



REHABILITATION & COMMUNITY
PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

THE quarterly advisor

MARCH 2022

❖ SPECIAL FEATURE

2022 CONFERENCE THEME: TOGETHER

The theme for the 2022 Conference, "Together," is official! Details coming soon, so mark your calendars for October 11–14 and we'll see you in Hershey, together at last!!

The [Call for Proposals](#) is out — we want to know about your innovations and successes. The deadline for submissions is Monday, March 14 at 5:00 pm ET. ◀



❖ DIVERSITY



Understanding Non-Binary Gender Identification and Terminology. What Does it Mean?

So you're non-binary and female? And your friend is non-binary and male? How is that possible? The vocabulary keeps changing. How can I keep up?

As more and more individuals explore their own identities, it is safe to say that these terms and expressions are here to stay and their use will only expand. It is crucial that we educate ourselves, understand what terms mean, and use them correctly in order to create a safe and productive environment for everyone.

Invest just four minutes of your time, [watch this interview](#), and grow your understanding of what identifying as non-binary means. ◀



NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

March 2022

ASSOCIATION MEMBER

Early Intervention Providers Association of Pennsylvania

PO Box 41
Forbes Road, PA 15633
Jill Glose, President

BUSINESS

Corporate Benefits Consultants, Inc.

8500 Brooktree Rd, Ste 205
Wexford, PA 15090
Greg A Robick, President

PROVIDER NORTHWEST REGION

CORE Psychiatric & Psychological Services

3 S Brady St, Ste 205
DuBois, PA 15801
Ronald Park, CEO

Penn Highlands

PO Box 447
DuBois, PA 15801
Richard Nenneau, Vice President

The Guidance Center

110 Campus Dr
Bradford, PA 16701
Denise Bean, Executive Director

About RCPA:

With well over 350 members, the majority of who serve over 1 million Pennsylvanians annually, Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) is among the largest and most diverse state health and human services trade associations in the nation. RCPA advocates for those in need, works to advance effective state and federal public policies, serves as a forum for the exchange of information and experience, and provides professional support to members. RCPA provider members offer mental health, drug and alcohol, intellectual and developmental disabilities, children's, brain injury, medical rehabilitation, and physical disabilities and aging services, through all settings and levels of care. Contact [Tieanna Lloyd](#), Membership Services Manager, with inquiries or updates regarding the following:

- **Membership Benefits**
- **Your Staffing Updates** (i.e., new hires, promotions, retirements)



STAFF

Richard S. Edley, PhD

President and CEO

Allison Brognia

Event Planner/ Accounts Payable Manager

Melissa Dehoff

Director, Rehabilitation Services Divisions

Sarah Eyster, MSW

Director, Mental Health Division

Carol Ferenz

Director, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Division

Cindi Hobbes

Director, International Pediatric Rehabilitation Collaborative

Tieanna Lloyd

Accounts Receivable/Membership Services Manager

Tina Miletic

Assistant to the President/CEO, Finance Manager

Sharon Militello

Director, Communications

Hayley Myer

Administrative/Communications Specialist

Jack Phillips, JD

Director, Government Affairs

Jim Sharp, MS

Director, Children's Division

Jason Snyder

Director, Drug & Alcohol Division

Fady Sahhar, XtraGlobex

Consultant, RCPSO President/CEO

MEMBER CONTRIBUTOR CORNER

Retail Pharmacy Crisis Highlights Importance of Having a Trusted Pharmacy Partner

By Lisa Hoffman, Genoa Healthcare Sales Director

Frustrations mount as many retail pharmacies struggle to meet the needs of the providers they work with and the consumers they serve.

Fluctuating hours, long lines, and cancelled appointments are just some of the barriers consumers face, while providers encounter lapses in communication with vital partners in patient care.

A [New York Times article](#) recently detailed the retail pharmacy crisis driven by both staffing shortages and increased demand. Because many consumers are struggling to get the medications they need, providers have adjusted their prescribing methods – filling a 90-day supply for what used to be a 30-day supply, for example – to ensure their consumers can stay on track.

