Access to the *ANCOR Amplifier* – an interactive website that enables members to easily and efficiently

communicate with elected officials on important issues;

- ▶ Collaboration with other providers through the use of a private, professional networking community, sharing information and advice with peers across the country;
- ▶ National Advocacy Campaign working to advance the professionalism, recognition of, and improved wages for Direct Support Professionals;
- ▶ Educational offerings including webinars;
- ▶ Technical assistance including guidance on HIPAA, Wage and Hour, and other regulations, including (limited) free access to legal consultation with Gilliland, Maguire & Harper, PC;
- ▶ Shared Resource Purchasing Network that also offers some benefits to employees of organizations; and
- ▶ Publications including weekly updates, *Capitol Correspondence*, and bi-monthly newsletters.

For a full description of benefits now available to you as members:

- ▶ [ANCOR Member Benefits Brochure](#)
- ▶ [2018 ANCOR Members How to Get Involved](#)
- ▶ [2017 Milestone Year Booklet](#)

RCPA will notify members once this agreement is in full effect. Please contact [Carol Ferenz](#), RCPA IDD Division Director, with questions. ◀



PCYA Shares Legislative Update

Brian Bornman, Executive Director at PA Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP), shared an extensive list of children, youth, and family specific legislative updates with us. Please see the list below:

Legislative Session in Review

Although the PA legislative session ran through November 30, with no additional session days scheduled and elections right around the corner, the session was already over in a practical sense. This has certainly been a session where numerous bills sought to review child welfare or make changes to the child welfare system. With the flurry of activity at the end of the session and the lulls of budget negotiations, it can be challenging to keep a tally of what passed and what did not. So, in the interest of keeping everyone in the know, the following is a rundown of some of the key bills PCYA was monitoring that passed and those that couldn't make it to the finish line.

What Passed?

Act 89 of 2018, (HB 2133), has been signed by the governor. This Act directs the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a Kinship Caregiver Navigator Program. DHS has already put out a Request for Applications (set out in Funding Section below) to assist in providing for the navigator program, and last week announced more than \$479,000 in federal funds will be available to aid in funding this effort.

Act 88 of 2018, (HB 1539), was signed by the Governor on October 23, 2018. This law has a 60 day effective period. This law creates a Temporary Guardianship Status and process by statute for individuals who cannot provide care for their child due to entry into a drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or due to medical emergency due to drug or alcohol use.

Act 54 of 2018, (HB 1232), was signed by the Governor on June 28, 2018. This law has multiple dates whereby different provisions become effective. The key provisions of this law require that grades K-12 post the ChildLine telephone numbers prominently. This provision went into effect August 27, 2018. The second key feature was an initiative that PCYA membership sought to progress and that is to extend the period during which valid GPS records can be kept. This was formerly moving through the legislature as SB 938. This law extends the retention period of GPS cases that were accepted for service or determined to be valid from five years to ten years. Additionally, this law permits counties to retain "information regarding protective service reports" in the county records,

regardless of whether they are expunged in the Statewide Data System or not. There is a one year effective date on this provision, but also specific guidance regarding how reports to be expunged are to be handled in the interim. There will be additional guidance forthcoming from OCYF on this topic.

Lastly, this law makes substantial changes to the notification provisions regarding substance exposed newborns and the development of safe plans of care. This provision was to take effect after October 1, 2018. OCYF indicated that there would be additional guidance and direction regarding the implementation of this provision.

Act 47 of 2018, (HB 17), was signed by the Governor on June 28, 2018, with an effective date of August 27, 2018. This law makes changes to the PA Drug and Alcohol Abuse Control Act. This allows a minor's parent to give consent for the release of drug and alcohol treatment records of that minor child.

Act 49 of 2018, (HB 159), was signed by the Governor on June 28, 2018, with an effective date of August 27, 2018. This law amends the Juvenile Act to expand the definition of "Delinquent Act" to include "the failure of a child to comply with a lawful sentence imposed for a summary offense, in which event notice of the fact shall be certified to the court." Additionally, it clarifies that the process brought due to the failure to comply with sentencing in a summary offense is a separate action in and of itself.

Act 12 of 2017, (HB 217), was signed by the Governor on June 29, 2017, with an effective date of August 29, 2017. This law changes the grading of the criminal penalties for Endangering the Welfare of A Child and specifically increases the penalty one grade when the child is under the age of six. Additionally, this law directs the court to consider ordering anyone convicted of this section to undergo counseling.

