



Special Feature

Awards, Advocacy, & Highlights

- ▶ RCPA President/CEO Richard S. Edley, PhD, Received the UCP Life Without Limits Award on November 21, 2019 (photo right)
- ▶ Council on Reform Submits Recommendations for the Protection of Vulnerable Populations to Gov. Wolf – RCPA President/CEO Richard S. Edley, PhD Served On This Council
 - o Access the online public comment form, available through December 16
- ▶ PATF Conference on Financial Empowerment for Individuals with Disabilities Recap
 - o View PATF conference photos here — Richard S. Edley, PhD of RCPA moderated the final panel of the day, “What Have We Learned and Where Do We Go from Here?”



Edley (center), with UCP Board Chair John M. Coles, Esq (L) and UCP President/CEO Judith McCowan (R)

Richard S. Edley, PhD

President and CEO

Allison Brognia

Event Planner/

Accounts Payable Manager

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Divisions*

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©2019. 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.

The views and opinions expressed in these articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of RCPA.

Members in the News

- ▶ Wolf Administration Awards \$3.4 Million in Grants to Support Pregnant and Postpartum Women with Opioid Use Disorder -- Congratulations to RCPA Members PA Counseling Services and Berks Counseling Center for making the list!
- ▶ RCPA Member Familylinks Names Don Goughler Interim President & CEO
- ▶ RCPA Member Allied Services Recognizes Employees At Annual Awards Ceremony



PROVIDER

Lighthouse Vocational Services

144 Orlan Rd

New Holland, PA 17557

Central Region

Kirt Barden, CEO

continued from page 1

- ▶ Agencies For Handicapped Sue Over State Regs Forcing Community Participation

Announcing the Department of Human Services'
Strategic Plan



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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 is a discount for the first year 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.



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

Tentative Minimum Wage Deal in the Works

Talk in Harrisburg is that the Pennsylvania Senate and Governor Tom Wolf are tentatively moving towards gradually increasing Pennsylvania's minimum wage to \$9.50/hour in the next 18 months to two years. The tentative proposal would increase the state's minimum wage by \$2.25 from the current rate of \$7.25.

Additionally, the tentative proposal would also prevent the Governor from taking action on a [proposed rule to expand overtime](#) to low level managers for the next two years, until after the next governor is elected. State business groups, such as the PA Chamber, may not fight this compromise so long as the overtime expansion is tabled and businesses receive assurances from the Governor that he will allow other employer/employee wage reforms to go through the legislative process and sign those reforms into law. The deal is still in its infancy and the PA House will have to agree to the proposal. Stay tuned!! ◀

RCPA Meets With House Mental Health Caucus

On Tuesday, November 19, RCPA staff and members met with the Pennsylvania House Mental Health Caucus to discuss pressing issues affecting our mental health providers. The items discussed at the meeting included restoring county mental health funding, insufficient Medicaid outpatient behavioral health services funding, and the Department of Human Services decision not to accept federal funding for certified community behavioral health clinics (CCBHCs). The handouts that were shared with legislators can be found here:

- ▶ [MH Funding One Pager](#)
- ▶ [Outpatient BH Survey Results Nov 2019](#)
- ▶ [CCBHC Letter Email Version to Gov Wolf and Secretary Miller 10-17-19](#)
- ▶ [CCBHC Letter to DHS 09-30-19](#)

RCPA will continue to follow up with legislators and the Governor's office on these important funding issues. ◀

RCPA's Legislative Tracking Reports

RCPA is constantly tracking various policy initiatives and legislation that may have positive or negative effects on our members and those we serve — so for your convenience, RCPA has created a legislative tracking report, which is broken down into specific policy areas. You can review these tracking reports below to see the legislative initiatives that the General Assembly may undertake during the 2019/20 Legislative Session. If you have questions on a specific bill or policy, please contact [Jack Phillips](#), RCPA Director of Government Affairs.

- ▶ [Adult Mental Health](#)
- ▶ [Autism](#)
- ▶ [Brain Injury](#)
- ▶ [Budget](#)
- ▶ [Children and Youth](#)
- ▶ [Children's](#)
- ▶ [Criminal Justice](#)
- ▶ [Drug & Alcohol](#)
- ▶ [Insurance](#)
- ▶ [Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- ▶ [Labor](#)
- ▶ [Medical Rehabilitation](#)
- ▶ [Minimum Wage](#)
- ▶ [Miscellaneous](#)
- ▶ [Regulatory](#)
- ▶ [Social Programs](#)
- ▶ [Suicide](#)

RCPA Legislative Information

RCPA members can now find the most recent [documents](#) on legislative priorities, position papers, and other important legislative information on [RCPA's website](#). Please check the RCPA website for additional updates on legislative happenings. ◀

RCPA PAC Needs Your Support

The RCPA PAC raises money and supports campaigns of state legislators and representatives who advance our interests on Health & Human Services issues. The funds raised through RCPA PAC can make a difference. 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.