Amid this crisis, clinics who partner with Genoa Healthcare® are finding even more benefit in having a reliable on-site pharmacy team. When a local pharmacy chain closed their doors in Oregon, nearby retail chains became flooded with prescriptions to fill in the community. People trying to get their medications were met with long wait times and miscommunication from pharmacy teams they had never met.

Understanding the challenges in her community, Genoa Pharmacist Shuga Knopp reminded her partners at the clinic that her team could fill all the medications consumers and staff needed [\[read full article\]](#). ◀

Natural Disaster/Weather Preparedness & Response

by Gordon Smoko, CSP, CFPS, ARM, Senior Risk Manager, Brown & Brown



Severe weather events can strike at any time, and this past year unfortunately provided several examples. Tornadoes, wildfires, floods, hurricanes, and winter weather have long been planning topics and OSHA has recently proposed a rule on heat stress. RCPA members and their safety committees should work to develop plans for natural disaster preparedness and response for severe weather events; as an example in this article, we will use tornadoes viewed from a preparedness and response planning standpoint [\[view full article\]](#). ◀

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Mainstay Expands Telemedicine Services Following Successful Pilot

Individuals with disabilities can see a specialized doctor in minutes for urgent and behavioral health matters

The COVID-19 pandemic magnified so many things we already knew – that in 2021, technology in our world isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. For Mainstay Life Services, technology isn't just about convenience or efficiency; it's a means for both safety and independence for the people we support. As part of our overall technology strategy, we've partnered with StationMD, a telemedicine solution that provides specialized care for people with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism to offer in-home care and help prevent unnecessary hospital and urgent care utilization [\[read official press release\]](#). ◀

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

RCPA Budget Update

RCPA staff reviewed the Governor's proposed budget, and while many details still need to be sorted out, RCPA can provide some high-level facts about the proposed budget from the House Democrat Appropriations Committee [2022/23 Executive Budget Proposal At-A-Glance](#) and the [Governor's 2022/23 Executive Budget Spreadsheet](#). Of note, please see pages 12–13 for the Department of Human Services line items and page 6 for the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs. View the full article [here](#), including highlights of the Governor's proposed budget. ◀

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. 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 current Legislative Session. If you have questions on a specific bill or policy, please contact [Jack Phillips](#), Director of Government Affairs.

- ▶ [Brain Injury](#)
- ▶ [Budget](#)
- ▶ [Children and Youth](#)
- ▶ [Criminal Justice](#)
- ▶ [Drug and Alcohol](#)
- ▶ [Insurance](#)
- ▶ [Intellectual Disability](#)
- ▶ [Medicaid](#)
- ▶ [Medical Rehabilitation](#)
- ▶ [Mental Health](#)
- ▶ [Minimum Wage](#)
- ▶ [Suicide](#)



TELEHEALTH

PA Telehealth Update


Telehealth Waiver for Audio Only

For any members who continue to provide telehealth for behavioral health or substance abuse services, you must submit a waiver for these services no later than March 31, 2022. OMHSAS has been processing these requests and providing decision letters for regulatory waivers that have been submitted by impacted providers. Requests that have been approved will have an effective date of **"April 1, 2022 or the day after regulatory suspensions are lifted, whichever is later."** This language is being used for the purpose of aligning with any potential extensions of Act 73 of 2021 that are enacted by the General Assembly. Waivers will be valid for a period of one year from the effective date.

Providers that have already submitted a request for waiver **do not** need to submit a second request.

Members may access the request at [Telehealth Regulatory Waiver Request template](#). ◀

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month


View Governor Wolf's official proclamation. 




Virtual Brain Injury Awareness Day Scheduled for March 16

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA), along with the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA), and Congressional Brain Injury Task Force co-chairs — Representatives Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ) and Don Bacon (R-Neb) — have announced a virtual Brain Injury Awareness Day briefing on the importance and value of advocacy to be held March 16, 2022 from 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm. Attendance is free, but [registration](#) is required. Questions for panelists can be submitted on the registration page. 

