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THE quarterly advisor

SEPTEMBER 2023

RCPA CONFERENCE

See Returning Favorites and New Ideas at the 2023 RCPA Annual Conference!

If you haven't registered yet for the 2023 RCPA Annual Conference *A Decade of Unity*, then don't wait any longer! Our keynote/plenary sessions (in addition to our many valuable workshops) throughout the week are sure to inspire you with new ideas to tackle priorities in health and human services. Looking ahead, we have:

- ▶ Returning speaker **Michael Cohen**, addressing practical ways for attracting high-caliber employees in a rapidly-changing job market;
- ▶ DEI Professional **Chaz Kellem**, exploring diversity and inclusion in the disability community, including the intersection of race and disability through the lens of consumers;
- ▶ Renowned speaker **John T. Broderick, Jr.**, examining how to change the conversation around mental health and help reduce stigma, including the R.E.A.C.T. Campaign and identifying the five signs of emotional distress;
- ▶ **DHS Secretary Valerie Arkoosh** discussing current critical issues for human services providers; trends in the field, and how PA continues the implementation of innovative treatments via VBP and telehealth;
- ▶ A panel addressing the realities of the workforce crisis, featuring **Tine Hansen-Turton** of Woods Services, **Brian Hancock** of Bancroft, **Rita Gardner** of Melmark, and **Marco Giordano** of Resources for Human Development; and
- ▶ National updates from National Council for Mental Wellbeing's **Chuck Ingoglia** as well as ANCOR's **Donna Martin**.



Be sure to view our [registration brochure](#) to book your seat (and your hotel room) today! Please contact [Carol Ferenz](#), Conference Coordinator, with any questions.

Special thanks to our [conference sponsors](#)! Complete the [sponsorship form](#) to add your organization to our current list of supporters.

About RCPA:

With well over 350 members, the majority of who serve over one 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, substance use disorder, 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)

Take full advantage of your RCPA membership by signing up for **emails and meeting invitations** as well as **complete website access**.



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NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

September 2023

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Dianne Gattorno, President

Christine Ortoll Recovery Org Inc.

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Michael Ortoll, Founder

BUSINESS

Chorus Innovations

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Christina Arevian, Marketing Manager

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Overland Park, KS 66211
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GOVERNMENT

Westmoreland County Behavioral Health-Developmental Services-Early Intervention

40 N Pennsylvania Ave, Ste 110
Greensburg, PA 15601
Sara Stenger, Administrator

IPRC

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

3401 Civic Center Blvd
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Maureen Sullivan, Senior Manager,
Center for Rehabilitation

Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital

850 S 5th St
Allentown, PA 18103
Amanda Kleckner, Director of Pediatrics

WakeMed Health and Hospitals

3000 New Bern Ave
Raleigh, NC 27610
Renee Patton, Nurse Manager, 4E
Children's Rehab

PROVIDER

Deerfield Behavioral Health of Warren

1003 Pennsylvania Ave W
Warren, PA 16365
Dr. Kimberly Thurston, Executive Director

Full Circle Residence

904 Cranberry Dr
Chambersburg, PA 17202
Deana Shaeffer, CEO/Executive Director

Futures Community Support Services, Inc.

23 Main St
Towanda, PA 18848
Justin Chapman, CEO

Lakeshore Community Services, Inc.

1350 W 26th St
Erie, PA 16508
Alan P Benson, President/CEO

Quality Healthcare Group Inc.

100 E Glenolden Ave, Unit B21
Glenolden, PA 19036
Afordu Moses Ekhaton, CEO

The Shadowfax Corporation

386 Pattison St
York, PA 17402
Amy Brillinger, CEO

Putting Care at the Center 2023

Join the #ComplexCare field November 1–3, at *Putting Care at the Center 2023*, the annual conference of the Camden Coalition's National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs initiative. This year's event will focus on "Elevating behavioral health in whole-person care," and will feature various levels of discussions highlighting complex care programs and innovators from across the country, from plenary speakers to Beehive sessions. [Register now](#) to participate. #CenteringCare23 ◀