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. ◀



Federal News

Department of Homeland Security Releases Final Rule to Clarify REAL ID Policy

On October 15, 2019, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a [final rule](#) regarding the deadline for no longer accepting non-compliant driver's licenses and identification cards for official purposes. This final rule amends the [REAL ID](#) regulation to clarify that the October 1, 2020 deadline when federal agencies may no longer accept non-compliant driver's licenses and identification cards for official purposes applies to all non-compliant cards, including state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards marked to indicate they may not be used for official purposes. Under the REAL ID Act and regulation, once a state is REAL ID compliant, it can continue to issue both compliant and non-compliant cards to residents; the non-compliant cards must be "marked" to clearly distinguish both on their face and in the card's machine readable zone that they are not acceptable by federal agencies for official purposes. ◀

CMS Releases CY 2020 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule

On November 1, 2019, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the calendar year (CY) 2020 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) [final rule](#). The final rule includes updates to payment policies, payment rates, and quality program provisions for services effective on or after January 1, 2020.

Some of the provisions included in the final rule:

Medicare Telehealth Services – The following HCPCS codes are being added to the list of telehealth services: G2086, G2087, and G2088, which describe a bundled episode of care for treatment of opioid use disorders.

Evaluation & Management (E/M) Services – CMS is mirroring the E/M changes that were adopted by the American Medical Association (AMA) Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Editorial Panel for office/outpatient E/M visits.

Physician Supervision Requirements for Physician Assistants (PAs) – The regulation has been updated on physician supervision of PAs to provide them with greater flexibility to practice more broadly in accordance with state law and state scope of practice.

Review and Verification of Medical Record Documentation – In order to reduce burden, CMS finalized broad modifications to the documentation policy so that physicians, physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs – nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse-midwives, and certified registered nurse anesthetists) can review and verify (sign and date), rather than re-documenting, notes made in the medical record by other physicians, residents, medical, physician assistants, and APRN students, nurses, or other members of the medical team.

Medicare Coverage for Opioid Use Disorder Treatment Services Furnished by Opioid Treatment Programs – CMS is implementing a new Medicare Part B benefit for opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment services, including medications for medication-assisted treatment (MAT), furnished by opioid treatment programs (OTP).

Counseling and Therapy Services – Finalized a policy to allow counseling and therapy services described in the bundled payments, to be furnished via two-way interactive audio-video communication technology as clinically appropriate.

Beneficiary Copayment – There will be a zero beneficiary copayment for 2020.

The final rule was published in the November 12, 2019 [Federal Register](#). ◀

Reduction Seen in Medicare Appeals Backlog

According to a filing with a Federal Court, the backlog of Medicare appeals has been reduced by 25 percent as of June 30, 2019. The filing stems from a lawsuit that resulted in a court ordering which directed the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to reduce the backlog by 19 percent from fiscal year (FY) 2018 to the end of FY 2019. This recent reduction places HHS ahead of schedule; however, 318,000 appeals remain pending at the end of FY 2019's third quarter. Per the court mandate, HHS must reduce the appeals backlog by 49 percent by the end of FY 2020, 75 percent by the end of FY 2021, and clear the entire backlog by the end of FY 2022. ◀

President Trump Signs Executive Order to Protect & Enhance Medicare Program

President Trump recently signed an [Executive Order](#) (EO) that aims to protect and improve the Medicare program for seniors. The EO instructs the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to take a number of steps to accomplish this policy goal. Some of these directives include: ensuring traditional (fee-for-service) Medicare is not promoted or given priority over Medicare Advantage (MA) plans, encouraging MA plans to offer more supplemental benefits, to adjust network adequacy requirements for MA plans, and to create a payment model that would allow MA beneficiaries to share directly in savings from the payment model. ◀

OLTL Announces Service Coordination Face-to-Face Training Sessions

The Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) recently announced that two one-day classroom training sessions will be offered for Service Coordinators (SCs). Prior to the training sessions, and a required prerequisite, attendees must complete three OLTL SC modules. These modules will provide a strong foundation on the basics to fulfill SC requirements. Participants will be able to take what is learned from these modules and apply it to situations found every day on the job. Attendance at the training sessions is limited to SCs, not supervisors or directors. Also, two attendees will be permitted per agency. Preference will be given to SCs that were hired in 2018 and 2019. Additional registrations will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Special Note: This training is required for SCs working with waiver participants enrolled in the Aging, Attendant Care, Independence, and OBRA waivers, as well as the Act 150 program.

Session information:

Thursday, December 12, 2019 in Harrisburg
Radisson Hotel Harrisburg
1150 Camp Hill Bypass
Camp Hill, PA 17011
8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Tuesday, December 17, 2019 in Philadelphia
DoubleTree
301 W Dekalb Pike
King of Prussia, PA 19406
8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Registration is required in order to attend one of these sessions. If you have any questions regarding registration, please contact Dering Consulting at 717-234-0567. Questions about the training should be directed to OLTL's Bureau of Participant Operations at 717-787-8091. ◀

InterRAI Train-the-Trainer Sessions for Service Coordination Entities Announced

The Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) announced three InterRAI train-the-trainer sessions for service coordination entities (SCEs). The trainings, which are limited to two individuals per SCE, will be jointly presented by the three Community HealthChoices Managed Care Organizations (CHC MCOs): AmeriHealth Caritas, PA Health & Wellness, and UPMC CHC.