Brain Injury Association of America Offers Live Webinars on a Variety of Topics

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) offers a variety of live webinars on a wide selection of topics, including [Self-Advocacy After Brain Injury: An Evidence-Based Model of Empowerment](#), scheduled for March 31, 2022, and [Concussion Symptoms: Thinking Beyond Headaches](#) on April 6, 2022. Check their [website](#) to view all upcoming webinars. 

Save the Date: PA Brain Injury Awareness Day Planned for March 29

Members are encouraged to mark their calendars for March 29, 2022 for the Pennsylvania Brain Injury Awareness Day at the Capitol. Details surrounding the day are currently being worked on; however, the day will most likely include an hour briefing in the morning in the Rotunda, followed by legislator visits, a reception, and a panel discussion. A flyer will be issued in early March with additional information. 



73% of Older Adults Would Prefer to Receive Long-Term Care at Home

About 73% of the American “Baby Boomer Generation” (between the ages of 57 and 75) hope to receive long-term care (LTC) in their current home. Another 17% want to receive LTC in an assisted living facility, and 2% would prefer to receive LTC in a nursing facility.

About 47% of non-retired Americans and 33% of retired Americans say they are concerned that it will not be safe for them to remain in their home when they need LTC. As a result, only 56% of Baby Boomers believe that their home is the most likely place for them to receive LTC, 23% believe receiving LTC in an assisted living facility is most likely, and 6% believe they are most likely to need nursing home care [read [full article](#), featuring findings presented in the *2021 Nationwide Long-Term Care Consumer Survey*, conducted by The Harris Poll for The Nationwide Retirement Institute® in October 2021]. ◀

Demonstrating the Value of Medicaid MLTSS Programs

Almost half of the states are operating Medicaid managed long-term services and supports (MLTSS) programs, but there has historically been limited evidence of their value. To help fill this gap, [this report](#) presents updated results from states responding to ADvancing States’ survey, as well as new research on states with MLTSS programs. The 12 states responding to the surveys — Arizona, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin — account for more than half of the states who are operating MLTSS programs. States were asked about their goals in implementing MLTSS programs, what progress they had made in attaining those goals, and if they faced any challenges collecting data to document progress. In addition, new research has documented additional value from MLTSS programs in the following areas [\[read full article\]](#). ◀

Medicaid LTSS Annual Expenditures Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2019

CMS released the Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Annual Expenditures Report for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019. This report discusses the LTSS rebalancing trends and growth in expenditures for home and community-based services (HCBS) as compared to institutional spending during the time period reviewed.

Highlights from this report include:

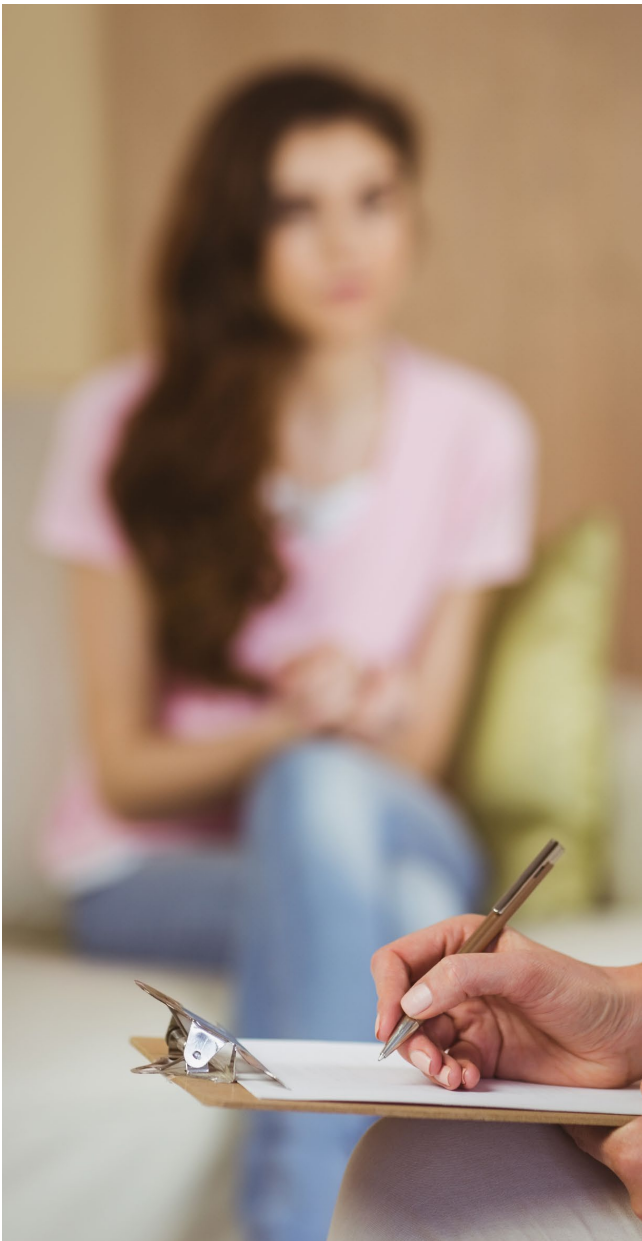
- ▶ Total Medicaid LTSS spending continues to increase. Expenditures increased from \$129 billion in FY 2018 to \$162 billion in FY 2019.
- ▶ The percentage of HCBS expenditures comprising total Medicaid LTSS expenditures has steadily increased over the last three decades, but it has slowed in recent years.
- ▶ The US total surpassed the long-standing benchmark of 50 percent of LTSS expenditures in FY 2013 and has remained higher than 50 percent since then, reaching 58.6 percent in FY 2019.

Access the full report [here](#). ◀



Coalition for the Mental Health Safety Net

RCPA and Coalition members are working to get material to the General Assembly giving them reasons to support, at a minimum, a \$36.6 million county mental health funding line item. In addition, RCPA is working with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) and the Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) to meet with House and Senate leadership in their home districts. The meetings will include an RCPA provider(s), county MH administrator, local hospital director, and when able, consumer and family members. The messaging is to support at LEAST \$36.6 million for the deteriorating mental health system in Pennsylvania. Data and personal stories will be used, as well as describing the hospital-community connection and impact on Pennsylvanians. ◀



ICWC and CCBHC Work Group Forming

RCPA members providing Integrated Care Wellness Clinic (ICWC) and/or Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) services are invited to join your colleagues to discuss best practices, outcomes, innovations, and challenges. During the first meeting, the group will set an agenda and frequency of meetings. Please email [Sarah Eyster](#) to sign up for the first meeting. ◀



988/Crisis Work Group Forming

With upcoming changes to 911, and the changes to the crisis intervention regulations, RCPA members are invited to an initial meeting to discuss the goals of the work group and frequency of meetings. Please contact [Sarah Eyster](#) if you are interested in joining this group. ◀

Information on Additional Work Groups Will be Forthcoming

Stay tuned for more updates. ◀

❖ DRUG & ALCOHOL

A New Approach to Support Overdose Survivors: Buprenorphine at the Point of Engagement

In the years Pennsylvania has been earnestly battling the opioid overdose death epidemic, many ideas have been suggested or implemented for intervening with overdose survivors. From hard line proposals (go to treatment following an overdose reversal or face criminal charges) to logistically complex processes (embed peers in emergency rooms to facilitate the transfer of overdose survivors to a treatment facility), these strategies have yielded

mixed results as judged against one grim fact: exacerbated by Covid, 5,063 Pennsylvanians died of a drug overdose in 2020 (the latest year for which overdose death totals are confirmed). That total is second only to the record set in 2017, with 5,403.

One of the newest initiatives to intervene with overdose survivors is currently under way in Pittsburgh. By addressing many of the shortcomings of other intervention efforts, this

strategy employs an evidence-based harm-reduction approach.