Act 68 of 2017, (HB 1139), was signed by the Governor on December 22, 2017, with an effective date of February 11, 2018. This amends the PA Newborn Protection Act (the so-called Safe Haven Act) to allow emergency services to accept safe haven newborns. It sets forth the requirements to maintain and monitor an incubator, if emergency

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services chooses to accept safe haven babies, and includes emergency services as an acceptable place for a parent to leave the baby in order to avoid criminal liability.

Act 21 of 2018, (SB 844), was signed by the Governor on May 4, 2018, with an effective date of July 5, 2018. This law amends the custody statute to grant standing to file for custody to anyone who meets the following requirements:

- (i) The individual has assumed or is willing to assume responsibility for the child.
 - (ii) The individual has a sustained, substantial, and sincere interest in the welfare of the child. In determining whether the individual meets the requirements of this subparagraph, the court may consider, among other factors, the nature, quality, extent, and length of the involvement by the individual in the child's life.
 - (iii) Neither parent has any form of care and control of the child.
- (5) Paragraph (4) shall not apply if:
- (i) A dependency proceeding involving the child has been initiated or is ongoing; or
 - (ii) There is an order of permanent legal custody under 42 Pa.C.S. § 6351(a)(2.1) or (f.1)(3) (relating to disposition of dependent child).

Act 71 of 2018, (SB 1037), was signed by the Governor on June 28, 2018, with various effective dates. This law changes the employment testing and maintenance of eligible employment lists from the State Civil Service Commission to the Office of Administration.

Act 92 of 2018, (HB 44), was signed by the Governor on October 24, 2018, with an effective date of April 22, 2019. This law amends the custody law to require that the petitioner must note in the petition that any party has been the subject of an indicated or founded child abuse referral and who the investigative agency was. There are also additional requirements for pleading notices.

Act 94 of 2018, (HB 149), was signed by the Governor on October 24, 2018, with an effective date of December 23, 2018. This law creates a misdemeanor criminal offense of unlawful use of an audio or video device in court.

Act 130 of 2018, (SB 554), was signed by the Governor on October 24, 2018, with an effective date of December 23, 2018. This law offers a number of protections and services for victims of sex trafficking. This creates the "safe harbor," which would prohibit minors from being charged for prostitution or connected crimes.

Act 157 of 2018, (SB 1092), was signed by the Governor on October 24, 2018, with an effective date of December 23, 2018. This law provides a sentencing enhancement for people convicted of domestic violence in the presence of a child.

What Didn't Pass?

Please note, this is not a comprehensive list of all legislation that PCYA was monitoring that did not pass. That list can be located on the PCYA website in the Legislative Tracking Spreadsheet.

HB 1745, The Fostering Independence Through Education Act, did not pass this legislative session. This bill would have waived the tuition for youth coming out of the child welfare system at the state colleges in Pennsylvania. This bill cleared both the House with unanimous support and the Senate Education Committee. This bill will likely be reintroduced next session.

If you are working with youth in foster care and want to assist them in reducing barriers to higher education, here are a few tips from the Juvenile Law Center to help support our youth:

1. **Support youth in their college aspirations and provide counseling as they make their decisions about their future.**

2. **Help youth apply for financial aid, grants, and scholarships:**

- a. **Help youth complete the FAFSA.**

The FAFSA is the Free Application for Student Aid and is the gateway to all federal and most state student aid. Make sure youth identify themselves as being in foster care so that they can be considered "independent."

- b. **Help youth apply for the Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)** if they were in foster care at age 16 or older. This could provide them with up to \$5,000 per year to help them pay for the cost of attending a program of higher education or training.

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- c. **Help youth apply for scholarships:** There are many search engines out there to look for scholarships for all youth. The Field Center has just released a [new resource](#) that has a list of scholarships for youth in foster care.
3. **Encourage youth to remain in care until age 21** so they can receive support while they attend programs of higher education and training. Youth can remain in care until age 21 even if they are in college or a training program; this can help defray some of the cost of pursuing higher education and training.
4. **Help youth find support services on campus.** Here is a [great resource](#) from the Field Center on campus support programs for youth in foster care at schools in the Philadelphia area. A guide for the state will be released next year. For campus based support programs for all students that are funded through Act 101, please [see this guide](#).

[SB 1129](#), which would require and define a diligent search checklist before cases could proceed to termination, did not pass this session.

[SB 1087](#), which would establish the Interbranch Commission on the Child Welfare System, did not pass this session. This bill was one PCYA was monitoring closely.