MEMBER CONTRIBUTOR CORNER

Proposed OSHA Standard for “Prevention of Workplace Violence in Healthcare and Social Assistance”

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

Workplace violence is an increasing problem in all industries; however, OSHA has identified privately operated health care and social assistance organizations as having nonfatal workplace violence incidences resulting in lost time injuries 4.8 times greater than in the private industry overall – see the [OSHA Healthcare Workplace Violence Fact Sheet](#) for more details. Based on these statistics, OSHA began a workplace violence prevention for health care and social assistance services rulemaking process in 2016, and in March 2023, OSHA convened a “Small Business Advocacy Review Panel” (SBAR) to review the proposed rule. Review by the SBAR is largely viewed as one of the final steps prior to issuance of the standard. The panel’s report has been released – see [Review Panel Findings](#) – which also provides a thorough guide to the requirements of the proposed standard.

If OSHA promulgates this standard, it will impact health care NAICS codes, including those in Subsector 621 – Ambulatory Health Care Services, Subsector 622 – Hospitals, Subsector 623 – Nursing and Residential Care Facilities, and Subsector 624 – Social Assistance. Most RCPA members fall within one of these NAICS code groups [\[read full article\]](#). ◀

DIVERSITY

Promoting and Maintaining a More Diverse Workforce

A recent SCOTUS decision struck down affirmative action in college and university admissions decisions. As race can no longer be a factor, colleges and institutions of higher education must now look to new ways to achieve a diverse student body. Maintaining a diverse university student body is imperative to ensure that the job applicant pool for high-level positions becomes more diverse in the years to come.

The end of affirmative action at colleges poses new and future challenges and risks in corporate hiring. Business leaders and academic administrators anticipate that the end of affirmative action at colleges will result in a less diverse applicant pool from which to recruit new workers.

A diverse workforce speaks volumes about a company’s values and desire to create an inclusive environment. Organizations can act in proactive ways now to draw a more diverse pool of candidates to their door by developing lasting policies and practices to combat the anticipated trends.

Learn more:

- ▶ <https://blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/recruiting-people-of-color/>
- ▶ <https://www.lendio.com/blog/tips-recruiting-people-of-color/>
- ▶ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/non-diverse-recruiting-teams-navigating-poc-job-seekers-daryl-layson/>
- ▶ <https://www.smartrecruiters.com/blog/recruiting-strategies-to-improve-your-diversity-brand/>



TELEHEALTH

RCPA & PACHC Awarded Delta Center Expansion Grant

The Delta Center for a Thriving Safety Net has awarded the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) and project partner the Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers (PACHC) a one-year extension to their current grant project, Creating Planes of Telehealth Equity.

Over the past two years, the Pennsylvania team has partnered with the Delta Center, the Justice Research Institute, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to advance telehealth policy and practice, and equity of access. The vision of the project includes ensuring integrated whole-person physical and behavioral health

care through telehealth services, legislative pathways to provide equity of access to underrepresented groups, and creating a sustainable platform for services for all Pennsylvanians.

The key activities have yielded telehealth policy change through the legislation of Act 98 and Act 76, as well as practice developments in the OMHSAS Telehealth Bulletin. These efforts for expansion and access have been driven by consumer and family voice and provider feedback. The third year of the grant will focus on sustaining previous strategies, as well as racial equity and the intersect of whole-person care for both practitioners and consumers. ◀

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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 PA 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.

- ▶ [Budget](#)
- ▶ [Children](#)
- ▶ [Criminal Justice](#)
- ▶ [Drug and Alcohol](#)
- ▶ [Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- ▶ [Mental Health](#)

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



RCPA Launches Behavioral Health Blog

RCPA has launched the first of what we hope will be many blogs. Our intention is to write commentary about the most important issues facing substance use disorder and mental health treatment providers in Pennsylvania, providing not only the facts of the situation, but our views and opinions on them. Our work with and on behalf of our members as well as our personal experiences will largely drive this blog. We know what is important to you. After all, you set our agenda. But if you have an idea about what we should be covering or an opinion or comment about what we've written, we want to know. We look forward to your thoughts as our new effort to provide thought leadership and foster dialog on the day's most important behavioral health issues unfolds [\[visit main blog page\]](#). ◀

❖ BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT SERVICES

Danny's Ride Offers Solution to Transportation Barrier to Recovery Services

In urban, rural, and suburban communities across the country, transportation to services and programs that support recovery from substance use disorder (SUD) is consistently identified as a significant barrier to access. Danny's Ride, a Pennsylvania nonprofit that provides rides to recovery services for people living with SUD, is working to remove that barrier.