In Pittsburgh, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is eliminating barriers to treatment and connecting patients to recovery resources through its prehospital buprenorphine program, a Pennsylvania Department of Health-approved pilot program that complies with all state and federal laws and regulations [\[read full article\]](#). ◀

❖ INTELLECTUAL/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Lifesharing: A Type of Housing That Works for Individuals with Disabilities in Pennsylvania

Jenifer Taylor Eaton, MEd and Kathryn M Burke, PhD. Institute on Disabilities at Temple University. (2020). Lifesharing: A research, practice, and policy overview. Philadelphia, PA: Author.

Summary

This study is about types of homes for people with intellectual disability (ID). We looked at the relationship between housing, support needs, and quality of life. The study included 2,639 people with ID, who all lived in Pennsylvania from 2013 to 2015. The results showed that where a person lives and their level of support needs are connected. In our sample, people with higher support needs live in more segregated settings. The study also showed that where a person lives is connected to how they feel about their life. Overall, people living in lifesharing, in their own home, and with family had a better quality of life than people living in group homes or private intermediate care facilities (ICFs). The results of this study show that lifesharing is a good housing option for people with disabilities. They also show the value of community living.

Why does this matter?

For the last 25+ years, the disability community has focused on deinstitutionalization. This means people who would once have lived in institutions may now live

in different types of segregated or community settings. Some research has compared living in institutions to living in the community. This research usually finds people who live in the community have better life outcomes. But not much research has compared or looked at one type of community setting, lifesharing. More research is needed to see if lifesharing can help people have the life they want.

- ▶ [Evaluating Lifesharing: Quality of Life for Pennsylvanians with Intellectual Disability by Residence Type](#)
- ▶ [Lifesharing ETADD Plain Language](#) ◀

Recruiting and Retaining DSPs

By Scott de Fassel, Blitz

It's hard to find and keep great Direct Support Professionals. Plus, it's even harder when you don't have a lot of time. That's why we're recording short videos sharing practical and proven approaches to recruiting and retaining DSPs. **View the first video in this series:** [Focus your job post on what DSPs get to do.](#) ◀

IPRC Members Combine Efforts to Create Resources for Spanish Speaking Families

Advocacy defined is: "any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others." It happens on behalf of the children and families we serve each and every day in big and small ways at IPRC member organizations. The IPRC Education & Advocacy Committee shares member stories to celebrate these efforts and inspire others.

Advocacy can take many forms – it can be an individual effort, or it can involve a number of people working toward a common goal. In this spotlight, we highlight the collaboration of several IPRC organizations working together to make brain injury educational material accessible for Spanish speaking patients and their families [\[read full article\]](#). ◀

A Call to Crisis: Pennsylvania's Youth With Complex Behavioral Health Needs

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our nation's children and youth were already experiencing a sharp increase in mental, emotional, and behavioral health conditions. COVID-19 has introduced additional and dramatic stress for children and families. This scenario continues to manifest itself in Pennsylvania, as children and families struggle to cope with the various impacts of this pandemic. One clear issue is the lack of access to much-needed services for youth with complex behavioral health care needs. The impact is felt at both the residential and community-based service levels, as agencies cope with workforce staffing shortages, vastly underfunded rate structures, and a residential services continuum that has been critically impacted by restrictive regulatory practices and a systems subset with the desire to reduce the footprint of congregate care. Read our full Call to Crisis Alert [here](#). ◀

RCPA IBHS Waiver Exceptions Request

On behalf of licensed Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) providers in Pennsylvania, RCPA has submitted to OMHSAS an outline for temporary waivers and exclusions for IBHS chapter 5240 regulations pertaining to staff qualifications and supervision. This request seeks relief for hiring and retaining critical service delivery positions and preserving reasonable operational efficiencies. These specific regulations, coupled with the effects of the pandemic, are straining an already depleted behavioral health workforce. This has left organizations with untenable staffing vacancies, limiting their ability to provide services as children and families' waiting lists grow.

While the new IBHS regulations have succeeded in providing access to services, as measured by these waiting lists, the current regulatory staffing standards make it increasingly difficult to attract and retain highly qualified staff to serve this population. ◀



RCPA Events Calendar

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