Other bills of note and discussion throughout the session that did not pass are listed below:

- ▶ [SB 65](#), which would create the Child Welfare Loan Forgiveness Program.
- ▶ [SB 62](#), which would exclude parental incarceration from aggravated circumstances.
- ▶ [SB 149](#), which would provide a definition of "Chronic Runaway Child."
- ▶ [HB 1707](#), which would remove the term "illegal" from the substance exposed infants referral provision.
- ▶ The package of adoption bills, the educational stability bills, any of the bills changing mandatory school age, and any of the numerous bills prohibiting smoking in cars with minors present.

Thanks to Brian for the work on this review and for sharing it. ◀

RCPA Children's Steering Committee and 2019 Priorities

The Steering Committee is now 21 members strong and well positioned to begin work on our 2019 priorities. Our year end meeting will welcome Deputy Secretary Lynn Kovich for a meet and greet. Deputy Secretary Kovich will outline the overall priorities for the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) and spend some time with the committee discussing priorities for the Children's Bureau. The committee intends to invite other deputy secretaries from the various child-serving systems at DHS to future meetings throughout 2019. The committee will engage our children's providers membership to determine what should be prioritized for policy and advocacy efforts. Children's policy efforts will align with those of our state partners. In 2018, we enjoyed constructive and meaningful interactions with PA lawmakers and the leadership due to the relationships created and maintained by RCPA's Richard Edley, Jack Phillips, and various RCPA members. We are confident that this will continue into 2019. The Steering Committee is co-chaired by Garrett Trout, TrueNorth Wellness, and Susan Hurd, Children's Behavioral Health, Inc. This group of dedicated professionals is comprised of executive leaders who are committing their time and resources to shape the future of the Children's Division agenda. ◀

Governor Wolf Introduces Ready to Start Task Force

Governor Wolf has created a task force that will focus on strategies to address health, human services, and education policy for infants and toddlers, ages 0–3. He believes that the task force complements his robust agenda for children, which includes access to high quality Pre-K through 12th grade. This task force will focus on the youngest Pennsylvanians; the group will identify programs and policies to help infants and children, 0–3. The Ready to Start Task Force will put emphasis on three guiding principles:

- Improve health outcomes of infants, toddlers, and their families;
- Strengthen the home environment for infants, toddlers, and their families; and
- Prepare infants and toddlers for future school success.

Listening sessions will be led by professionals with a focus on early learning and child development. The information gathered will be used to gain insight into current and possible strategies to help the children, birth to three years of age. Six sessions will be hosted across the Commonwealth through November. The newly formed Early Intervention (EI) Committee will receive updates from various members of the task force with an overall goal of providing the EI providers' perspective in regards to the recommendations and strategies created by the task force. ◀



Events subject to change; members will be notified of any developments

DECEMBER

Monday, December 3	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	BHRS/IBHS Work Group Meeting <i>RCPA Conference Room</i>
Tuesday, December 4	12:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Drug & Alcohol Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre - Room B</i>
Wednesday, December 5	9:30 am – 12:00 pm 10:00 am – 2:00 pm 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Mental Health Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre</i> Brain Injury: Collaborative CHC MCO Issue Resolution Meeting <i>Penn Grant Centre</i> Criminal Justice Committee <i>RCPA Conference Room</i>
Tuesday, December 11	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Advocacy, Education & Membership Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Wednesday, December 12	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	Open Board Meeting <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Thursday, December 13	9:15 am – 11:15 am 12:15 pm – 4:15 pm	Supports Coordination Organization Subcommittee <i>RCPA Conference Room</i> Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Thursday, December 13	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm EST	IPRC Webinar: Problem Solving Respiratory Issues in Children with Neuromuscular Disease
Tuesday, December 18	10:00 am – 12:30 pm	Medical Rehabilitation Committee <i>RCPA Conference Room</i>
Tuesday, December 18	12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Outcomes & Best Practices Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Wednesday, December 19	1:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Physical Disabilities and Aging Division <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Thursday, December 20	11:00 am – 3:00 pm	BH-MCO/RCPA Task Force Meeting <i>Penn Grant Centre</i> <i>Lunch sponsored by Community Care Behavioral Health Organization</i>

JANUARY

Tuesday, January 8	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Advocacy, Education & Membership Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Tuesday, January 15	12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Outcomes & Best Practices Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Thursday, January 17	9:00 am – 10:00 am	Government Affairs Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Thursday, January 31	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	IDD Committee Meeting <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>