The training sessions are two full-day sessions that begin promptly at 9:00 am. Attendees are encouraged to arrive by 8:30 am to register. The training is free and lunch will be provided. Dates and locations of the trainings are:

- ▶ December 4–5: Wilkes Barre, PA
- ▶ December 9–10: Camp Hill, PA
- ▶ December 12–13: Franklin, PA

Registration is required to attend. Each session has limited spots available, so register as soon as possible. At the conclusion of this InterRAI training, participants will be able to recognize and complete each section of the InterRAI HC Assessment Tool, in accordance with the standards set forth in the CHC Agreement. ◀

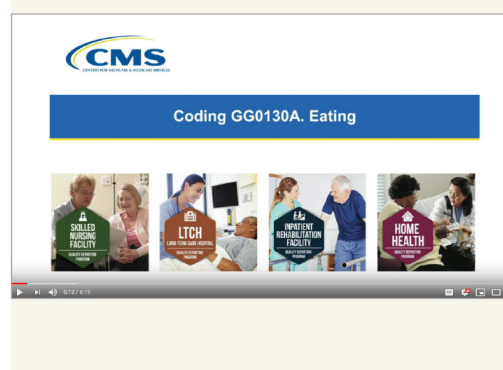


OIG Report Finds Medicare Improperly Paid Claims Subject to the Post-Acute Care Transfer Policy

On November 1, 2019, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued the [report](#), “Medicare Improperly Paid Acute-Care Hospitals \$54.4 Million for Inpatient Claims Subject to the Post-Acute Care Transfer Policy.” The OIG found that Medicare improperly paid acute-care hospitals \$54.4 million for 18,647 claims subject to the transfer policy. These hospitals improperly billed the claims by using the incorrect patient discharge status codes. Specifically, they coded these claims as discharges to home or to certain types of health care institutions, such as facilities that provide custodial care, rather than as transfers to post-acute care. Of these claims, 83 percent were followed by claims for home health services, and 17 percent were followed by claims for services in other post-acute-care settings. The OIG made a recommendation to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to direct the Medicare contractors to: (1) recover the \$54.4 million in identified overpayments, (2) identify any claims for transfers to post-acute care in which incorrect patient discharge status codes were used and direct the Medicare contractors to recover any overpayments after the audit period, and (3) ensure that the Medicare contractors are receiving the post payment edit’s automatic notifications of improperly billed claims and are taking action by adjusting the original inpatient claims to initiate recovery of the overpayments. CMS concurred with the recommendations. ◀

CMS Releases New IRF-PAI Video Tutorial For Coding Eating Measure

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a new video [tutorial](#) for coding eating measure GG0130A of the inpatient rehabilitation facility patient assessment instrument (IRF PAI) and other post-acute care evaluation tools. ◀



Brain Injury

ACL Launches TBI Technical Assistance & Resource Center

On October 28, 2019, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) [announced](#) the launch of the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Technical Assistance and Resource Center. The goal of this center is to help states promote access to integrated, coordinated services and supports for individuals who have sustained a TBI, their families, and caregivers. This center will provide program support to ACL and technical assistance to ACL’s TBI State Partnership program grantees, and will develop and compile resources that will be available to the public. This effort reflects ACL’s commitment to independent living and person-centered planning. The new center will be administered by the [Human Services Research Institute](#) (HSRI) and the [National Association of State Head Injury Administrators](#) (NASHIA), as well as subject matter experts that include individuals who have experienced a TBI. ◀

Traumatic Brain Injury Behavior Study Being Conducted

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) recently released information about a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Behavior [study](#). The researchers of the study are looking for individuals that have experienced a TBI and are showing symptoms of aggression, agitation, and irritability. The results of the study will provide more information (safety and effectiveness) about an investigational drug and whether it could one day be used to help treat behavioral problems due to TBI. ◀

National Conference on State Legislatures Publishes Report on State Responses to Juvenile Justice and TBI

The National Conference on State Legislatures (NCSL) published a Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) [report](#) that examines the issue and prevalence of TBI among justice-involved juveniles. The report highlights the steps that policymakers, researchers, and public officials in four states – Pennsylvania, Colorado, Minnesota, and Virginia – are taking to identify and support young individuals who have sustained a TBI and who are involved in the juvenile justice system. The work in these four states was funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) Federal TBI State Partnership Grant Program. The support for this project was provided by the Mount Sinai Injury Control Research Center, which was supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). ◀

Physical Disabilities & Aging

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.

CHC Corner

The Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) and the three Community HealthChoices (CHC) managed care organizations continue to prepare to implement services in the remaining three regions on January 1, 2020 (Lehigh/Capital, Northwest, and Northeast). Participants continue to have until mid-December, 2019 to make a different plan selection that will be effective on January 1, 2020.

The Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) Subcommittee of the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee (MAAC) reviewed a [monitoring report](#) on November 6, 2019 comparing the three health plans on specific quality measures. The three plans are: UPMC Community HealthChoices, AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania/Keystone First, and PA Health & Wellness. The quality measures include call responsiveness, complaints and grievances, communication, missed services, and plan changes.