The Danny's Ride model is designed so that recovery service providers identify the people who need rides to get to critical services and programs that support their recovery and ensures the rider arrives when and where they're expected to be [\[read full article\]](#). ◀

❖ BEHAVIORAL HEALTH | MENTAL HEALTH

SAMHSA Releases 2023–2026 Strategic Plan

The 2023–2026 SAMHSA Strategic Plan presents a new person-centered mission and vision highlighting key guiding principles and presenting new priorities, goals, and objectives. To achieve its mission, SAMHSA has identified five priority areas to better meet the behavioral health needs of individuals, communities, and service providers guided by SAMHSA's four core principles that are being integrated throughout the agency's activities.

The four core principles are:

- ▶ Equity;
- ▶ Trauma-Informed Approaches;
- ▶ Recovery; and
- ▶ Commitment to Data and Evidence.

See the [SAMHSA Strategic Plan 2023–2026](#) for the complete plan and outline including the five key priorities. ◀



❖ CHILDREN'S SERVICES

OCDEL Announces Rate Methodology Project

A key focus of the RCPA Early Intervention Steering Committee's strategic agenda has been the review of how rates have been historically developed, including the lack of sustainable rate increases that have taken place over the past two decades.

Last fall, the RCPA Early Intervention team presented several cost analysis models to OCDEL for consideration in

the hopes that they would revisit the current rate methodology. In December, OCDEL released an RFP for a rate methodology study, and last month, DHS announced that a vendor has been named to complete the project: the Public Consulting Group (PCG). PCG is familiar with rate methodology studies and Pennsylvania's human services system, and we look forward to working with them on the project.

In preparation for the rate methodology study, the RCPA Early Intervention team created a set of questions and recommendations, and finalized it as the [RCPA Early Intervention Rate Methodology Review](#). RCPA will be reviewing this with the OCDEL administration this fall as the project gets underway, to ensure that the provider engagement remains a key component to the study. ◀

❖ INTELLECTUAL/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Thoughts of a "Veteran" Mom

(shared by the mother of two sons with intellectual & developmental disabilities/autism, Nechel spoke at the Capitol at one of our recent rallies)

My name is Nechel. My education is in art education. I am no doctor, so do your own research, I can only speak from my experiences, and would like to share them with you.

I have two sons, 22/21; both are on the autism spectrum. My 22-year-old was diagnosed at three years and has high functioning Asperger's with severe generalized anxiety. Secondary diagnoses are sensory integration disorder, OCD, ADHD. My 21-year-old was diagnosed at 11 months old. He actually has two primary diagnoses – severe autism with aggression and ID. Secondary diagnosis – SI, OCD, language delay, ADHD.

Both sons struggled with childhood sicknesses like most do, including allergies, RSV, croup, ear infections, sinus infections, etc. My youngest son suffered more with these illnesses, which exacerbated the aggressive behaviors! He was taking an average of eight antibiotics per year! He has had six sets of ear tubes, tonsillectomy, sinuses were cauterized, but still needed to be on antibiotics several times a year! His health was impacting behaviors and therapies profoundly. I went on a mission to get my sons healthier [\[read full article\]](#). ◀



❖ BRAIN INJURY

BHSL Announces Update to Annual Training Hours for Administrators

The Bureau of Human Services Licensing (BHSL) issued a notice on August 15, 2023 regarding the requirements of 55. PA Code Chapter 2600.64(c) and 55. PA Code Chapter 2800.64(c) as related to administrator annual training hours. Until further notice, personal care home and assisted living residence administrators may continue to complete all 24 hours of administrator annual training online, provided that at least 12 of those hours are formatted as a live training (e.g., Zoom, Teams, etc.). A maximum of 12 hours of online asynchronous or pre-recorded trainings are permitted. Questions about this communication or about annual training for administrators may be submitted [via email](#). ◀

