



REHABILITATION & COMMUNITY
PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

Meeting Notes

RCPA County Funding Stakeholder Meeting Notes: December 2, 2020

Participants included RCPA members, regional provider associations such as Moving Agencies Toward Excellence (MAX) and the Conference of Allegheny Providers (CAP), and representatives from people who have personal experience and family members with mental health concerns such as the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association (PMHCA), the Mental Health Association (MHA), the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), and the Family, Training, and Advocacy Center (FTAC). The County Commissioners Association/PA Counties Mental Health and Disability Services (CCAP/PACA MH/DS) also attended.

Richard Edley kicked off the meeting, and Sarah Eyster brought participants up to date on the effort to work on increasing county only funding for behavioral health services, which began more than a year ago. More recently, a group of RCPA members met in August. Then RCPA and CCAP/PACA MH/DS met to review previous efforts, resulting in this meeting.

The effort to increase county only funds needs to occur with urgency beginning right now because it may take years for the funding to be approved at a level that will actually support county-funded programs.

The group discussed different strategies, messaging, previous efforts that worked, and fiscal impact. Education of the legislature is the single greatest need; it needs to happen immediately and last for the long term. This education includes defining mental health and intellectual disability diagnoses, understanding Medicaid, and comprehending how behavioral health county-funded services are the social determinants of health (SDOH). With so many new legislators and new human services leadership in Pennsylvania, it is critical to get regular information to the legislators and staff.

Several ideas were formulated:

- Offering concrete examples of services being impacted
- Getting stories (videos) from people using services and family members
- Defining/educating the legislature – RCPA will attend meetings as requested
- Recruiting legislative champions such as Rep. Mike Schlossberg and others on the mental health (MH) caucus
- Partnering with your county administrator
- Presenting facts and gathering data
- Clarifying the message
- Connecting the fiscal dots

Several work groups will be formed to address the ideas above:

- People using services, family members, caregivers, and providers will record stories (short clips) to help get the word out. They will develop suggested talking points and collect/review submissions.

- Laurie Barnett-Levine, Nicole Dawson, and Don Panto volunteered to form a research group.
- Charlie Hooker will be in charge of legislative outreach.
- Andrew Wigglesworth, Deb Neifert, Lloyd Wertz, and Sarah Eyster volunteered to participate in messaging.

We are looking for more volunteers for each work group. It is expected that some groups will run longer than others.

Next Meeting: To Be Determined