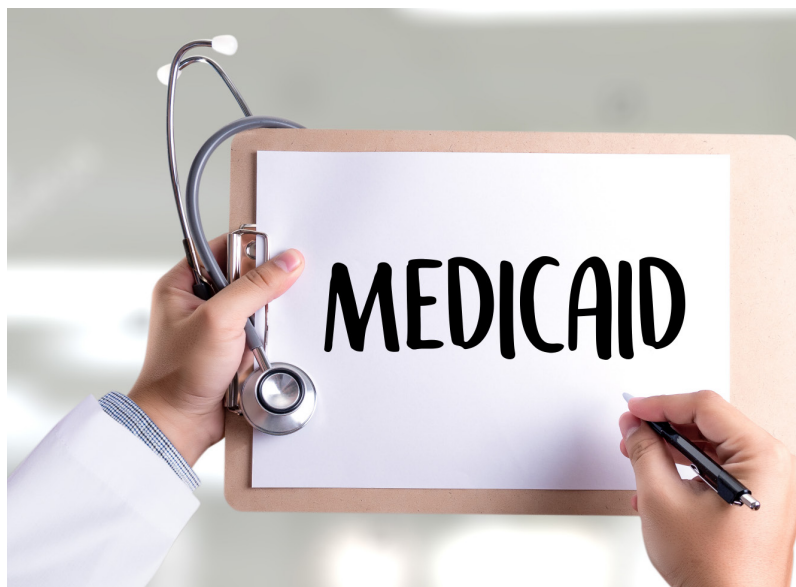
The MAAC MLTSS Subcommittee meeting dates for 2020 are listed [here](#). General information about CHC is available [here](#). ◀

The Value of Pursuing Medicare-Medicaid Integration for Medicaid Agencies

11/22/2019

By Kruse, Alexandra; Herman Soper, Michelle; Dobson, Camille

This report is the fourth in a series of publications from the MLTSS Institute, which was established in 2016 to drive improvements in key MLTSS policy areas, facilitate sharing and learning among states, and provide direct and intensive technical assistance to states and health plans. This issue brief focuses on delivering effective care to individuals eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid and aims to lay out the case for state Medicaid agencies to invest in integrated care programs. [View the Value of Integration Issue Brief](#). ◀



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.

‘Better Business Model’ Needed For Dementia Care, Senate Committee Hears

By Lois A. Bowers, McKnight’s Senior Living, November 21, 2019

A “better business model for the diagnosis and care of persons with Alzheimer’s disease” needs to be created, Jason Karlawish, MD, said [Wednesday] at a Senate Finance Committee Subcommittee on Health [hearing](#).

“The majority of persons with Alzheimer’s disease are over 65 and so covered under Medicare,” said the professor and co-director of the Penn Memory Center at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. “Medicare, therefore, has a key role in shaping the business model for the care of persons with Alzheimer’s disease.”

The hearing was called by Committee Chair Patrick J. Toomey (R-PA) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), ranking member, timed to coincide with National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month. Toomey, who said his father and grandfather had the disease, is co-chair of the Bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer’s Disease... [read full article [here](#)]. ◀

Memory Care Approach Cuts Antipsychotic Med Use In More Than 50% Of Residents: Study

By Lois A. Bowers, McKnight’s Senior Living, November 18, 2019

A person-centered approach to memory care led to the reduced or discontinued use of off-label antipsychotic medications in more than half of the residents of 53 long-term care communities, including assisted living communities, who participated in a study, the results of which were announced last week. The study was conducted in the Canadian provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island.

The Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics, or AUA, approach works with residents living with dementia, their families, and staff members to try to understand the causes of behaviors and underlying issues, such as pain, and respond to each resident’s unmet needs based on his or her personal history. The approach involves reviewing the appropriateness of the use of antipsychotics for the resident and creating individualized care plans with alternative activities — such as exercise, pet therapy, or music therapy — that are meant to be meaningful and enjoyable for the resident... [read full article [here](#)]. ◀

Industry Must Evolve With Needs, Demands of Growing Older Adult Population

By Len Weiser, McKnight’s Senior Living, November 18, 2019

Senior living communities can’t continue to do things the way they have always done them. Why? Things aren’t the same as they were 30 years ago when retirement communities started to pop-up across the nation, or even 10 or 20 years ago.

Life is a process of growing and changing as new generations of residents in senior living make their way into communities. We no longer are serving a generation of residents that sit down every night for dinner at 5 pm and accept being told what they are eating... [read full article [here](#)]. ◀

CCBHC Funding Extended Through December 20

The federal government has once again extended the federal support and funding of the [Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics \(CCBHCs\)](#). The federal government continues to extend this and other Medicaid programs toward the end goal of setting new funding levels for FY 2020.

Pennsylvania has yet to accept the federal funding available, which has left CCBHC providers experiencing significant losses while trying to maintain fidelity to the CCBHC model. RCPA continues to reach out to not only the leaders of OMHSAS and DHS, pleading for them to accept the funds and apply the state required funding match (which is reduced, given the enhanced federal match of 62%), but also to legislative leaders and the Governor's office.