❖ MEDICAL REHAB

CMS Releases FY 2024 IRF PPS Final Rule

On July 27, 2023, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the fiscal year (FY) 2024 inpatient rehabilitation facility prospective payment system (IRF PPS) final rule. This payment rule updates Medicare payment policies and rates, as well as quality reporting program (QRP) for 2024. Additional information can be found on a [fact sheet](#) released by CMS. ◀

❖ PHYSICAL DISABILITIES & AGING

New Medicare Dementia Care Model

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), announced the new [Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience \(GUIDE\) Model](#). The purpose and goal of this model is to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia, reduce strain on unpaid caregivers, and help people remain in their homes and communities through a package of care coordination and management, caregiver education and support, and respite services.

There is a web page that has been created specific to this care model that provides additional information:

- ▶ [GUIDE Model Press Release](#)
- ▶ [GUIDE Model Fact Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- ▶ [GUIDE Model Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- ▶ [GUIDE Model Letter of Interest](#) ◀

Save the Date: Blind Health Virtual Expo 2023 Planned for December 1 & 2

Save the date for Accessible Pharmacy's 2nd Annual Blind Health Expo! The Blind Health Expo is a completely virtual event and will be held on December 1 and December 2, 2023. The Blind Health Expo is the world's largest virtual expo of health care information, products, services, and medication for individuals in the blind, low vision, and disability communities. The Expo is free of charge and there is no charge to exhibit with hundreds of exhibitors expected. There are also thousands of attendees expected. For additional information, including attendee and exhibitor information, click [here](#). ◀



RCPA Comments on CMS Proposed Access Rules

CMS published a set of proposed rules intended to improve transparency and access to HCBS services, while also addressing the desire to create more equitable payments to direct care workers (DCWs) and direct service providers (DSPs). RCPA responded to CMS, with the following highlighted areas:

- ▶ Expressed support for the increasing transparency and reporting by the states, but pointing out that the provider community may not have the resources and tools required to report to the state. The RCPA position was that this could become an unfunded mandate and that the rates should reflect the increased expenses.
- ▶ Recognized the need to provide a living and competitive wage to DCWs and DSPs. However, RCPA's response did not support that the arbitrary 80% of the gross rates should be for direct worker pay. We urged the regulators to provide substantial clarity regarding the elements to be included in the 80% such as employer taxes, unemployment insurance, benefits, training, etc. Most critically, RCPA recommended reflecting these rules in the rates providers receive, as well as considering increasing the relevant federal match to address the differences in regional costs of labor.

These rules are being considered for implementation in 2028. [View the comments](#) submitted by RCPA along with other state associations. ◀

RCPA Joins the Coalition for Choice

RCPA joined a coalition of trade associations and providers to advocate for assuring consumer choice in the delivery of consumer directed services, including Fiscal Management Services (FMS) and Agency With Choice (AWC). The coalition was formed as a result of the continuing decline in consumers enrolled in consumer directed services available through the Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) and the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). The coalition has sent position papers as a response to the Community HealthChoices (CHC) RFI and the CMS Access rules. Learn more about the Coalition for Choice [here](#). ◀

OLTL Pending Procurements

As of the writing of this newsletter, the following procurements continue to be in the blackout period:

- ▶ FMS for OLTL OBRA and ODP – About 4,000 consumers impacted – the department has extended current contracts through the end of 2023.
- ▶ Agency With Choice – the procurement is suspended indefinitely, due to pending legal action scheduled to be heard on September 19.
- ▶ Independent Enrollment Broker – No Update
- ▶ Community HealthChoices – Procurement for 1/1/2025 start of services – 450,000 consumers impacted. Services currently provided by three MCOs: AmeriHealth Caritas / Keystone First, Pennsylvania Health and Wellness, and UPMC. No specific target date at this time. ◀



RCPA Events Calendar

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