The CCBHC demonstration is not just about expanding the range of services available in a state plan or the number being delivered in a day — it's also about putting clinics on a more sustainable fiscal path that allows them to build their capacity to serve new clients, reduce wait times, hire needed staff, etc. These capacity expansions in the system reap rewards well beyond just looking at a list of what services are covered by an MCO. Likewise, just because something is "covered" doesn't mean it's available, if there are lengthy wait times or staff vacancies, and so forth. By not accepting the federal funds and matching the state dollars at a minimum, access times and staff vacancies increase. ◀

OMHSAS Responds to RCPA New Outpatient Regulation Questions

More than 140 members joined a call to walk through the Psychiatric Outpatient Regulations that were promulgated on October 12. As a result of that call, RCPA submitted questions to the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) for clarification. OMHSAS has submitted responses; view the questions and answers [here](#). RCPA staff has identified areas of concern and will be addressing these with OMHSAS. Please contact RCPA Mental Health Division Director [Sarah Eyster](#) for more information. ◀

RCPA Working With Members to Improve Funding for Mental Health Services

RCPA members and staff have been working to identify where and how to improve mental health funding for county and HealthChoices funded programs. Two areas were identified which include restoring the 2012/13 county mental health budget cut and increasing psychiatric outpatient rates.

RCPA has created a [white paper](#) detailing the burden to the county funded mental health system for the last decade and more resulting from the 2012/13 budget cuts. This white paper will be the basis for future discussion with other Pennsylvania stakeholders, including county commissioners.

In October, RCPA conducted an [outpatient services survey](#), asking about the status of outpatient sustainability. The results of that survey not only confirmed what we already knew, that outpatient services are underfunded, but also indicated that downsizing and closures are occurring across the Commonwealth.

RCPA members and staff will be meeting with the Behavioral HealthChoices primary contractors and payors to discuss the findings of the survey and discuss opportunities. Additionally, meetings are scheduled with DHS leadership and the Governor's Budget Secretary. These are ongoing needs to stabilize the true "safety net" county services and the community-based outpatient services funded through HealthChoices. ◀



RCPA Testifies on Senate Bill 675

The Pennsylvania House Human Services Committee held a public hearing on Tuesday, November 19, regarding [Senate Bill 675](#), an Act providing for certification of buprenorphine office-based prescribers; limiting the use of buprenorphine; and imposing powers and duties on the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP). RCPA submitted written testimony to the committee, which included many of the concerns that were presented by those who testified in person. Transcripts of the testimony provided in person can be [found here](#) toward the bottom of the page under “Committee Transcripts and Reports.” RCPA’s testimony can be read [here](#). ◀

Judiciary Committee to Discuss Bill Legalizing Marijuana at the Federal Level

by Lois A. Bowers, McKnight’s Senior Living, November 19, 2019

A bill that would legalize marijuana at the federal level [was] discussed at a House Judiciary Committee meeting [Wednesday, November 20], Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) announced [Monday, November 18].

Passage of the bill could be good news for senior living communities, especially those that accept federal funding in states where cannabis / marijuana use is legal, because state and federal law on the issue would be more closely aligned. Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, and other illnesses common in older adults often make the lists of diagnoses for which the use of prescribed medical marijuana already is approved at the state level... [read full article [here](#)]. ◀

Federal Addiction Treatment Dollars Off-Limits For Marijuana

At a meeting of behavioral health care providers in Philadelphia on Thursday, November 21, Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs (DDAP) Secretary Jennifer Smith discussed a new [restriction on the use of federal treatment dollars](#). The federal government will not allow federal dollars to be used for addiction treatment services for patients who disclose they are using medical marijuana prescribed to treat behavioral health conditions. Providers of substance abuse services must document their efforts to transition patients to a different method of treatment for their behavioral health needs, and taper the patient’s use of medical marijuana. ◀

AMA Calls for Total Ban on All E-Cigarette, Vaping Products

By Lindsey Tanner, AP News, November 19, 2019

The American Medical Association on [Tuesday] called for an immediate ban on all electronic cigarettes and vaping devices. The group adopted the sweeping stance at a policy-making meeting in San Diego. It aims to lobby for state and federal laws, regulations, or legal action to achieve a ban, but the industry is sure to fight back.

The AMA cited a surge in underage teen use of e-cigarettes, which typically heat a solution that contains nicotine. “It’s simple, we must keep nicotine products out of the hands of young people,” Dr. Patrice Harris, AMA’s president, said in a statement... [read full article [here](#)]. ◀

Opioid Treatment Bill Sent To Governor

November 21, 2019

HARRISBURG, PA (WHTM) – The Pennsylvania Senate has passed a bill aimed at reducing the risk of opioid addiction, sending it to the governor for his signature. [Senate Bill 572](#) requires new patients prescribed opioids to enter into treatment agreements with a prescriber to ensure they follow responsible safety guidelines. The treatment agreements require patients to undergo baseline and periodic drug testing. The requirements would not apply in medical emergencies, to patients with existing relationships with a medical provider, or patients suffering from cancer or terminal illness [[view article online](#)]. ◀

Recruitment and Retention of Direct Support Professionals – A Systemic Challenge

One of the biggest challenges any human service provider faces in delivering their services is the ongoing shortage of Direct Support Professional (DSP) staff. We have all read the statistics and reports about the turnover rates and open positions across not only Pennsylvania, but the nation. We continue to advocate for better wages and benefits every year with our legislators. This year, our budget message in Pennsylvania includes a request to increase DSP wages by \$1.50 an hour. Beyond wages, there are other critical pieces that organizations must pay attention to in order to attract the right candidates for positions, and to retain the staff who are so critical to offering quality services. The training, supervision, and ongoing support to DSPs is important to retain staff. Demonstrating respect and including DSPs in making decisions that affect them can go a long way to developing commitment in employees.

PHI has developed a helpful resource, with strategies rooted in the person-centered principle that individuals matter, whether we're talking about clients, family members, or employees; *Growing a Strong Direct Care Workforce, A Recruitment and Retention Guide for Employers*.

RCPA has hosted two webinars over the past year, with father and son partners Craig and Scott de Fassel. The first webinar focused on evaluating your organization's recruitment strategies and offered suggestions for attracting potential candidates. The second offered suggestions for retention of DSP staff.

In April, RCPA will be hosting a half day, in-person workshop presented by Craig and Scott, focusing on recruitment and retention efforts you can implement in your organization. Use the links below to register for one of the two workshop sessions being offered:

- ▶ [Recruitment and Retention Workshop Session 1: 9:00 am – 12:15 pm](#)
- ▶ [Recruitment and Retention Workshop Session 2: 1:00 pm – 4:15 pm](#) ◀

Department of Human Services Developing a Statewide Enterprise Case Management System

The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides services to individuals and families through multiple program offices but cannot easily view a complete picture of the services received by the individual or family. There are also opportunities to improve how individuals who apply for services, receive services, and those who help provide those services, interact with DHS. DHS has launched the Enterprise Case Management (ECM) initiative to address these opportunities.

DHS leadership believes a statewide ECM system will help to provide necessary information and insights, and as a result, improve the services and delivery of those services offered by in-scope state and county programs. ECM will also provide DHS staff and business partners with the tools needed to perform their jobs efficiently, and to better serve their clients by eliminating redundancy and delivering key information needed to properly manage their cases.

On December 12, 2019, Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) consultant Gary Rossman, and Michele DiFiore from Public Consulting Group (PCG), will be meeting with RCPA IDD providers to collect user stories, discuss how ECM could better support their work, and illustrate how new technology can better streamline their processes and communication. [Register here](#) to attend this meeting. ◀



OVR Implements New Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) Policy

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Board meeting agenda from September 12, 2019 included a [presentation from Kimberly Robinson](#), OVR Transition & 511 Division Chief, regarding OVR's new Pre-Employment Transitional Services policy.

Ms. Robinson's presentation reviewed the history of the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program that began in 2014, with limited federal guidance and infrastructure, and the urgency to spend the Federal allocation for PETS services. Effective October 1, 2019, OVR implemented a structured policy they believe is focused on assessing and serving the most students possible in the most cost-effective manner.

A group of providers who offer PETS and Supported Employment services have joined to form the "Provider Partnership" and have met several times, in order to discuss their shared concerns with policies that have been implemented by OVR over the past two years. RCPA has joined this partnership along with several of our members. The Partnership submitted its concerns in a letter to OVR leadership and board members; however, the Board voted to move forward with implementing the new policy, despite the concerns that were raised.

OVR staff have agreed to meet with members of the Provider Partnership, and the group is currently gathering information regarding specific concerns, such as issues with billing, reporting, travel related costs, moving from job placement to a contract, inconsistency between offices, methods of communication, administrative tasks that could be revised, details about billable hours and productivity standards and how that information could be used to develop rates, tiered payment structures for group services, and examples of additional costs/time related to additional disability accommodations/auxiliary aids/augmentative communication. We anticipate meeting in January 2020 to review this information. In the meantime, OVR is entering into an intensive technical assistance agreement with WINTAC, receiving monitoring and technical assistance from RSA, and entering a Memorandum of Understanding with the education/statewide leadership team. ◀



Pennsylvania to Apply for Good Faith Effort Exemption for Electronic Visit Verification

ODP recently announced that Pennsylvania will formally request a Good Faith Effort (GFE) Exemption from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), to delay implementation of the Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) mandate, and allow for necessary time for providers to fully prepare for EVV. ODP has heard from many providers who are using Alternate EVV systems and are working with Sandata to certify their systems for integration with the DHS Aggregator, and have learned that the time for certification is taking longer than originally projected. The extension would allow additional time for these systems to go through the necessary testing with Sandata and become integrated to feed EVV data to the DHS Aggregator. The exemption would allow for the soft launch period to be extended and delay the denial of payments. The timeframe between system launch and the EVV mandate is referred to as the soft launch. The soft launch is an opportunity to:

- ▶ Test and interface Alternate EVV systems.
- ▶ Familiarize providers with EVV prior to claims integration. Claims will continue to pay and EVV errors will appear on remittance advice.
- ▶ Inform policy and system development.
- ▶ Help the Department identify and develop supplemental training materials.
- ▶ Facilitate EVV participation by caregivers and members.

Since the exemption has not yet been approved, providers are still required to begin using EVV by January 1, 2020. Provider participation will produce valuable data for system modification and policy development.

Please visit the [DHS EVV web page](#) to view the ODP EVV Technical Guidance, public meeting notices, training resources, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). ◀

Growing Into a Lifechanger

(reprinted from The Children's Institute)

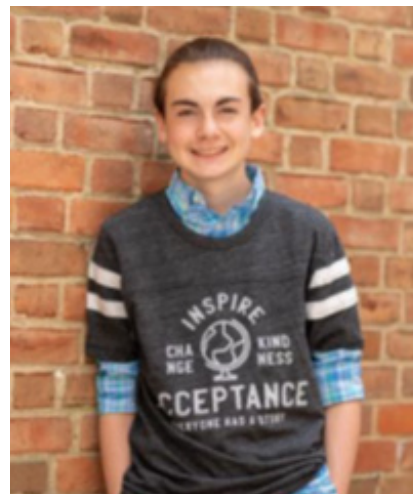
A few weeks before Jacob, who has autism, turned nine in the Spring of 2015, Jacob's parents asked him what he wanted for his birthday. A very mature "I have everything I need," was his reply. "Our response – a teachable parenting moment about giving back to others – has evolved into an incredible fundraising journey for Jacob and the rest of our family," says Megan, his mom.

Jacob first chose to donate to Wins for Kids because his favorite sports team is the Pittsburgh Pirates. He also toured The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh to learn about the challenges that kids with Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS) and their families face every day.

The inspiration he received from The Children's Institute and the Pittsburgh Pirates made Jacob one of the largest individual donors ever to Wins for Kids – with more than \$50,000 raised in less than six years split between Pirates Charities and The Children's Institute – and earned him the Outstanding Youth Philanthropist of the Year Award for 2017 by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Western PA Chapter.

"It makes me feel humble to do something for someone else," Jacob explains. "I like that the money I raise is helping other people." Jacob's biggest fundraising initiative has been the Wins for Kids Wiffle Ball World Series, an annual event at James W. Parker Middle School (JWPMS) in Edinboro, Pennsylvania, where he is now an eighth grader. In October 2017, the fifth- and sixth-grade homerooms competed against one another to play in a championship game against the teachers. Seventh and eighth graders were added in 2018. Jacob's goal is to expand the series into the high school by the time he is a freshman.

"Jacob was already a little bit famous as a fundraiser when he started at JWPMS as a fifth grader," says Jason Buto, K-12 Curriculum Coordinator and Principal of JWPMS. "When he asked for permission to continue those efforts, I challenged him to take a leadership role. He jumped right in, developing an action plan that grows every year. It was such a joy last fall at our assembly to see all 700



of our middle school students active, engaged, and cheering, and to know that Jacob was the architect of it all."

"Jacob is one of the reasons why I am an educator," says Buto. "He is embracing his potential, and he's going to do the world a lot of good for many years to come."

"We are such proud parents," says Megan. "Giving has become our family's biggest gift!" [See full article [here](#)]. ◀



ODP Announcements Since Last RCPA News

- ▶ Polk and White Haven Center Closures Communication
- ▶ ODP Announcement 19-140 New ODP Regulations Update: Trainings Announced for November
- ▶ ODP Announcement 19-141 Community Participation Supports Train the Trainer Sessions in November 2019
- ▶ ODP Announcement 19-143 Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) Error Status Codes (ESCs) to Become Active November 1, 2019
- ▶ ODP Announcement 19-144 Bureau of Autism Services – New Name Announced
- ▶ ODP Announcement 19-145 Free Online Orientation Training Meets Regulatory Requirements
- ▶ ODP Announcement 19-146 Health Risk Screening Tool Statewide Progress Update
- ▶ ODP Announcement 19-147 Clarification of Billing Process of Respite Services in Non-Residential Settings
- ▶ Enterprise Licensing System Information
- ▶ Upcoming Webinar: Life in the Community Like Everyone Else: Fundamentals of Community Inclusion
- ▶ ODP Announcement 19-149: Now Available – Residential and Non-residential HCBS Provider Settings Self-Assessment Reports
- ▶ Money Follows the Person (MFP): Training Workshop Opportunity – Mindfulness Tools and Movement Practices
- ▶ ODP Announcement 19-150: Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) Update – Good Faith Effort (GFE) Exemption Request
- ▶ Community Health Choices (CHC) Fact Sheet: Third Party Liability and Coordination of Benefits
- ▶ Reminder ODP 19-049: Getting Connected to the Community CPS Training Available
- ▶ ODP News – November 2019



Children's Services

Waiver Program to Provide Tuition to Students in Foster Care

Governor Tom Wolf signed Act 16 of 2019 on June 28. The Fostering Independence Through Education Act provides tuition waivers for youth who were in foster care or adopted from foster care, and are eligible for the Chaffee Education and Training Grant. This includes youth who are or were in the Pennsylvania foster care system at age 16 or older, and youth who were adopted or entered into custodianship arrangements from the Pennsylvania foster care system at age 16 or older. The tuition waiver

can be used for up to five years – they do not need to be consecutive – or until the participant reaches age 26.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is proud to highlight this program and they encourage all students in the foster care system to take advantage of this waiver. The program will begin in the fall semester of 2020. Application information for the waiver will be available from the PA Department of Education in January 2020. ◀

OMHSAS IBHS Implementation Moves Forward

The Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), through a series of webinars and regional summits, continues its work with providers and Behavioral Health MCOs to implement the promulgated Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) Regulations. These regulations will take effect on January 17, 2020, though the expectation will be the conversion from BHRS to full IBHS service delivery will take a year to accomplish. OMHSAS has created an [IBHS web page](#) on the PA HealthChoices site. Also, there is an [IBHS FAQ](#) document that continues to be updated. If you have any questions, please contact RCPA Children's Division Director [Jim Sharp](#). ◀

PA Family First Poised for October 2020 Startup

The PA Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) continues its systematic implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Law, enacted in February 2018. Pennsylvania has selected the October 2020 start date with statewide work teams tackling critical issues in prevention and congregate care service standards. These work teams are comprised of state agencies, service providers, and private stakeholder groups tasked to design services and resource continuums for children at risk or involved in human trafficking, pregnant teens, foster care, and supervised independent living programs. OCYF will be hosting several regional convenings through December to inform county agencies, providers, judicial entities, families, and systems groups on the implementation standards, and releasing a *PA Puts Families First* website in the coming year. ◀

IBHS & RELIAS

With implementation of the IBHS Regulations, the need has arisen for increased training for staff delivering these services. Your membership with RCPA includes quick, convenient, and affordable access to the required RBT trainings, as well as a full continuum of ABA and autism courses. These RELIAS trainings are PA DHS/OMHSAS approved and can be accessed directly from the [RCPA home page](#). Also, Relias has released *Click-to-Learn*, a new feature on your module list which generates a link that, when clicked by any user on your Relias site, assigns them the course as an elective and brings them directly to the module to begin utilizing the content.

Click-to-Learn was developed based on client feedback that you were interested in a fast and easy way to enroll users in a module and deliver course content. To see *Click-to-Learn* in action and to learn more, please [view this article](#) on Relias Connect. ◀

President/CEO

Step By Step, Inc. is a community service provider operating in 15 counties throughout Pennsylvania for over 40 years, specializing in support services to children and adults with intellectual disabilities, behavioral health, and autism spectrum disorders. The Agency has a long, successful history of providing residential in-home support, specialized autism classrooms, vocational and employment services. We are seeking a highly-talented executive for the role of President/CEO to lead our team of 1,300 dedicated professionals.



The President/CEO is directly accountable to the Board of Directors and duly-elected officers. Position responsibilities include:

- Overall administrative and leadership responsibilities, including program planning/development, strategic planning, cultivating relationships with contracting entities and other stakeholders, participating in state and national association meetings and conferences.
- Provides leadership and direction to the executive management team to ensure fiscal accountability, human resource administration, and compliance with organizational policies and procedures.
- Develops, maintains, and supports a passionate Board of Directors; serves as ex-officio of each committee, seeks and builds Board involvement with strategic direction for ongoing operations.
- Extensive travel throughout the Agency's geographical territory and occasional evenings and weekends.

The successful candidate will have the following qualifications/traits:

- Master's degree from an accredited college or university in the field of public administration, business education, social services or human services.
- Progressively responsible experience in human services, including experience in personnel management, budgeting, and procurement.
- Substantial and successful experience in senior management within an organization similar in size, scope, and scale of impact.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to effectively partner with individuals and organizations.
- Knowledge of the current delivery system in PA for ID and behavioral health services, and the impact public policy will have on future program development.

This position includes a competitive compensation package. Qualified candidates are invited to submit a resume and cover letter, with specific points of interest in the position and salary requirements, to: Attn: SearchCommittee@stepbystepusa.com



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

DECEMBER

Tuesday, December 3	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Drug & Alcohol Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Wednesday, December 4	9:30 am – 12:00 pm	Mental Health Committee <i>RCPA Conference Room</i>
Wednesday, December 4	10:00 am – 2:00 pm	Brain Injury Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Wednesday, December 4	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Criminal Justice Committee <i>RCPA Conference Room</i>
Thursday, December 5	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Webinar: Treating Transgender Youth
Tuesday, December 10	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Advocacy, Education & Membership Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Wednesday, December 11	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	RCPA Membership Meeting <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Thursday, December 12	9:15 am – 11:30 am	SCO Subcommittee <i>RCPA Conference Room</i>
Thursday, December 12	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	IDD Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Tuesday, December 17	10:00 am – 12:30 pm	Med Rehab Committee <i>Webcast Only</i>
Tuesday, December 17	12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Outcomes & Best Practices Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Thursday, December 19	9:00 am – 10:00 am	Government Affairs Committee <i>Conference Call</i>

JANUARY 2020

Thursday, January 9	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Special Webcast – Advancing Children’s Health Care 2020: A Legislative Update
Tuesday, January 14	10:00 am – 2:00 pm	Children’s Steering Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Tuesday, January 14	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Advocacy, Education & Membership Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Wednesday, January 15	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Human Resources Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Thursday, January 16	9:00 am – 10:00 am	Government Affairs Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Tuesday, January 21	12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	IPRC Outcomes & Best Practices Committee <i>Conference Call</i>
Thursday, January 30	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	Employment Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>
Thursday, January 30	12:15 pm – 3:00 pm	IDD Committee <i>Penn Grant Centre</i>